

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, May 8th, 2016 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

May 2016

Happy Mothers Day!

President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850
Vice President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700
Secretary – Calandra Thurrott 386/761-4804
Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041

This month's meeting –“Growing Quality Cryptanthus”

Steven Hoppin was born in Worcester, Massachusetts and his family moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1962. For the past 50 years, Steve's passions have included showing horses, keeping marine tropical fish and raising, exhibiting and judging exotic birds. He has been involved with horticulture for over 35 years and in 2001 with the encouragement of Gene McKenzie and Larry Giroux of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society, he became seriously involved in the bromeliad hobby. Besides bromeliads, he continues his interests in orchids, aroids, ferns and other tropical plants of which he has amassed an impressive collection at his SE Florida home.

Stephen is a member of the Bromeliad Society International, the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society (where he has served as President, Vice President, Secretary, Board of Directors), and the Cryptanthus Society (four terms as President).

He is an avid grower, hybridizer and exhibitor of a variety of Bromeliad genera, but has a preference for Pitcairnia, mini-Neos, Dyckias and Cryptanthus. Amongst his best known registered hybrids are Cryptanthus



Cryptanthus 'Steven Hoppin'

“Thriller”, C. “Miami Heat” and C. “McDreamy”.

Steve is an active BSI Accredited Master Bromeliad Judge (*Steve and I went through Judge's school together – JT*). He has judged and exhibited at World Bromeliad Conferences, International Cryptanthus Shows and BSI Affiliates' Shows throughout the United States. Steve served as the Judges Chairman of the 2008 BSI World Bromeliad Conference held in Cairns Australia and Show Chairman of the 2007 & 2009 Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Shows held in Ft. Myers, Florida. Exhibition achievements include winning the Mulford B. Foster “Best of Show, Horticulture” twice, as well as the Morris Henry Hobbs “Best of Show, Artistic”.

Mr. Hoppin's program will be "Growing Quality Cryptanthus". In his PowerPoint program he will review the Genus, various species, cultivars and hybrids, as well as, share specific growing techniques. He will address any and all questions, time permitting. And lastly, he is pleased to be able to offer limited numbers of quality Cryptanthus for sale to the membership & guests.



Steven Hoppin photo taken while judging the 2015 BSSF Bromeliad Show at Fairchild Gardens.

Last Month's Meeting –

April's program was a real treat as we heard about the latest buzz on bee-keeping. Our own Jack Dunlop presented a fascinating look at the world of bees. Thank you Jack!



Jack Dunlop with a few of his tools of the trade that he uses. ...and don't forget Show and Tell. At every meeting we give our members an opportunity to show what they've been growing. At April's meeting we saw this outstanding Billbergia of Rick Ryals'.



Francisco with Billbergia stenopetala in full bloom.

President's message –

A couple years ago I walked through a Home Show at the Ocean Center. I ran across a booth that was selling a soil amendment called "Coco coir". Never heard of it before. Well, the product intrigued me so I bought 4 blocks. The product is similar to sphagnum peat moss, which I've used for years, but I've discovered that I enjoy using the coir more. So, when the

opportunity to obtain coco coir bricks for our club presented itself I bought 80 of them. I realize not everyone augments their potting soil with other items, but I do. Sphagnum peat moss and coco coir add a fibrous bulk which loosens the potting mix and aerates to allow proper, healthy root growth. I also accessorize my mix with perlite, Nutricote and maybe some pine bark. I believe these additions make the potting soil lighter, more organic, nutrient rich and better draining which in turn makes for "happier" plants.

Now, let me share with you information about peat moss and coir so you can make a decision whether or not you want to try coco coir.

Sphagnum peat moss: A harvested, living moss from Canada, grows on top of peat bogs. The moss is renewable (bogs are not) although it takes up to 25 years to regenerate. Peat moss is acidic with a pH of 3.6-4.5 (7.0 being neutral). Peat moss is readily available and fairly inexpensive. It is difficult to wet once it is dry. When wet, however, it can expand two times in volume. Peat moss decomposes fairly quickly and is pretty much void of nutrients.

