

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, July 14th, 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

July, 2013

Summer is Here – Make the Most of it!

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

Did you ever notice...

that bromeliad growers in Florida tend to have a 'love/hate' relationship regarding Summer in the Sunshine State? They love being able to grow almost any type of plant when the temperature is a balmy 80degrees F, the relative humidity is so high that there's really no reason to water those plants(they're practically immersed in water), and the frequent afternoon rains just seem to pump that humidity higher...and higher...and higher. But then after a week or so of this, we begin to long for those cool nights and dry air of the late Fall season. We all love the way our plants respond to even the slightest bit of nurturing during these near-perfect growing conditions, but hate the way that even the slightest bit of exertion outside causes some of us to perspire so heavily (the ladies don't perspire of course – they 'glisten') that we don't even notice when the afternoon rains begin. If this sounds like you, fear not – Fall is just around the corner and we'll have to start thinking about how to protect those same plants from the cold weather that's sure to plague us once Winter arrives.

Last month's meeting...

was the club's 20th birthday party – and what a party it was! President Rick Ryals, of course, did a super job with the preparations and festivities; and Hedy...those beach

themed place settings that you hand-crafted were just 'over the top'!



Thank you everyone for your help, both in setting up for the meeting and in clean-up after. Rick asked for a few volunteers and I think we ended up with half the club staying

after the meeting to help with the cleaning – that’s the hallmark of a great club: everyone pitches in to help!



Standing room only as everyone gets ready for barbecue and a fabulous cake for dessert.

...and did I mention the cake? How many bromeliad societies have a professional chef in their membership? Francisco outdid himself (he always outdoes himself!) with an enormous cake proclaiming the club’s 20th anniversary and decorated in actual *Cryptanthus* offsets!



Birthdays for July:

I forgot to include the June birthdays in last month’s newsletter. You know who you are – if you didn’t bring a desert last month, your contribution will be cheerfully consumed this month!

Barbara Kincade Nancy Rogers
Charlotte Mueller Betty Shearon
Kimberly Ridenour Jane Villa-Lobos
Happy Birthday all!

This month’s meeting –

We are most fortunate in having George and Irene Aldrich as members of our group and this month George will address the club. I’m sure this will be a great program and hope everyone will brave the heat and the afternoon thunderstorms to be with us this month to hear about “Collecting Bromeliads in Costa Rica”.

Plant Profile – Billbergia pyramidalis

This is a bromeliad commonly seen in the landscape in our area and frequently ignored or taken for granted. Some may know this plant as “Foolproof Plant” (an indication of the lack of care needed) and not even be aware that it is a bromeliad. Often called the “Summer Torch”, “Flaming Torch” “Torch Bromeliad”(where did the Orlando Sentinel get that name from?), and even “Red Torch”(Ebay) online, likely due to its typical Summer flowering period. This is one of those rare bromeliads with a common name. However the fact that there are so many names in circulation for the same plant demonstrates the need for the botanical name of *Billbergia pyramidalis* or, more accurately: *Billbergia pyramidalis* var. *concolor* as described by Lyman Smith. In fact, this plant has more names previously assigned to it than any other that I can think of! Consider the following (and I may have missed some)

- Bromelia pyramidalis* Sims (1815);
- Billbergia pyramidalis* var. *bicolor* Lindl. (1828);
- Bromelia nudicaulis* Rchb. (1829);
- Billbergia thyrsoidea* Mart. ex Schult. & Schult.f. (1830);
- Tillandsia farinosa* Schult. & Schult.f. (1830);
- Billbergia bicolor* Lodd. (1832);
- Billbergia atrosea* Drapiez (1834);
- Billbergia loddigesii* Steud. (1840);
- Pitcairnia fastuosa* C.Morren (1847);
- Billbergia splendida* Lem. (1852);
- Jonghea splendida* Lem. (1852);
- Billbergia croyana* De Jonghe ex Lem. (1854);

