

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 1:30pm.  
Colony in the Wood – club house  
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

April, 2015

## Summer Is Here – What Are You Waiting For?

**President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850**  
**Vice President – Linda Stagnol 386/212-8138**  
**Secretary – Ed Meiser 386/785-4830**  
**Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041**

Summer is definitely upon us now. I know, technically Summer arrives on June 21<sup>st</sup>, but as far as I'm concerned once daytime temperatures are in the mid-80s(F) for several days in a row – there is no such thing as Spring, it's Summer! This year Summer arrived as though someone had simply opened a door. One morning the temperature was hovering near freezing and the next – birds were singing, the azaleas burst open in bloom, the thermometer bumped up to 80 and we had to throw the switch on the air conditioning from 'heat' to 'cool'! On the plus side: I always like being able to go outside in shorts and no shoes instead of long pants and a jacket. The downside: My electric bill pretty much stays the same. That's season changes in east central Florida for you!

### **Last month's meeting –**

Our own Linda Stagnol (a former president of FECBS, by the way) presented a very interesting program on some novel potting mixes (of which she brought many examples to show to our members) and growing techniques that she has found to work well for her. I think that everyone was intrigued by her experiment using hydroponics blended with a fish tank for

some of the smaller varieties of bromeliads. She's clearly had some good results from her unconventional techniques, as evidenced by those beautiful (and large!) Cryptanthus varieties that she showed to the group. I hope you noted her comment that "if you can grow African violets, you can grow Cryptanthus" – that's not something you often hear concerning the epiphytic bromeliads, but for those earthbound varieties with extensive root systems like the Cryptanthus, this is good advice indeed.



**Linda Stagnol with some of her unconventional mixes and techniques.**

Thank you Linda for a great program!

Also at the meeting, Joanne from the Volusia County Orchid Society spoke about the upcoming Mothers Day show. We have been invited to have a static display (table-

top display on 8' table) during this event and will discuss this in more detail at the next meeting (April).

I always enjoy the 'Show and Tell' portion of our meetings. You never know what interesting bromeliad will be brought in and discussed by our members. Last month Joan Campbell (another former president of FECBS!) brought in a nice example of *Billbergia* 'Collevii' in bloom. This is an interesting small *Billbergia* hybrid that according to the BSI Cultivar Registry (BCR) is the product of a cross of *B. amoena* and *B. vittata* (two *Billbergia* species plants) done by Van Geert way back in 1882.



Joan Campbell with *Billbergia* 'Collevii' at the March meeting  
An interesting comment in the BCR is that it is felt that the original 'Collevii' is probably no longer in cultivation and that what is seen today is likely an F2, the result of growing out seeds from the original plant (which introduces some variability) rather than continuing the 'pure' line from offsets. Of course, it may just be that Joan has that rare true 'Collevii'...in any event, an interesting plant to bring to 'Show and Tell'.

### Out and about....

Bill reported on the Water Wise Fair in New Smyrna Beach in early March. Once again our club was invited to participate (4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year!) and many thanks are due to Bill Hazard, Bryan Manion, and Virginia Dornbach for manning the FECBS booth there. There was a lot of interest in bromeliads expressed by those attending this

event, plant sales were brisk...and so was the wind. They had quite a difficult time keeping the plants from blowing off the sales table!



Virginia Dornbach explains to the public what bromeliads are and how to care for them.

### A few words from our past-president -

Congratulations to Jay Thurrott who took home top honors for this beautiful *Vriesea gigantea* at the Everybody's Flower and Garden Show held last weekend at the Spring Home Show, Ocean Center. The four year old *gigantea* (there's a story connected with this – see the next issue of the Florida Council newsletter – jt) earned him a 'Grower's Choice' and 'Horticulture Excellence' ribbon.



Photo by Rick Ryals

You never know what may be given away at one of our club meetings but last year one of my favorite members, Ann Marie Alberti gave away some epiphytic orchids carefully wrapped in white plastic bags. I planted the contents in a clay pot and watered them regularly and noticed just before our cold temperatures that they were spiking. During one of the coldest periods I pulled

the entire pot into my dining room (what a site that was) and waited for warmer temperatures. As you can see, the 30 plus blooms is a great addition to my bromeliads and now each time I look at it, I think of Ann Marie and her wonderful spirit of giving.



