

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, May 12th, 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

April, 2013

No Meeting This Month!

President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700

Vice President – Eretta Morris 386/677-9557

Secretary – Jillian Thurrott 386/801-2500

Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084

We hope you all are able to take part in the field trip to S. Florida where you will certainly be enthralled with the gardens of Casa Phippsberger, thrilled with the judged show and sale at Fairchild Botanical Gardens and mesmerized by Dr. Jeffrey Block's 'Block Botanical Gardens'. This is a trip you won't want to miss! Since so many of us will be in the Miami area on the weekend of our club meeting, this month's meeting is cancelled.

How did your bromeliads fare in the cold snap that we experienced on the morning of March 4th? My thermometer showed 28.7 degrees F in my backyard, but hopefully the sub-freezing temperatures were of a short enough duration that there was little damage to my plants. According to the Daytona Beach News Journal that wasn't quite a record low temperature for this date. That distinction still rests with March 2, 1980 when Daytona Beach recorded an all-time record low of 28 degrees (F). By coincidence, I was recently leafing through some old materials in my files (ok, they're not *exactly* 'files'...more like a pile of papers in a corner of the bedroom) and came across the following "Freeze Report" by Audrey McCrory discussing that same event:
Sunday, March 2, 1980...Don't we all remember that day here in Central Florida! After a mild winter, our bromeliads were

sending up spring growth, and we were bringing out many of the less tender varieties for the summer months. Inside, we were rejoicing in our good fortune in not having had freezing weather to combat. Then --- seemingly out of nowhere, Ole Man Winter showed up, with a complete bag of tricks --- all of them nasty: icy winds, rain, freezing temperatures. Everyone we talked with remembers exactly where they were that day and how late into the night they worked!

*But strange things happened: Jim Stoll had native *Tillandsia utriculata* in bud. Only the bloom stalks were frozen. A month later, a second bloom came up between the leaves, but in multiple stalks.*

*Roy and Dottie Oishi over at Malabar on the east coast, had just moved into a new home in the fall, had transplanted all of their bromeliads, only to suffer great devastation from the wind chill. But we saw several *Aechmea ornata* 'Nationalis' with no damage.*

*In Kissimmee, the temperature dropped into the high 20s. We had much freeze damage, despite our good tree cover. Many plants in pots died, while the same plant in the ground survived: *Portea petropolitana extensa*, *Aechmea nudicaulis* X *Ae. Fasciata*, *Billbergia* 'Fantasia'. Suffering much leaf damage, but surviving to bloom anyway was *Aechmea bracteata rubra*. No*

damage was noted on *Neo. Carolinae princeps* in pots, nor *Neo. 'Fairy Paint'* planted in the ground.

In the Winter Garden area, Dr. Roger Taylor said they were spared any damage. The west side of Orlando was not as severely hit as the east and central sections, according to Bill Weckbacher. His *Canistrum roseum* which had always been hardy died; *Neo. Farinosa* nearly expired; *Aechmea luedemanniana* was badly burned, but all his *Aechmea recurvata* and *recurvata* hybrids escaped undamaged.

Being situated between two lakes helped alleviate freeze damage Florence McKinney reports. Her *Billbergia vittata*, usually hardy, suffered leaf damage and *Aechmea pectinata*, in the ground for several years, had its top damaged, but now has new growth through the center.

In the Mount Dora area, Glenna Simmons reported temperatures down to 20-22 degrees, and many badly damaged plants; all *Ananas* except those in heavy shade; all *Hohenbergias*, all *Tillandsias* except Spanish moss and ball moss, all *Aechmea 'Fosters Favorite'* where planted in the ground, those growing epiphytically were killed outright. *Cryptbergias* planted in the ground survived, but those in pots above ground were burned. Also damaged were *Aechmea 'Maginali'*, *Aechmea augustifolia*, *Aechmea lamarchei*, *Aechmea 'Royal Wine'* *Aechmea chantinii 'Ash Blonde'*, *Billbergia brasiliensis*, and all *Porteas*.

Many of our new hybrids and rather scarce species have never been tested for hardiness in this area. Let's hope that as new varieties prove their tolerance for sudden cold, their owners and growers will report this welcome occurrence in this Newsletter.

