

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 1:30pm.  
Colony in the Wood – club house  
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

March, 2018

## Time to Get Busy – It's Spring!

**President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700**

**Co-Vice Presidents – Jane Vila-Lobos and Hedy Quirk  
386/446-0341 and 386/427-2314**

**Secretary – Ruth Gessner 386/767-3499**

**Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041**

Well, I think it's safe to say that the worst of the cold weather is behind us now. What did you do to protect your plants when the temperatures dropped below freezing this year? Bill Hazard shared these photos of his efforts to minimize the damage from those nights of low temperatures. His approach was in 3 steps: Those smaller and most cold-sensitive varieties in pots were moved to the garage. The larger plants in the landscape that were also cold-sensitive he covered with frost cloth. Finally, those in the landscape that were more cold tolerant were left to prove just how cold-tolerant they really were. They were not covered and bore the brunt of the cold weather.



Bill Hazard constructed these racks and packed the smaller and more cold sensitive plants into his garage.



Many of the Neoregelia varieties like these are quite cold-hardy and survived with little or no damage.



...but where they were located in the yard made quite a difference. This group of the same variety of Neoregelia, but in a more exposed location shows the characteristic bleached-out effect of too much cold.



The larger plants in the landscape wouldn't fit in the garage – and that's where frost cloth was used to cover plants in the yard.



Frost cloth can be used year after year and provides 3-5 degrees of protection by trapping and retaining residual ground heat.

A good plan and a very reasonable approach. I'm sure that the damage to Bill's plants would have been much worse if he hadn't taken these measures of protection. Now it's time to survey the damage this past Winter's cold weather may have caused to our bromeliads.



Severe cold damage on a *Neoregelia carcharodon* hybrid.



*Quesnelia testudo* climbs a tree several feet away from the previous Neo. photo. No damage from cold.



If you are making a list of cold-hardy plants, make sure that *Quesnelia testudo* is on it!

It's also time to get busy and work in the garden. No more lazing around the house, watching daytime TV, eating chocolate bonbons and drinking diet cokes – it's time to get out there and go to work! You might want to start by removing and potting up those pups that have been growing on your *Neoregelias* since last fall. The ones that are on stolons are probably the easiest to remove, so start there. Just take your shears and snip the stolon near the base of the pup. Put your new pup in a pot with some potting mix. Put a new tag identifying your pup in the pot and you're done. Now, how easy was that? The pups that are not on stoloniferous plants are probably held closely to the base of the parent plant and might be a little more difficult to get to. Try removing the parent and pup from your old pot and washing the potting mix off the roots of the parent. You can also remove the old, dead leaves from the base of the

parent plant at this time so that you can better see where the point of attachment to the pup might be. Now you can either grab the pup firmly and rock it back and forth until it breaks away from the parent or you can reach in close to the point of attachment with your garden shears and clip the pup away from the parent. Don't worry about whether roots have formed on the pup or not – it makes little difference to the pup. New roots will form soon enough once you pot your new pup in some fresh mix. It's far more important that the pup be large enough to be separated from its mom. How large is that? The rule of thumb that I've always heard is that if the pup is  $\frac{1}{2}$  the size of the parent (give or take a little), it's large enough to have sufficient energy built up within the plant to exist on its own. Take away a pup that is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  the size of the parent and it may or may not survive the trauma of separation. Do you feel lucky? If not, you might want to wait a while longer for that pup to grow a bit larger before separating it from the mother plant. Wait too long to remove the pup (particularly those that are held close to the base of the parent) and the pup may actually begin to get deformed as it struggles for space crushed up against the parent plant.

**This month's meeting –**



St. Patrick's Day is usually celebrated on March 17<sup>th</sup> but that's not our meeting date, so we will be celebrating this holiday a bit early on March 11<sup>th</sup> with a traditional St. Patty's day dinner. FECBS will provide the main course, the dishes, utensils, paper goods, and drinks. Those who would normally be scheduled to bring refreshments are asked to please bring the desserts. Oh, and I'm told that everyone must wear something green for the occasion!



**Last month's meeting –**  
President Rick Ryals opened the meeting.



...and the club members always appreciate a good joke by Rick.

We thought that we would try something a little different this year and have a few programs dedicated to specific bromeliad Genera. February was the first in a series that began with the Genus *Aechmea* and we had some great examples of this group to examine – starting with one of the smallest *Aechmeas*: *Aechmea recurvata* var. *benrathii*.



It may be small, but the inflorescence of *Ae. recurvata benrathii* is sure to grab your attention.



Bill Hazard's *Ae. mexicana* may have had some cold damage, but isn't this a great bloom!