It may not be a bromeliad, but it sure is pretty!

Not every plant you get blooms in the first year or two (or three) as is evidenced with this *Androlaechmea Cyclops*. Received from Mike Michalski (not sure if I purchased it or he gave it to me) at the 2012 World Bromeliad Conference in Orlando. I repotted it a couple of times and then finally it spiked this past winter. I covered it and moved it several times causing a little damage but was very pleased with it overall, so much that I moved it to my front door area. The colorful pink/orange leaves are a welcome sign of spring.



*Androlaechmea* 'Cyclops' – photo by Rick Ryals

- Rick

### What is that thing?

This time of year you may notice a bright pink bloom emerging from a cluster of viciously-spined green leaves arranged around a medium sized bromeliad. Back in the late 1800's someone saw one of these plants in bloom and thought that it resembled a turtle's head (a rather imaginative observation – I wonder what strange creatures he thought he saw in those puffy cumulus clouds overhead?) and gave the name of *Quesnelia testudo* (Latin for 'tortoise') to this plant.



*Quesnelia testudo*'s bright blooms are a welcome Spring sight. Note the blue flowers that peek out from the bright pink bracts on the inflorescence in the photo above. Closely related is the somewhat larger *Quesnelia quesneliana*.



*Quesnelia quesneliana* inflorescence

How do you tell them apart? This plant, at least in my yard, blooms at the same time as its cousin, but has a more wavy, satiny appearance to the inflorescence with bracts that are a little darker than *Q. testudo*.

If you really want to tell the two apart, you need to get close enough to observe the bracts on the bloom. *Quesnelia testudo*'s bracts covering the stalk of the inflorescence each terminate in a stiff, sharp spine. There are some good photos on the FCBS website showing this. On *Quesnelia quesneliana*... not so much - its bracts are soft and floppy.

Both of these plants are extremely hardy and shrug off extreme heat and extreme cold with little noticeable stress. Grow them in full sun: the plant becomes more compact and the leaves are pale green. Grow them in shade – longer leaves and a darker green. Neither is very particular about growing conditions and both are so spiny that you are not likely to brush against them more than once. In fact, just about the time that you decide that you've had enough of these tough customers and are going to rip them out of the ground and dispose of the bodies, they reward you with a really nice bloom...and you decide to put off getting rid of them for another year!

### **Halifax Council of Garden Clubs**

Although FECBS is no longer a member of the Council of Garden Clubs of the Halifax Area, I have continued to attend their monthly meetings and thought you might want to know what they've been up to recently. Chris Taliafaro has been very diligent in seeing that the property is kept up. She has had the large bay tree that died in the back yard removed, the roofing tiles repaired, the house has been repainted, and she is working now on getting the shutters repaired/replaced. One of the few 'worker bees' in that organization, Chris has been doing a great job.

The garage sale in February brought in approximately \$1700 (should help to offset at least some of the house upkeep costs). They have also taken the first steps towards obtaining non-profit 501c3 status, although they have been told that this may take up to 9 months before this status is awarded( a bit like having a baby?).

On the negative side, no vendors have been secured for Everybody's Flower Show, so it's unlikely that they will offset expenses incurred there. No newsletter has been printed for several months because no one has provided any news to the editor. And, finally, the nominating committee had no volunteers to serve as officers for the upcoming year – although it looks like they may get some less than willing club members to take on those spots following a brisk discussion at their March meeting.

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### **Help us show appreciation!**

For the past two years we have had the good fortune of having canopy tents at the Water Wise Garden Fair in New Smyrna. They will also be available to us for the Master Gardeners Sale coming up, if needed. These tents were loaned to us by United Brethren in Christ of Holly Hill. Having these tents at our sales serve multiple purposes, they provide much needed shade for our plants and of course for those of us who volunteer for these sales. Another benefit is that of an aesthetically pleasing appearance to our setup, which isn't always the best in New Smyrna due to the ever present windy conditions which makes for a challenging event.