So, a similar unexpected cold snap happened in March in 1980 and caught many bromeliad growers unawares! That's why it's probably good advice to not put the frost cloth away or get too heavily into repotting until we're well

into March and all danger of a freeze is behind ...at least for this Winter. Next up – get ready for a dry Spring!

Everybody's Flower Show 2013-March 22nd to the 24th, 2013

After an extended absence from the News Journal's 'Everybody's Flower Show', the Council of Garden Clubs returned to the Ocean Center with a three day sneak preview of what should be an outstanding event next year.



Council of Garden Clubs president Amy Nowell contemplates ribbon placement on an entry.

For many years the public was invited to participate by entering their home-grown plants in a judged horticulture show while garden club members had an opportunity to enter a judged floral design show in conjunction with the Spring Home Show.



Photo above by Rick Ryals

What does this have to do with bromeliads you may ask? This year our club accounted

for over a third of the total entries in the horticulture show – and that’s for a ‘sneak preview’ on very short notice. Attendance over the 3 day show was 10,000+. Not a bad way to expose the public to the world of bromeliads! In past years FECBS members have entered their bromeliads in this show, taken many ribbons, and even won the ‘Sweepstakes’ award for the greatest number of ribbons for entries by members of a garden club. Let’s start thinking now about how to best represent the club next year.

Ask Jay!

Please send your bromeliad related questions to Jay at cajat@aol.com.

Q: With all the wind this past several weeks and a few cold nights, should I be watering my plants as usual? The St. Augustine grass certainly seems like it needs watering, perhaps the bromeliads do too?

A: That all depends on what constitutes ‘usual’. How often and how much you should water can be a very difficult thing to establish. It’s not a good idea to expose any of your plants to prolonged cold, wet conditions – and that includes both bromeliads and St. Augustine grass. That encourages the growth of fungal and mold organisms which can have harmful effects on vegetation, so any watering should take place in the morning hours rather than in the evening. Also keep in mind that moisture needs for your plants are far less now than they will be in another few months, so adjust your watering practices accordingly. Wind is another factor to take into consideration since our Spring breezes can quickly dry out potting mixes and, once they get bone-dry they can be very difficult to rehydrate – with the result that your bromeliads can become extremely dessicated. Not a good thing! Then, as if those are not enough variables to consider, still another factor can be the type of pot that your bromeliad is in. Clay pots respond more than plastic to windy weather

by wicking moisture through the pot, where it quickly evaporates. Plastic pots may retain moisture in the mix a bit longer...and require less frequent watering. If that all sounds like a bit of a balancing act, it is! Fortunately, however, bromeliads are very forgiving with regard to optimal care – they’ll survive quite well even if you neglect to water them for as often as you should.

Birthdays for April:

Irene Aldrich	Judy Dilling
Michele Kelley	Steve Provost
Jayne Molnar	Eretta Morris
Hey Quirk	Rose Vincel
Virginia Whiting	

Happy birthday everyone!



Rick sent this interesting picture that he had taken at Epcot in Orlando recently – what a great looking monster!...and look at that *Alcantarea odorata* mounted on his head!

Name that plant...

These are a little out of the ordinary (at least two of them are) so you may have a little trouble identifying them. Good luck!

#1 This plant is one of only two in the whole Genus and looks like a pot full of grass until you look a little closer and see what looks like little colorful

pinecones.



#2 This next one is common enough, and you probably have one in your collection but has it grown into a nice ball like this?



#3 Our last mystery plant is the result of crossing bromeliads from two different Genera. In this case, the result was simply outstanding and looks like something from outer space!



Last month's "Name that plant" photos were:
1. *Tillandsia foliosa* – this is one of the so-called "soft-leaved" Tillandsias and one that adapts very well to pot culture. I purchased my first *T. foliosa* some years ago from Tropiflora and out of flat of many of these plants, I selected on that had interesting red foliage...only to find out that they take on that color in their leaves just before they fall over dead! I was advised to make another selection and have been rewarded with blooms on the original and subsequent pups ever since.