The Aechmeas are a very diverse and attractive bromeliad group, but are not especially well suited for the landscape in our east-central Florida area. Many of the more desirable varieties like *Ae. Mexicana* (shown above) or the ever popular *Ae. blanchettiana* simply can't tolerate the few days of extreme low temperatures that we may experience each winter. That's not to say that you absolutely can't grow these plants in your landscape settings – it simply means that unless you provide some appropriate means of cold protection many of the popular *Aechmea* varieties either will not survive our winters or, perhaps worse – they may survive, but their cold damaged leaves will provide a continual reminder for many months after the warm weather returns that *Aechmeas* are not

necessarily a good choice for the landscape in this area.

### **Dues are now due for 2018**

If you haven't already done so, please see our Treasurer Eve Krauth to pay your dues for this new year. Always a bargain, annual dues continue to be just \$15 for an individual membership or \$20 for a family. Don't risk being dropped from the roster (it's a long fall from up there!) and removed from the newsletter mailing list!

### **Out and About –**

We had lots of beautiful pictures submitted this month by Virginia.



If it looks like *Aechmea gamosepala*, that's because it's from the same sub-group of *Aechmeas* – this is *Aechmea kerteseiae*



This is the time of year for *Aechmea bromeliaefolia* to show its stuff and this is a great example of the bloom. The showy yellow flowers don't last long and this is what you see: white buds that haven't opened, yellow flowers, and black spent blossoms.



Guzmania hybrids are not usually known for their cold-hardiness, but those that have *Guzmania lingulata minor* in the parentage tend to be the exception as this plant in Virginia's landscape demonstrates!

### Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies meeting in Gainesville

February 24<sup>th</sup> saw the first meeting of the year for the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (FCBS) at Oak Hammock in Gainesville. Calandra Thurrott and Jack Dunlop are our club's two representatives to this group and although Calandra was unable to attend this meeting due to illness, the Dunlops made the trek to Gainesville on our club's behalf. This was Jack's first meeting of the council and at times the discussions were a bit lively.



Kathy and Jack Dunlop at Oak Hammock in Gainesville.

The new chairman for FCBS assumed his office at this meeting and there was ample opportunity for new representatives to meet their counterparts from around the state.



Mike Michalski from the Bromeliad Society of South Florida is the new chairman of FCBS for 2018

Before and after the meeting there was an opportunity to tour the custom greenhouse at Oak Hammock where Ron and Carolyn Schoenau (of the Gainesville Bromeliad Society) grow an extraordinary variety of bromeliads and Ron was easily persuaded to share some of his extremely well-grown plants.



Linda Sheetz (Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society) inspects a wide array of bromeliads and other tropical in the greenhouse.

### March Birthdays

Mimi Borosky • Rosie Byard • Francisco Cardoso • Forrest Chaffee • Milt Cohen • Judith Davies • Louise Dianto • Patricia Esmont • Mike Fink • Bill Hazard • Tree Hazard • Jim Irvin • Eve Krauth • Pat Mathews • Deborah McNair • Shellie Merrill • Bobbie Moore • Vicki Teel • Ron Tucholski • Jane Upham • Margo Walker

**Looking ahead:**

**March 9-11, 2018**

20<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Plant Extravaganza at  
Searle Brothers Nursery 6640 SW 172<sup>nd</sup>  
Avenue, SW Ranches, Fl. 33331  
Featuring bromeliads, crotons, cycads,  
cordylines (and that's just the b's and c's) –  
something for everyone!  
8am-5pm on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 9-4 on the 11<sup>th</sup>

**March 10 – 11, 2018**

Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale  
Leu Gardens in Orlando – free admission

**March 10, 11, 2018**

Edison Estate Annual Garden Show  
Edison House in Ft. Myers  
2350 MacGregor Blvd.  
Ft. Myers

**March 24, 25, 2018**

Spring Garden Festival at Kanapaha Gardens  
in Gainesville - Kanapaha Botanical Gardens  
entrance is on SW Archer Road (State Road  
24) 1.4 miles west of Interstate 75 (exit #384)  
Admission \$8/adults, \$5/children.  
Remote Parking is available at Celebration  
Pointe & Bass Pro Area:  
4526 SW Archer Rd  
Gainesville, FL 32608 shuttles run every 15  
minutes to the gardens.

**March 24, 25, 2018** Bromeliad Society of  
South Florida annual show and sale at  
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden located at  
10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables

**April 7, 2018** Master Gardener's Plant Fair at  
the Volusia County Fairgrounds

**May 29 – June 3, 2018** World Conference,  
San Diego, Ca.

**September 14-16, 2018**

SW Bromeliad Guild annual show/sale.  
Baton Rouge, La.