Coco coir: Made from the ground up husks of coconuts. It is a waste product and is quickly renewable from the tropical palm rich regions of the world. Coir has a pH of 5.5 – 6.8 which is ideal for many plants. It is rich in potassium but also has micronutrients of iron, manganese, zinc and copper. Coir is somewhat new to the public so availability is not ideal as of yet. However the commercial growing industry has been using it for a decade. With this in mind, costs are a little higher. It is very easy to re-wet once it is dry. When wet it expands 5 to 7 times in volume so it is a good addition to clay pots and hanging baskets. Because coco coir contains lignin (an organic polymer which binds with cellulose to strengthen cell walls providing stability and structure) it decomposes very slowly. Coco coir resists disease and pests while encouraging beneficial bacteria.

In a nutshell, there you have it! Coco coir retains more moisture for a longer period of time than peat moss so you need less of it and you have to water less. Good news if you grow

plants other than bromeliads, but c'mon, what else would you want to grow?? You may ask "will I drown my bromeliads with coco coir?" This product is a definite plus when planting terrestrials such as Pitcairnia, Puyas, Cryptanthus and Ananas. I put one of my Neophytum "Galactic Warrior" in pure coco coir and it did just fine. No problems what so ever. So the answer is "no". If you want to use pure coco coir as the only growing medium in the pot, you can do that. You cannot, however, do that with peat moss.

I hope you decide to at least try coco coir as a soil amendment. The bricks cost \$5 each or 3 for \$10. Each brick will make 1/3 cubic foot of volume or 2 1/2 gallons. The brick is compressed so you stick it in a 5 gallon bucket and pour 1 1/2 gallons of water on it. You'll be amazed how that brick sucks all that moisture in to give you a soft, fluffy medium with which to work.

Bill

Birthdays for May:

Ruth Gessner	Robert Jacks
Vijaya Reddy	Mally Trzeciak
Audrey Hayes	Terry Kahn
Judy Simmons	

Happy Birthday Everyone!

Special Thanks –

We really have an extraordinary group of people in FECBS and I would like to take this opportunity to say a special thanks to a few of you who have contributed so much to our club. Thank you Bryan, Virginia and Bill for making our club's presence at the Water Wise festival in New Smyrna Beach such a success and thank you Harriet for supplying our members with those wonderful plastic trays that are so useful in growing and transporting our bromeliads. Thank you to the following for your help at the recent Master Gardener's event at the Volusia County Fairgrounds: Calandra Thurrott, Alan Bennett, Robert Jacks (great job as cashier!), Bill Hazard, Bryan Manion, Stan Marye,

Christoph Cardot, Virginia Dornbach, and Joan Campbell.

Out and about –

One of the premier bromeliad events each year is the Bromeliad Society of South Florida's judged show and plant sale at Fairchild Gardens in Coral Gables.



Vriesea 'Mint Julip' albomarginated displayed by Bullis Bromeliads

Last year 4 judges from our club were asked to participate and this year although we were invited once again, only 2 of us were able to attend. As expected, it was a beautiful show, the setting in the gardens was wonderful and it was great to renew acquaintances with the South Florida folks, even though it was a brief visit.



Alcantarea imperialis in several color forms at Fairchild Gardens.

Send in your photos and articles about bromeliad events, blooms in your garden, or newspaper and magazine articles that may be of interest to our members. Email to:

cajat@aol.com or mail to Jay Thurrott, 713 Breckenridge Dr., Port Orange Fl. 32127

Looking ahead:

May 8th, 2016 Volusia County Fairgrounds Mothers Day Show and Sale by the Volusia Orchid Society. Once again we have been invited to make a bromeliad display for this event. Can you spare a few of your showiest bromeliads to loan for the weekend? This is a great opportunity to show off our finest!



Last year's 2015 display

June 13-19, 2016

Bromeliad Society International World Conference. Hosted by the Houston Bromeliad Society in Houston, Texas
Don't miss it!

June 24, 25th, 2016

Tropiflora Summer Sale. You know them, you love their plants. Here's a chance to add to your collection!

