

THE FLORIDA EAST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

July 2024 Newsletter

Meeting Date: July 14th at 1:30 p.m.

**Meeting Location: Colony in the Wood, 4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd.
Port Orange, FL 32129**

July 14th Meeting

This month's meeting will be held on July 14th at 1:30 pm at Colony in the Wood. The speaker will be Nakecha Thomas, Branch Manager of Regions Bank, Daytona who will enlighten us on fraud and identity theft and how to respond before or after it happens.

Don't forget this month is also the bromeliad centerpiece competition if you wish to participate. Use your imagination and create a design for a special prize. There are a few rules: bromeliads should be the focus and no spray-painted bromeliads or artificial plant material. Please no Christmas decorations. There will be prizes for the winners!

Everyone looks forward to the bromeliad raffle, delicious refreshments, door prizes, show and tell, so don't miss the meeting. --Jack



Jack in Cuba pictured with a 1950s Ford Edsel station wagon

President Jack Dunlop ventured to Cuba with Dennis Cathcart

Hola y'all. I visited Cuba for the second time this past May and traveled with 10 herpers (reptile nuts) and four Cuban guides to find and see Cuban reptiles (which are amazing) in their native habitat. As before, Dennis Cathcart (reptile and bromeliad hunter) went along, and he and I also looked for native Cuban bromeliads in the wild. We found a lot, but not a lot of different species.

This trip was 10 days in central Cuba, starting in Santa Clara. We went from the Atlantic to the Caribbean sides of the island exploring jungles, coastal keys, mountains, caves, snakes, lizards, toads, tarantulas, birds, butterflies, flowers, and day and night hunting.

The natural areas in Cuba are still pretty wild. Probably because the economy is poor, and there is no urban expansion. No new buildings, no traffic, few paved roads, and limited utilities, electricity, and fuel. The Cuban people were friendly though, but most speak only limited English which makes conversation hard.

You can bring coffee back to the US, but no rum, cigars, or plants. Surprisingly the most challenging part of the trip for me was driving in Miami and getting through Miami International Airport. Once in Cuba it was a great experience.

If you think this might be something you would like to do, see me for more details. --Jack



Dennis Cathcart



Guzmania monostachia
(Naturally variegated)



Wild Tillandsia



Cave



Grocery store



Tarantula

The History of *Alcantarea*

The genus *Alcantarea*, native to Brazil's Serra dos Órgãos mountain range, is found growing on rocky crevices in Rio de Janeiro. It was first described by Elie-Abel Carriere in 1888 as *Vriesea imperialis* and dedicated to the emperor of Brazil. In 1930 Hermann Harms assigned this plant to the genus *Alcantarea* named after Dom Pedro d'Alcântara, second emperor of Brazil.

These plants can live anywhere from 20-40 years tolerating dry conditions and full sun. They can grow in zones 3-7 and can tolerate light frost.

Over 16 years ago a neighbor gave me a potted *Alcantarea imperialis* 'Rubra'. Known as one of the giant bromeliads, its leathery green leaves with reddish purple below can grow 6" wide and 5' long. Each leaf has its own trichomes (scales or hairs) not visible to the naked eye that allow the plant to absorb water and nutrients especially necessary in nutrient poor environments.

It may take 10-20 years before the plant flowers, so I am happy to report mine started producing a flower stalk in mid-April and is now over 12 ft. tall. The branched inflorescence will flower over a six-month period and have at least 400-600 tiny white flowers which produce an abundance of nectar for insects and birds. The flowers also have a light fragrance.

Unfortunately, like other bromeliads, it is monocarpic and will eventually die. This process can take over a year to complete. It can produce hairlike pups around the trunk of the plant which mature at the end of the plant's life cycle.

As you know Christophe Cardot is a hybridizer and when he discovered my *A. imperialis* was blooming at the same time as one of his Alcantareas, he contacted me to see if he could cross pollinate it. He has come to perform this procedure three times and the seeds should be ready in 3 months. Keep your fingers crossed!!!! --Judith Davies and photos by Keith McCabe



April 19



April 19



April 29



Keith measuring May 15



May 28



May 29



Christophe pollinating June 5

We love to see pictures of bromeliads in our members' gardens



Nidularium (K. Bolanos)



Wilson's garden



Marie Fabozzi's garden



Neoregelia 'Enchantment'
(Judy Rafter)



Neoregelia
(Judy Rafter)



Neoregelia 'Cotton Candy'
(Jane Villa-Lobos)

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 Jane at saravillalobos387@gmail.com.



Birthdays for July

Greetings to: Mary DeLisle, Linda Sheets, Jane Villa-Lobos and Annette Wilson.

Future Events

August 17-18
Annual Fall Plant Sale
Seminole Bromeliad &
Tropical Plant Society
Garden Club of Sanford
200 Fairmont Dr.
Sanford, FL 32773
9-4

Co-Presidents - Jack Dunlop 386-317-0054
Chuck Mamele 386-402-4830
Vice President - Bill Hazard 386-882-3850
Secretary - Ruth Gessner 386-767-3499
Treasurer - Eve Krauth 386-871-1041