Billbergia miniatorosea Lem. (1855);
Billbergia thyrsoidea var. *zonata* de Vriese (1855);
Billbergia fastuosa (C.Morren) Beer (1856);
Billbergia longifolia K.Koch & C.D.Bouché (1856);
Billbergia paxtonii Beer (1856);
Billbergia punicea Beer (1856);
Billbergia pyramidalis var. *croyana* E.Morren (1873);
Billbergia pyramidalis var. *farinosa* E.Morren (1873);
Billbergia pyramidalis var. *zonata* (de Vriese) E.Morren (1873);
Billbergia thyrsoidea var. *fastuosa* E.Morren (1873);
Billbergia thyrsoidea var. *miniatorosea* (Lem.) E.Morren (1873);
Billbergia thyrsoidea var. *splendida* (Lem.) E.Morren (1873);
Billbergia lemoinei André (1885);
Billbergia andegavensis André (1886);
Billbergia schultesiana Baker (1889);
Billbergia setosa Baker (1889);
Billbergia pyramidalis var. *concolor* L.B.Sm. (1954);
Billbergia pyramidalis var. *vernica* E.Pereira (1979);
Billbergia pyramidalis var. *lutea* Leme & W.Weber (1984)-thanks to Mario Beltramini for this brief history)

Whatever you wish to call it, this plant has been grown in gardens in Florida for so long that it is often thought to be a 'native' plant which, of course it is not – there are no *Billbergias* that are native to North America. Still, for a plant so widely grown, it's surprising how little is generally known about it.



For example, the BSI Cultivar Registry (a terrific resource – if you haven't seen it, go to www.bsi.org and have a look) notes that the albomarginated form known as 'Kyoto' was brought into California from Japan in 1975, but it is not known if it originated in Japan or was imported into there from somewhere else. This plant, by the way, looks like and blooms like *B. pyramidalis* v. *concolor* except for its white edged leaves.



Photo courtesy of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

Another plant that is frequently seen around here and often mislabeled as *B. pyramidalis* v. *striata* is most definitely not the same plant. It looks nothing like *B. pyramidalis* v. *concolor*, its bloom looks nothing like *B. pyramidalis* and it even blooms at a different time of year! To make matters worse, this imposter's variegation is unstable resulting in non-variegated pups that look even less like the true *B. pyramidalis*. Fortunately, Derek Butcher a former Cultivar Registrar, has done his best to resolve this confusion by assigning the name of *B. 'Fosters Striate'* to the variegated form and *B. 'Gloria'* to the non-variegated form that

often has a pronounced yellow tint to its leaves. Unfortunately however, we are creatures of habit and like Newton's first law of motion (look it up!) once a plant is mislabeled it tends to stay mislabeled unless acted on by an outside force. Check your tags and don't let a mislabeled plant hit the sales table where it can perpetuate the misinformation!



Photo courtesy of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

Another curiosity relating to *B. pyramidalis* is that there have been references in the past (including Padilla's book 'Bromeliads' from 1973 – it's in our club's library) to a form that has totally red flowers rather than the typical violet or blue edged, red flowers that we are familiar with. Unfortunately, there have been no recent sightings of this plant and Butcher concluded, after an extensive literature search, that such existing references to a form with totally red flowers are the result of a mistake at some point in the past - such a plant likely never existed!

It may be a 'common' bromeliad, but it's still a welcome addition to the landscape. If you haven't already, give *Billbergia pyramidalis* a place in your collection.

Name that plant...

Last month's mystery plants were 1. *Aechmea orlandiana* 'Ensign'. 2. *Tillandsia bartramii*. 3. *xNeophytum* 'Burgundy Hill'

Looking ahead:

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 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 If you can only attend one bromeliad-related event a year, this is the one to go to!!

September 8–14, 2014

Bromeliads in Paradise – the 21st BSI World Bromeliad Conference hosted by the Hawaii Bromeliad Society. For more information go to www.bsi.org

