

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1:30pm.  
Colony in the Wood – club house  
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

June, 2013

## FECBS Invites You to a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party!

**President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700**  
**Vice President – Eretta Morris 386/677-9557**  
**Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500**  
**Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084**

### **Two decades ago...**

the Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society was formed and held its first meeting. That's right, FECBS is now 20 years old! It sounds trite to say, but it's true – time does fly when you're having fun...and 'fun' has been the key word for this group since its first meeting back in 1993. Since then, the meeting place has gone from an open gazebo at Sugar Mill Gardens in Port Orange to the Wm. A. Finney Memorial Garden Center (otherwise known as the 'Council of Garden Clubs building') in Daytona Beach and now, back to Port Orange at Colony in the Wood (thank you Jean!). The meeting place may have changed but the name remains the same: Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society. Still learning about bromeliads, still having fun!

### **If you are a 'Florida Gardening' reader...**

This month's issue has a photo of a live oak tree draped in Tillandsia usneoides and an article titled "Spanish Moss: Romantic and Useful" written by a recipient of the National Garden Bureau's Exemplary Journalism Award and the Florida Magazine Association's Silver Award of Writing Excellence. Maybe our native bromeliads are finally getting some respect?

### **Last Month's Meeting –**

We were privileged to be visited by Alan Herndon and Robert Meyer from the Bromeliad Society of South Florida. Robert is the editor of their newsletter, the BromeliAdvisory. Alan, a nursery owner and BSI director, presented a fascinating program on hybridizing bromeliads – a subject that many members have asked about in the past. Alan answered many "how to" questions and I can now expect to see many new hybrids being developed by our club members...oh, wait – we haven't discussed how to harvest, plant and grow those bromeliad seeds yet! Probably a topic for discussion at a future meeting...?

### **20th Anniversary Celebration/200 Plants in the Raffle - Rick Ryals, President**

Our very first club meeting was held at Sugar Mill Gardens in Port Orange, in the summer of 1993. For nearly twenty years we've been learning about bromeliads and having a great time doing it. While the club started small we have grown to over 70 members, from all areas and backgrounds. A truly diverse and blessed group. To celebrate this momentous anniversary we will have a celebration June 9th, at 1:30pm, our regular

meeting date. Please feel free to bring your spouse/significant other/bff (best friend forever) or potential new member. The club is having a complete barbeque meal catered in. We'll have a big cake and if your birthday month is June please continue to bring a dessert to share (as we do each month). Everyone is invited to attend and everyone is asked to bring two plants for our 200 Plant Raffle (250 plants for our 25th and 300 plants for our 30th – you get the picture). We'll have both our regular raffle (\$1.00 a ticket or \$5.00 for six tickets) and a silent auction of some spectacular plants given to us for this special event.

It's going to be a great time, see you June 9th!

### **Plant Profile – Hechtia texensis**

One bromeliad that I've grown for many years is *Hechtia texensis*.



*Hechtia texensis* – note the bloom spike protruding from the right side of the plant.

I really don't know why, because I'm not overly fond of the prickly ones and I've already learned first-hand that Hechtias, despite their fearsomely spiny appearances, are real sissies when it comes to cold weather.

Those same winter cold spells that we so frequently experience in east central Florida and that Dyckias shrug off with no ill effects can be lethal to their cousins, the Hechtias. Maybe when I originally picked up a small *H. texensis* at a plant sale I was intrigued by the fact that it's one of the few bromeliads found in the United States. Known as 'Texas false agave', (there's no accounting for colloquial

names!) *H. texensis* is found only in a very small range in west Texas and northwestern Mexico. This same plant was formerly known as *Hechtia scariosa* also and you may see it listed under that name in older publications. Actually, in all fairness, it was felt that *H. scariosa* and *H. texensis* were two different species for many years until someone thought to closely examine the flower petals and noticed that they were exactly the same. Why was the name 'scariosa' dropped and not 'texensis'? I suspect that lobbyists from the lonestar state may have had something to do with that.

Oh, and since you asked, the Genus *Hechtia* was named after a counselor to the King of Prussia (and how long has it been since you've heard of Prussia? That's a clue as to when this name was first given) by the unwieldy name of Julius Gottfried Conrad Hecht. Why he was given this honor or why these plants weren't called 'Julius' instead of 'Hechtia' is anyone's guess. Strictly a terrestrial, anyone attempting to mount one of these plants on driftwood will likely be doomed to failure.

I may have selected this plant because it's one of the few bromeliads that will grow well in our area in full sun. In fact, the more light that I've managed to provide to this plant, the more pronounced the bright red color that develops around the bases of the spines. Recently my *H. texensis* favored me with a bloom for the first time. The 3foot long bright red stalk has multiple short branches with clusters of tiny white flowers and bright yellow centers. Not bad for a prickly bromeliad that reaches out to snag you each time you pass by...I could almost get to like these plants.



Hechtia texensis bloom spike showing white flowers in clusters along the stalk

### Name that plant...

Last month's mystery plants were a little more difficult than usual to identify. These were not plants that often turn up on the raffle table, but each is outstanding in its own way.

Plant #1 was **Aechmea ampla**. You don't often see this plant, but when you do, there's no forgetting the beautiful red markings extending from the leaf tip well back toward the middle of the leaf.

Plant #2 is always a favorite at bromeliad shows. It's **Guzmania sanguinea** – one of the Guzmanias that has a low rosette of leaves rather than the taller types that we are used to seeing in hotel and airport lobbies. The leaves develop a remarkable red color when the plant is in bloom and bright yellow flowers emerge from the center.

Plant #3 is **Portea alatisepala** – one of the Porteas that not only produces a bright cluster of flowers when in bloom, but also has colorful leaves when grown in good light.

How did you do? You probably had to spend some time researching these. This month's plants should be a little easier to identify. Although the first one is not as commonly seen in collections as it once was, the second picture is of a plant everyone has seen on trees in our area and mystery plant #3 has turned up on our raffle table in months past. Good luck!

### This month's mystery plants:



### #1

This photo was taken at a greenhouse in Texas where John Anderson had quite a large number of these plants – named for a son of Mulford Foster, they're a variegated form of a plant that Mulford discovered.

### #2.



Where many of the Florida natives are found only in the southern half of the state, this one is only found in the northern half where it sends up its bright pink spike with a few tubular purple flowers at this time of year.

### #3.



Someone once said that most of the bi-generic hybrids were more things of curiosity than

beauty, but x-Neophytum 'Galactic Warrior' put that comment to rest. Here's another gorgeous bi-generic that often finds its way to the head table in bromeliad shows. It's difficult to grow without damaging the leaves, but well worth the effort!

**Looking ahead:**

**July 13<sup>th</sup>**

Quarterly meeting of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies – hosted by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay

**August 17-18**

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society sale at the Sanford Garden Club, located at 200 Fairmont – corner of Fairmont and 17-92 in Sanford

**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 21<sup>st</sup>, 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](mailto:glund@Tampabay.rr.com) If you can only attend one bromeliad-related event a year, this is the one to go to!!

