

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1:30pm.  
Colony in the Wood – club house  
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

September, 2013

## Don't Miss the 2013 Extravaganza On September 21<sup>st</sup>!

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

### **The Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies' annual Extravaganza...**

is always a great event and this year should prove no exception. Hosted by the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society, this year's extravaganza will be held at the Holiday Inn Harborside in Indian Rocks Beach, Clearwater. If you haven't made plans to attend yet, I suggest that you do so – you won't want to miss this – if you do, it will be at least 12 months until your next opportunity to be part of an FCBS Extravaganza!

### **September in the garden -**

What should you be doing in the garden this month? That all depends... If we are threatened by a tropical storm or hurricane, you will need to be able to secure your plants so they don't blow away into your neighbors yards or, even worse, become flying projectiles in your own. This means taking down your hanging baskets and plants hanging from tree limbs first. Take all of your potted plants off the benches – they will surely blow off onto the ground otherwise. Then you should consider moving plants in pots to secure areas where they will be protected from falling branches and finally, you should gather up any potting materials, empty pots and anything light enough to

blow around and bring them indoors until the danger passes. Hope for the best and plan for the worst!

September is also the month when we are encouraged to finish our separating and potting up of Neoregelia offsets. Not to encourage those procrastinators among us (raise your hands!), but if you wait much longer for this chore, you may as well put it off until Spring when the plants once again begin their active growth spurt.

Finally, September is a good time to prepare for the upcoming cold weather – you know it's coming and you know that it will probably arrive when you least expect it, so it's best to have your cold weather protection plans in place before that day arrives. A good first step toward this should be to identify those bromeliads in your collection that are the most cold-sensitive. Don't know which ones these might be? Ask your fellow club members – that's one of the benefits of being a member! Once you've identified these plants, you can either group them together so you can quickly move them indoors when needed or you might add a colorful tag to each one so you won't overlook them in your haste to prepare for a freeze – of course overlooking them is one way to identify which plants are cold sensitive... although it will be 'after the fact' – they'll be the ones

that are pure white and falling out of their pots after the cold weather passes and the temperature returns to normal!

### **This month's meeting**

We are once again looking forward to a visit from our favorite marine biologist and bromeliad aficionado - Dr. Terrie Bert! This year Terrie will be educating and entertaining us with a program titled: The Outstanding and Picturesque O & P Bromeliad Genera. She will also be bringing plants with her for sale, so don't miss this month's meeting...or you will be hearing from the other members about how you *'shoulda been there'!*



**Charlie Birdsong – our speaker at last month's meeting.  
Photo by Rick Ryals**

### **FECBS thanks...**

Once again, thanks to Harriet Herrin for providing those very handy plastic trays for our members. These are great for transporting bromeliads for the raffle table at our meetings, moving plants from one corner of your yard to another, or even as a table to support potted plants while they are growing.

Thanks also are due to Amy Crane for donating those extra bromeliad pups from her yard to our meeting place – where they are made available at no charge to anyone wishing to take them home after the meetings.

And let's not forget those wonderful club members who stay after every meeting to clean up, help put away the tables and chairs and generally ensure that our meeting place looks the same after each meeting as it did before the meeting. You know who you are and your efforts are sincerely appreciated!



Rick sent in this terrific photo of the bigeneric xAndrolaechmea 'Dean' in bloom in his yard. What's in bloom in your yard? Send in a photo and we'll try to put it in the next newsletter.

### **October Raffle with a Special Purpose – Billy McBride**

Our club holds some very exciting (and profitable) raffles each month. While June was an exceptional raffle with the celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, each month adds to your bromeliad collections' and our club's small treasury.

From this, one of our most admired members, Ann Marie Alberti has suggested and so voted on by our membership at our last general meeting in August to hold a special raffle for our good friend and

member, Billy McBride. You might recall that Billy suffered a debilitating stroke several months ago and has been convalescing at Ridgecrest Nursing and Rehabilitation in Deland.

So we're going to organize a special raffle at our General Meeting, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm to benefit Billy. We're asking that you participate in several ways:

- #1 - Bring some clean and healthy plants (or other bromeliad related items) for the raffle.
- #2 - Bring some money to spend on raffle tickets, as always, they're \$1 a piece or 6 tickets for \$5.
- #3 - Arrive early to assist in setting up this raffle and checking out all the wonderful possibilities you can add to your personal collection.

Several folks have asked if we'll have the Silent Auction portion, like we did in June. And at this time (going to newsletter publishing) we're not yet certain.

The generosity of our club members over the last 20 years has been truly inspirational, please join us for this special raffle to benefit, Billy McBride.

