

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 1:30pm.  
Home of Bill and Tree Hazard – 876 Quail Run, Ormond Beach 32174

May 2014

## Location, Location, Location!

**President – Jay Thurrott 386/761-4804**

**Vice President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850**

**Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500**

**Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084**

### **This month's meeting...**

No we're not talking real estate here. Our own Bill Hazard will show how to use the right plant in the right location in the landscape. And what better place to do this than in his own yard? We are all invited to the Bill and Tree's home in Ormond Beach for our May meeting. There is a map showing where you can find their home on the last page of this newsletter.

### **Last month's meeting –**

In April we continue our review of some of the bromeliad basics with a discussion on the differences in containers and which pot might be the best fit for your growing style. We also took a look at potting mixes and then had a demonstration of separating and potting bromeliad offsets – some of these are easier to remove than others!

### **The 2014 Master Gardeners Spring Sale...**

is now history and we are looking forward to next year's event. What's not to like about this sale? It's in the morning before the sun has a chance to begin cooking the plants on the sales tables, the customers are there for one purpose only and that's to purchase plants (no pots and pans and free yardsticks like some other venue), and it's only a half day out of everyone's busy schedules! This year was very successful with lots of beautiful bromeliads for sale, lots of help manning the sales area and lots of customers

snatching plants off the tables and putting them in their carts. Thank you Irene and George Aldrich for bringing their beautiful bromeliads for sale and tables and canopies to protect them from the sun and special thanks to Irene for efficient handling of the sales transactions! Thank you also to Alan Bennett for bringing many, many plants to fill the tables and helping out all morning. And thank you Bryan Manion, Christophe Cardot and Christophe's lovely daughter Elise (please forgive the spelling...) for also bringing sales plants and helping with sales throughout the morning.



All in all, an excellent crew and an excellent event!

**And a sad note –**

We were very sorry to learn of the recent death of former FECBS member Wendy Hollingsworth. She always provided a sparkle to our meetings with her British humor and will be missed. Wendy was 78.

**Plant Profile: *Tillandsia ionantha***

How many plants can you think of that can be found for sale in T-shirt shops along Atlantic Avenue in Daytona Beach, the check-out aisle in WalMart, and in Michael's Bromeliads in Venice, Florida? I can only come up with one ...and that is *Tillandsia ionantha*. This funny little bromeliad is often seen in large piles in baskets in gift shops where they are listed as "air plants", mounted on brightly colored refrigerator magnets (most of us cringe at the thought!) in the souvenir sections in the big box stores, and also in an amazing variety of forms in nurseries that specialize in growing and offering bromeliads for sale. This is obviously a plant that appeals to a very broad range of customers, and perhaps that is due in part to the lack of care needed to keep it looking nice.

First described in 1855 by the French botanist Jules Emile Planchon - best known for his work in saving the French vineyards from a tiny aphid-like pest accidentally released into the French countryside from...America! He eventually saved the wine industry by introducing American grapevines that had developed a resistance to the pest to France. Hmmmm...could there be a parallel here with the Mexican weevil and weevil resistant *Tillandsia utriculata* plants from Central America?

Three distinct varieties and one additional forma of this little gem of a plant are listed in the Bromeliad Binomial, however the BSI Cultivar Registry notes no fewer than 25 recognized cultivars. *T. ionantha* was also one of the first from this Genus used in making a hybrid when

Mulford Foster developed a cross with *T. brachycaulis* and named it *T. 'Victoria'* in 1943.



New member Ron Tucholski's *Tillandsia ionantha* entry in this year's Everybody's Flower Show.

Most forms have tubular violet colored flowers (the name "ionantha" is from the Greek words 'ion' for blue-violet and 'anthos' for flower), however there are cultivars ranging from the white flowered 'Druid' to the peach colored 'Peach', to the horizontally barred 'Zebrina'.



*Tillandsia 'Druid'* is identified by its white, tubular flowers.

Most forms were originally found in Guatemala, Honduras, or Mexico and range in size from the tiny one inch (and appropriately named) 'Peanut' to the fist-sized 'Hand Grenade', but new varieties are still noted in batches of seedlings so we may see that list of 25 cultivars increase further. Like most of the *Tillandsia* Genus, the *ionantha* group does best mounted on some firm material like driftwood, stone, or even shells. Care shouldn't end there however.

This plant thrives where there is good air movement (not on the refrigerator), high humidity (not on the refrigerator), and bright light (do I have to say it again?). This means that if you happen to purchase one of those ionanthas attached to a refrigerator magnet, the plant will still do well as long as you put it somewhere that provides the conditions noted above.



The Foster hybrid Tillandsia 'Victoria' mounted in a shell

### Weevil Update

Now that we know that the Mexican weevil has been found right here in Port Orange, it was suggested that we supply some identification photos so that everyone will know what to look for if they think (heaven forbid!) there may be weevils in their own backyards or in their plants. These photos were taken just this year and may save the life of some non-weevils that you think may be Mexican weevils and are about to dispatch:



If you tug at the central leaves of a bromeliad and they come free to show what looks like chewed bases of the leaves, you may have a weevil.



If what looks like a small cocoon falls out of those central leaves of a bromeliad, you may have a weevil.



If you have a black bug with a "Jimmy Durante" nose and yellow or orange markings like the one above...you have a weevil. This one is about to steal a dime - keep your loose change away from them.

### Field Trip to the Aldriches' Nursery in Ocala –

The Aldriches' have generously volunteered to open their nursery to us on **Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**. You may recall the great time we all had on our previous visit to their place. There is a beautifully landscaped pond (no fishing allowed) surrounded by well-established landscape bromeliads. Be sure to bring your cameras! We will be on our own regarding transportation to and from Ocala, but a number of us will be car-pooling, so if you need a ride get in touch with your fellow club members. Plan to arrive at 10 a.m. This will be a terrific opportunity to add to your own bromeliad collections, so be sure to bring your wallets and purses because you

will be seeing some outstanding bromeliads at amazingly low prices! We will be eating lunch there – the Aldrichs will be providing food on the grill and the club will provide side dishes and beverages. The address is 746 NE 35<sup>th</sup> St. Ocala, Fl 34479. A map is provided for your convenience on the last page of this newsletter.

### **Birthdays for May:**

Happy Birthday to:

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Quyless Force  | Terry Kahn    |
| Audrey Hayes   | Jerry O'Keefe |
| Robert Jacks   | Jillian Ragia |
| Mally Trzeciak |               |

### **Looking ahead:**

#### **May 10, 11, 2014**

Central Florida Bromeliad Society presents annual Mothers Day show and sale at the Fashion Square Mall, Orlando.

#### **May 12, 2014**

Halifax Council of Garden Clubs annual meeting and luncheon at Pelican Bay clubhouse in Daytona Beach. Meeting begins at 10am.

#### **July 12, 2014**

Quarterly meeting of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, hosted by FECBS

**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! Check the BSI website: go to [www.bsi.org](http://www.bsi.org) for the latest.