United Brethren in Christ has a food pantry which helps out many that are less fortunate than most of us. Last year they gave away close to 500,000 meals, that's no small task! We can show our appreciation by donating non-perishable food items to their food pantry. You can help by bringing your donations to our April F.E.C.B.S. meeting and Bill Hazard and I will pass them on to U.B.I.C. on behalf of our club for their food pantry.

Thanks for your support,

Bryan Manion

**President's Message**

*Well, here we are in April already. The threat of freeze and frost are past and we can, without hesitation, bring our plants out from under the cover of protection. The oak leaves have finished dropping (although magnolias are about to start) so we can clean, separate and find the ideal spot for each prized specimen. Speaking of prized specimens....Ron Tucholski has agreed to head up our display for the Volusia County Orchid Show (May 9-10th). This is a great way for the FECBS to get exposure with orchid enthusiasts. Some of whom may not realize that the growing conditions in most cases are very similar to those for orchids. So what we're looking for is a "few good plants" to cover and surround a standard 8 foot table. Ron will be speaking about that show this month so please bring plants that could be considered for our table. We want a table that will "pop" so bring small and large, common and unusual. Bring Aechmeas, Bills, Crypts, Dyckias, Guz, Neos, Tills, Vrieseas and any other genus you may have to show. The more the merrier. Did I mention the Orchid Show is Mother's Day weekend at the Volusia County Fairgrounds?*

*I'm hoping to go to Mary McBride's for another plant purging on April 4th. Again, we can help her out as well as getting plants for the Master Gardeners Sale on April 11th. We can use all the help we can get for both, so now that you have emptied your calendar. You have plenty of time to take part, right? Hope to see you there - May the Brom be with you.*

*Bill*

**Editor's note** – Don't forget to bring plants for each meeting's 'show and tell' feature. We have been getting some really interesting plants to show the members, but we need *your* participation. Let us know what you've

been growing and how that working out for you!

**Birthdays for April:**

Happy Birthday to the following FECBS members:

Irene Aldrich	Michele Kelley
Steve Provost	Jayne Molnar
Eretta Morris	Rick Peters
Hedy Quirk	Roberta Sappington
Rose Vincel	Virginia Whiting

**Looking ahead:**

**April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Volusia County Master Gardener's Plant Fair at the county fairgrounds in Deland. This is a half day sale and once again we have been invited to have a booth. This is a good way to get rid of some of those unwanted pups and to make a few dollars in the process. You get 80% of the proceeds, the club gets 20%.



They start lining up outside the fence early on Saturday for the ½ day Master Gardener's sale.

**April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Palm Coast Garden Club's Spring Garden Expo and Plant Sale at the Trinity Presbyterian Church. 156 Florida Park Drive. 9am to 4pm

**April 17-19, 2015**

Bromeliad Society of South Florida 34<sup>th</sup> annual show and sale to be held at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

Gardens are open at 7:30am-4:30 Sat., 7:30am - 9pm Sunday. General Admission \$25, \$18 for seniors  
10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables, 33196  
Chihuly Glass in the Gardens exhibition will be on display until May 31<sup>st</sup>!(now there's a reason to attend in itself!)

**April 18-19, 2015**

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Spring Sale at Sanford Garden Center.

**May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015**

Field trip to Ocala to visit George and Irene Aldrich's 'Plants and Things' bromeliad nursery. Details about how to get there will be given at this month's meeting.



George and Irene Aldrich of Plants and Things in Ocala

**May 9-10, 2015**

Volusia County Orchid Society 20<sup>th</sup> annual orchid show and sale at the Volusia County Fairgrounds. 9am to 4pm both days. \$5 admission (\$1 discount cards are available). Our club has been invited to have an

unmanned display at this event. See Bill for details.

**May 20, 2015**

Halifax Council of Garden Clubs annual luncheon. Oceanside Country Club. Business meeting at 10am, lunch at noon \$23/plate. See your officers for details.

**September 26, 2015**

Bromeliad Extravaganza hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida. "Bromeliads in the Magic City".

711 NW 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave.

Miami, Fl. 33126

Double Tree Hilton Miami Airport and Convention Center

Room rate of \$107/night plus parking

For more information about reservations, go to

<http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/M/MIAMADT-BRO-20150923/index.jhtml>