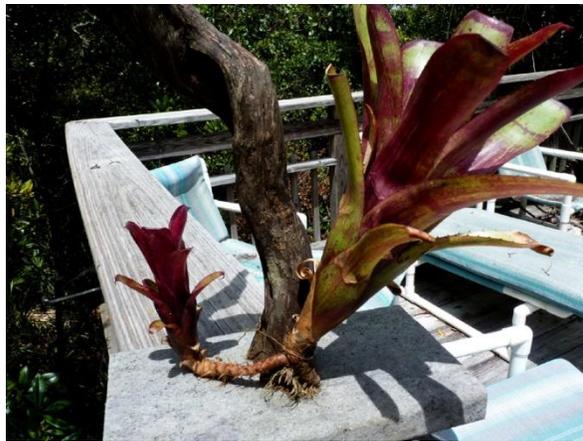
-Rick

### **Birthdays for September:**

George Aldrich	Mary McBride
Butch Force	Randee Laskewitz
Doreen Hodge	Lynne Menard
Rick Ryals	

Happy Birthday all!

### **Plant Profile – Aechmea nudicaulis**



*Aechmea nudicaulis* var. *rubra* – was originally obtained as a plain green plant, but soon developed a deep red color when grown in full sun.

Calandra and I were fortunate enough to be able to attend the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society's sale in Sanford recently (we saw quite a few of our club members there as well) and despite my intentions of not buying any more bromeliads, I found myself the proud owner of a plant marked as '*Aechmea nudicaulis*'. There seem to be quite a few types of *Aechmea nudicaulis*'s (is the plural form *nudicauli*?) and since this tag had no indication of which variety it might be, I was intrigued. Was this a recognized variety, a cultivar, a hybrid? This was a bit of a mystery.

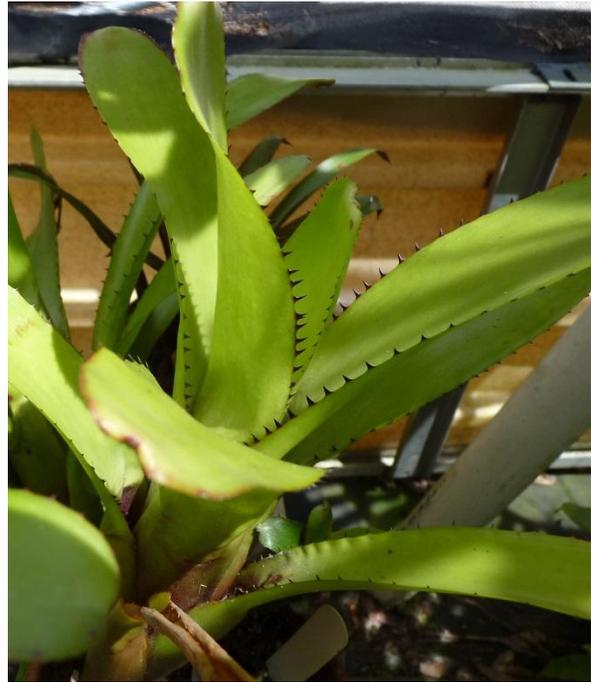
*Aechmea nudicaulis* is a plant that most of us have in some form or variety in our collections and in fact, the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies website shows photos of some 9 different varieties of the species as well as additional cultivars. A search of the web suggests that there are many more recognized forms of this plant in circulation, but there seems to be a difference between being in circulation and being formally described to be recognized as a true variety. A quick check of Tropiflora's website showed 27 different forms available for purchase and our speaker from last month told me that he has approximately 30 different types of *Aechmea nudicaulis* in his collection! So, how many varieties of Ae.

nudicaulis are out there on sales tables and in bromeliad growers' collections? How many licks does it take to get to the center of Tootsie Roll pop? The world may never know! This is likely due to the fact that nobody has had the time to thoroughly examine and formally describe each of what appear to be distinctive differences among this group of plants - all of which are called *Aechmea nudicaulis*.



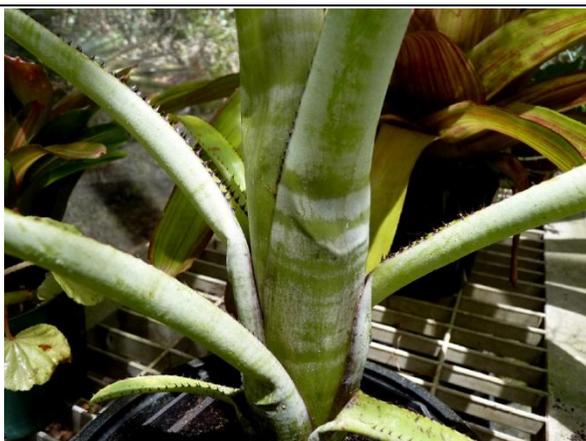
Albomarginated form of *Aechmea nudicaulis*.

