

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

This month's meeting would have been on Sunday, July 12th, 1:30p.m.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

July, 2020

Happy 4th of July Now put on your mask and wash your hands!

Co-Presidents – Jack Dunlop and Chuck Mamale
386/317-0054 386/402-4830

Vice President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850

Secretary – Ruth Gessner 386/767-3499

Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041

Editor – Jay Thurrott 386/761/4804

No July Meeting!!

Stay in touch though, we may be able to get together in August, so stay tuned and always, always read your newsletter for the latest update!

Well...I know that y'all have had a lot of time on your hands over the last few months. So, what have you been doing out in the garden during this time? What has been blooming? How has all of this rain been affecting your plants?

Lots of exciting things have been going on in our yard – lots of beautiful blooms and recovering plants that I had given up hope on now are looking pretty good. At the risk of repeating myself (I think I say the same thing each year), this is the time of year that I begin to get grandiose gardening thoughts: I can grow anything! Just look around at how nice everything is doing. And then, in November or December I start to see that “No, you idiot – what made you think you could grow things that need that warmer climate that only South Florida can provide?” I'm slowly learning. What that means is that the plants that don't do well in my yard – I

don't replace them after they shrivel back into nothingness. And those plants that thrive – I give them a little extra care and lo and behold...they get bigger than ever and their blooms are bigger and brighter each year!

Birthdays for July:

Happy Birthday to the following members:

Linda Collins	Charlotte Mueller
Nancy Rogers	Jane Villa-Lobos
Annette Wilson	Diane Zdunowski

Don't see your name here among the birthdays for July? That's because you haven't paid your dues yet and have been dropped from the current roster. See Eve for details and for renewing your membership.

Help Wanted:

We are looking for someone among our members who is at least slightly familiar with using “Zoom” to conduct meetings. Please contact one of our officers. Calandra and I

had the pleasure recently of being asked to join in a Zoom tour of a bromeliad garden in California and it was not only interesting and a lot of fun but it was also very, very easy to participate as an invitee to a Zoom event (and, it was free by the way!). Unfortunately, I wouldn't begin to know how to host a Zoom meeting (that would not be free!). Maybe you have some experience from your workplace with this electronic media platform...or maybe your son, daughter, or grandchild would be willing to help us out here? If the corona virus is stopping us from having a garden ramble, let's take a look at having the ramble in the safety of our own homes. Help us out here!

What's in a name?

You know how sometimes the local squirrels run off with your nametags and you can't quite remember the name of those plants? No worries - our president sent in the following regarding bromeliad names:

In my quest to learn the bromeliad hybrid names of my bromeliads, I got to thinking....always a rare and dangerous thing according to Kathy.

Some Special Bromeliad Names....or why spending too much time in the garden can be dangerous.

- BOB** A bromeliad in your swimming pool.
- FINN** A bromeliad in your koi pond.
- MAT** A bromeliad outside your front door.
- BILL** A bromeliad in your mailbox.
- ART** A bromeliad hanging on your wall.
- JACK** A bromeliad under your car.
- JOE** A bromeliad in your coffee cup.
- PHIL** A bromeliad in a hole in your back yard.
- JOHN** A bromeliad in your bathroom.
- SCOTT** A bromeliad from Scotland....very rare.
- ROBIN** A bromeliad in a tree.
- WYATT** A bromeliad from the Old West.

ROB A bromeliad that breaks into your house.

ADAM Your first bromeliad.

MAVERICK A bromeliad that grows its own way.

ROMAN A bromeliad from Italy....also very rare.

SAWYER A bromeliad with very sharp spines.

MAX A really BIG bromeliad.

Happy gardening!
—Jack

Jack also sends this terrific picture of a group of *Aechmea haltonii* plants in his yard – all in bloom!



Aechmea haltonii

These are big, heavily spined plants, but they certainly look nice in the landscape!

It's a Vriesea... no, it's a Tillandsia...no matter – it's a nice plant!

Sometimes I wish that taxonomists would just leave well enough alone and stop making me take out my eraser and change the names on my plant tags. Consider this interesting little plant that's blooming right now. It's called Vriesea 'Mira' and I obtained the original plant from Blossom World Bromeliads back in 2001. Since then, it's been trouble-free, a regular bloomer and always provides me with enough offsets to keep the generational lines on-going as well as some extras to share with other bromeliad growers.



Mira is the result of a cross that was registered with the BSI Cultivar Registry in 1976 of *Vriesea malzinei* with a variety of *Vriesea heliconioides*, but here's where it gets a bit confusing. According to a recently updated version (updated as of June of this year!) of the new Bromeliad Taxon List, both the parent plants of this hybrid have been reclassified from the Genus *Vriesea* to the Genus *Tillandsia*. According to the Bromeliad Cultivar Registry however, *Vriesea* 'Mira' is still listed as a *Vriesea*! I won't pretend to understand what goes on behind the scenes to cause a bromeliad to be moved from one Genus to another – sometimes I picture in my mind a scene of money changing hands in a smoke filled room in a bad part of town. I'm sure that taxonomists are fine people and always have the most noble intentions at heart when they issue their latest rounds of reclassifications, but I've also got to think that if their work was never published, my collection would still look the same, and in fact the plant tags wouldn't look so smudged where I've tried to erase previous names and replace them with their current accepted versions.