2. *Neoregelia McWilliamsii* – this is simply a great Neo.! My original plant came from Michaels Bromeliads as a mail-order plant and was described as a "giant Neo. compacta". Trouble free and very cold tolerant, Neo McWilliamsii is a wonderful addition to anyone's collection. The center turns a wonderful strawberry color when in bloom and the long stolons will march right up the side of a tree!

3. *Aechmea disticantha var. schlumbergeri*
Don't you wish that more bromeliads had common names? This one is a mouthful, but it's a great landscape plant for our area. Full sun, full shade, high temperatures, cold temperatures...it makes no difference. This plant thrives under all of these conditions and puts up a beautiful bloom spike each Spring. The downside though is that it's really spiny and has a tendency to draw blood if you get too close!

Last month's meeting:

Many thanks to our guest speaker Marty Faulk for his program on the use of bromeliads in the landscape. Marty is an outstanding grower and it's a great pleasure to have him address our group.



Eretta Morris and Marty Faulk with Aechmea 'Blue Tango'
Photo by Michele Kelley

Looking ahead

If you think that the calendar in last month's newsletter looked pretty full – this month is even more so. Let's start with Tropilora's Spring event...:

April 5-7

Tropiflora's Spring Festival
3 day sale featuring Tropiflora's outstanding variety of plants as well as many outside vendors, food. 3530 Tallevast Road, Sarasota, Florida 34243.

April 6 & 7

EFG Orchids 2nd Anniversary Celebration, Power Plant Nursery, 4265 Marsh Road, Deland. Nice folks, nice plants – well worth a visit! 10am - 5pm both days, more Information, 386/738-8600

April 6

Master Gardeners ½ day sale at Volusia County Fairgrounds. 3100 E. New York Ave, Deland, FL 32724 (just off I-4, on state rd. 44). 8:30am until noon only – this becomes a madhouse when they open the gates!

April 13-14

Palm Coast Community Flower Show and Plant Sale – presented by The Garden Club at Palm Coast with Dolphin Printing and the News Journal. African American Cultural Society, 4422 US Highway 1 North, Palm Coast

Saturday noon-5pm, Sunday 10am-4pm Plant sale only on Saturday 10am-5pm

April 13-14

Bromeliad Society of South Florida show and sale at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables (Miami). Admission to the gardens is \$18 for adults – included in the bus trip and just one more reason why it's a good deal!

April 13-14

Spring Plant Festival
USF Botanical Gardens
12210 USF Pine Drive
Tampa, Florida

April 20, 21 – Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society sale at the Seminole Garden Center, 200 Fairmont Drive, Sanford. 9am - 4pm both days.

April 20, 21

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay bromeliad show and sale. Tampa Garden Club building at 2629 Bayshore Blvd Tampa, FL 33629-7317

April 27-28

Mounts Spring sale at Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach

May 5

Sugar Mill Gardens 'Spring Fling', 950 Old Sugar Mill Road, Port Orange. Sunday from Noon to 4pm. Set-up is 9am to 11am. Our club will be offering plants for sale. If you would like to sell plants please contact Bill Hazard at billtreehazard@gmail.com.

May 11-12, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Mother's Day Sale
Fashion Square Mall, Orlando, FL
www.mybscf.org

May 11 & 12 - Volusia County Orchid Society Show & Sale, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Deland. 9am - 4pm both days.
\$1.00 off the \$4.00 admission fee at
www.vcosonline.org.

August 17-18
Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society sale

September 7, 8 2013 – SW Bromeliad Guild show and sale in Dallas, Tx. Also, the Cryptanthus Society's International Cryptanthus Show...and the BSI's annual meeting. All at the same place!

September 21st, 2013
Bromeliad Extravaganza – Hosted by the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society Indian Rocks Beach, Clearwater at the Holiday Inn Harborside. Free parking!
For more information, contact Judy Lund at 727/439-7782 glund@Tampabay.rr.com

December 6-8, 2013
Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society show and sale. This will not be a standard BSI show.

September 8-14, 2014 – BSI World Conference. Ala Moana Hotel. 410 Atkinson Drive. Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. Register now for what is sure to be an unforgettable event!