You may recall our speaker last month referring to *Hylaeaicum* as a "Subgenus" of *Neoregelia*? Well, the Genus *Aechmea* has a number of Subgenera as well – including *Chevaliera* (plants in this group tend to have a cone-shaped inflorescence), *Lamprococcus* (surprisingly, these are generally spineless), *Macrochordian* (also cone-shaped, but generally with and unbranched inflorescence), *Ortgiesia* (inflorescence resembles a pinecone), *Platyaechmea* (flat, floral branches), *Podaechmea* (found in Central America), and finally *Pothuava* (a catch-all group, wide spread and common), a group that includes the many forms of *Aechmea nudicaulis*. Found over a fairly broad range in Central and South America and an equally broad range of altitudes, this group of plants was first described by Grisebach in 1864 and given a name meaning a naked caudex (nudi...caulis) or stem.



*Aechmea nudicaulis* mislabeled as "*Aechmea muricata*"-note the prominent black spines on the leaves.

Although varieties of plants within this species may differ in outward appearance depending somewhat on where they are found, they can be quite easy to identify if you know what to look for...at least with regard to the *species*. All members of this group of plants have stiff, tubular and upright rosettes composed of few heavily spined leaves (somewhat resembling *Billbergias* in this regard) and all can be recognized by a signature wrinkle or 'thumbprint' at the base of each leaf. Often, the spines along the leaf edges are dark and very noticeable. Indeed this is one of the few bromeliads that is so distinctive in appearance that it can be identified without waiting for the plant to mature and produce a bloom!



'Thumbprint' at base of leaf is good indication that this is a form of *Aechmea nudicaulis*.

The inflorescences or blooms of most varieties of *nudicaulis* are similar in that they usually have striking, bright red scape bracts (those are the ones on the stalk of the blooms spike, below the flowers) and bright yellow flowers arranged in a cylindrical form – although even that trait may be different in some varieties.



photo by Reginaldo Baiao

Photo courtesy of FCBS website

Another identifying characteristic of this group of plants is that the blooms are quite short lived (also reminiscent of the genus *Billbergia*?). If you have always wanted to try growing a bromeliad on weathered wood or driftwood piece, try using a young *Aechmea nudicaulis* since it quite rapidly

establishes a root system to anchor itself and will eventually develop into a very attractive multiple display. Since some varieties of *nudicaulis* are found quite close to the seashore in coastal Brazil, I would also expect these plants to be somewhat salt-tolerant...a feature many condominium dwellers look for in selecting plants to decorate their balconies or porches.

Finally, since we are approaching the end of our Summer growing season in east central Florida, I should mention that I have found most varieties of *Aechmea nudicaulis* to be reasonably cold hardy – meaning that I don't look to protect plants in my collection from the cold unless temperatures are predicted to dip below freezing. Anything colder than that and you are liable to either lose some plants or they will show signs of cold damage. If you haven't already done so, consider adding *Aechmea nudicaulis* to your collections, and, by the way, the *Aechmea nudicaulis* that I obtained from the Seminole society appears to be nearly identical to the photo of *Aechmea nudicaulis* "Good Bands" on the Florida Council website – mystery solved.



Unknown variety of *Aechmea nudicaulis*, tentatively identified as "Good Bands"

### Looking ahead:

**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!!

**September 21, 2013**

Central Florida Orchid Society's auction. 9am to 3pm at the Maitland Civic Center – 641 S. Maitland Blvd. [www.cflorchidsociety.org](http://www.cflorchidsociety.org)

**October 12, 2013**

Quarterly meeting of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies – hosted by the Bromeliad Society of Broward County

**October 13, 2013**

FECBS meeting –The plant raffle will be dedicated to club member Bill McBride to help out as he continues to recover from his medical problems.

**October 26, 27, 2013**

Brevard County Orchid Society's 53rd Annual Fall Orchid Fair. Saturday, and Sunday from 9:00am to 5:00pm. THE MELBOURNE AUDITORIUM 625 E. Hibiscus Blvd Melbourne, FL Admission \$4.00 (visit our website-[thebcos.org](http://thebcos.org) -for a \$1 coupon off the price of admission - print as many as you need) Free Parking

**December 6-8, 2013**

Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society show and sale at Terrie park in Fort Myers.

**March 28-30, 2014**

Everybody's Flower Show returns to the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach. Watch for more details in the future!

**September 8–14, 2014**

Bromeliads in Paradise – the 21<sup>st</sup> BSI World Bromeliad Conference hosted by the Hawaii Bromeliad Society. For more information go to [www.bsi.org](http://www.bsi.org)

We'll finish up this month's newsletter with another great photo from our president Rick Ryals. This time it's an Aechmea chantinii that is in bloom in his yard. Thanks Rick!