Regardless of which pigeon-hole the name is placed in, all three of the plants involved in this name- calling are beautiful plants although I might caution that one of Mira's parents; *Vriesea/Tillandsia heliconioides* var. *polysticha*, is a bit on the cold-sensitive side (translation: I just can't keep it alive!) but I find *Vriesea/Tillandsia* 'Mira' every bit as nice a plant as either of the parents and seemingly much better suited to our growing conditions in East Central Florida and *Vriesea/Tillandsia malzinei* – also not difficult to grow here.

Out and About:

Thank you everyone who has sent in photos of bromeliads in their collections.

These are great to see! If we can't have a club meeting with Show and Tell, we can at least show off some of our plants in photographs!

Sherrie Thompson has been making good use of her free time at home to make this terrific plant-stand for her group of *Cryptanthus bivittatus*.



Sherrie also sent this photo of a raffle plant that she brought home after one of our meetings. It's surrounded by a sea of albo-margined Neoregelias and now is sending up a tall bloom spike. Anyone know the name of this plant?



Rosie Byard sends us this picture of colorful Neoregelia:



This certainly looks like Neoregelia 'Raphael', a wonderful hybrid that does well in our area under all sorts of light conditions and still rewards us with this outstanding color when it blooms... and it is blooming as you can see by the cluster of flower buds in the center of the plant and there are two

flowers opening in this photo. Thank you Rosie!

All *Tillandsia fasciculatas* are not created equal. Maybe that's a good thing as it certainly creates a bit of variety when these plants bloom in the wild. This is one of those Florida native plants that aren't commonly found in Volusia County since it's a bit more cold sensitive than that other Florida Native, *Tillandsia utriculata*. If you can protect it from the occasional very cold snap that passes through our area, this can reward you with a very nice and long-lasting bloom.

I have several color varieties that range from peach to green to yellowish red (there's also an "alba" variety that is found in South Florida with a white or ivory inflorescence), but this photo sent in by Rick Ryals is a beautiful deep red color that we don't often see in Florida's native bromeliads.



Florida's native *Tillandsia fasciculata*

Thank you Rick for this photo and may the Mexican weevils never find their way to your plant!

Who says that Bromeliad flowers are small and uninteresting? Take a look at this photo of an Alcantarea flower taken by Terrie Kahn:



If that's not an eye-catcher, you may want to check your prescription with the nearest optometrist!

In 2015 I purchased a plant at a show from the Tropiflora sales table that had an interesting tag reading "Vriesea scalaris Hill's Best". Now I've grown Vriesea scalaris for many years and, in fact, I have two forms both dating back to 1995 when our club visited a nursery in Longwood called the Pineapple Place. Sadly, this nursery is long-gone, but the plants or rather, their offspring, still survive. Both of these forms are quite small Vrieseas with plant tags reading "Vriesea scalaris". One is plain green and the other is a reddish-brown plant that Carol Johnson (proprietor of Pineapple Place) had personally collected in Panama. Both grow quite easily with no help from me and both produce the familiar thin dangling inflorescence with yellow flowers arranged "ladder-like" on a regular basis. Vriesea scalaris Hill's Best is, first of all easily three or four times the size of my Pineapple Place plants – a giant among forms of V. scalaris. The second notable feature is that the leaves

are very dark and discolor. The inflorescence, as expected of a large plant is large also. It's a dangling ladder of flowers, but at last check this ladder was easily 30 inches long and it seems to be still growing! It's easy to see why this plant has earned the moniker "**Best**". Of course, one common feature of all Vrieseas that I like is that they are all spineless! No scratches or punctures involved when you handle plants in this Genus.



Vriesea scalaris 'Hill's Best'



The bigger the bromeliad, the harder it is to take a good picture that shows both the plant and its bloom, but Jack has done a great job on this one. This is *Aechmea bracteata*, a large bottle-shaped plant that produces this enormous inflorescence of green berries that will eventually turn black and still look good for a long time.



This is an easy plant to grow from seed and if you would like to give it a try, I'm sure that Jack would be willing to part with a berry or two. That's all you need. Don't try to harvest more than that or you will soon be up to your earlobes in seedling *Aechmea bracteata* plants!

...and, we have room for one more photo, so feast your eyes on this *Aechmea MEND* from our president's yard. Notice the color change in the berries from white to blue. That usually means that there are seeds in the berries that are ready to be harvested and planted, but in the case of *MEND* any seedlings will not run true to the parent plant and will not have that nice variegation that makes *Aechmea MEND* so attractive.



Aechmea MEND

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

Announcements:

Our friends at E.F.G. Orchids wanted everyone to know that "Yes, We Are Open For Business!". So think about a trip to Deland to feed your need for beautiful plants! They are still planning on their annual Orctoberfest; this year for October 16th, 17th, and 18th with sales in the greenhouse and food vendor outside. Look for more details in future newsletters as they become available.

Looking ahead:

August 15-16, 2020
Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society

Annual Fall Plant Sale

Sanford Garden Center
9-4 PM each day



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1993