

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014 1:30pm.

Colony in the Wood – club house

4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

September 2014

## Summer is Almost Over!

**President – Jay Thurrott 386/761-4804**

**Vice President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850**

**Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500**

**Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084**

You wouldn't know it by stepping outside on most days now (it's still hot!), but the season is about to change. Autumn officially begins on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month and we may begin noticing a little drop in our morning and evening temperatures as the days shorten and the land has less time to heat up under the blazing sun. More importantly to bromeliad growers in our part of the state, September usually marks the end of the best period to separate and pot up *Neoregelia* offsets. By the time October rolls around, if you haven't already separated those Neo. pups, you are hereby granted permission to procrastinate until the Spring. Also, if you haven't already, you should be reducing the amount of water that you apply to your bromeliads. They don't need as much now and their nutrient needs are also tailing off, so don't fertilize from October until Spring.

September is a good time to go through your collection to check on the overall health of your bromeliads. It's been a hot and humid summer, so look to see how the potting mix is holding up. No matter what mix you are using, it doesn't last forever. The organic materials can quickly degrade in our climate. Is the level of the mix still what you expect, or does it seem to have shrunk to well below the rim of the pot? Maybe our frequent rains have washed out the mix to where most of the plant's roots are exposed. Feel the mix with your finger – is it

firm or is it wet, spongy and a bit slimy? You might want to replace the mix if the "finger test" shows a problem. Remember, we want a potting mix that drains quickly for most bromeliads. If it retains too much moisture, rot organisms may develop in the mix and you may suddenly find your prized bromeliad on the ground, rotted off at the base. If this happens to you, before discarding the rootless plant, try stripping off the bottom leaves and putting that damaged plant in an empty pot, out of the way. In a few months you may find the plant has recovered and begun to develop new roots!

### **This month's meeting –**

This is one meeting you won't want to miss! Dennis Cathcart, owner of Tropiflora will be with us and will address the group with a very interesting trip to Brazil program.



He always brings an outstanding variety of plants from his nursery for sale, so you might want to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance your collection of bromeliads with Tropiflora beauties!

### Last month's meeting –

Dave Johnston of Pinellas Park and owner of the bromeliad nursery **Bromeliads Galore** was our speaker in August and he presented a very interesting program on the pattern-leaved Vrieseas.



Dave Johnston explaining the origins of some of today's Vriesea hybrids

### Plant Profile – *Aechmea fasciata*

What was the first bromeliad that you brought home? For many, it was one of the few bromeliads that has been available commercially for so many years that it has acquired a nickname...or actually several nicknames:



Typical *Aechmea fasciata* bloom.

*Silver vase plant, urn plant, silver urn plant,* and I'm sure there are others, but this just emphasizes the need to refer to the scientific names of bromeliads- in this cases to avoid confusion over whether the *silver vase plant* is the same thing as the *silver urn plant*? ...and what if it's green and not silver? What about the *living vase plant*? And are there other plants called *urn plants*? It's best to just drop all of these and call it what it is: *Aechmea fasciata*.



*Aechmea fasciata* with central leaf variegation. Photo courtesy of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Here is a plant that was first introduced to the public in 1826 and is still one of the most commercially popular of all the bromeliads...ok, there is the pineapple too, but we won't count that since it's usually more of a food thing than a potted plant thing. Anyway, *Aechmea fasciata* no doubt continues to fascinate (and no, that's not where the name came from!) because of its classic shape and incredibly dense concentration of trichomes covering the undersides of its upright, broad green leaves- giving it an overall frosted or banded appearance. Then, there is the outstanding and long-lasting pink inflorescence with

lavender flowers that really grabs people's attention wherever this plant is displayed. What's not to like about this plant? Don't like spines? There's a spineless variety just for you. Bored with the leaf color and pattern? There are variegated varieties available as well as varieties with other colors in their foliage.



*Aechmea fasciata* var. *pupurea* – with reddish purple leaves

Ok, there must be a downside to growing this plant – otherwise we would be seeing them in every home across the country. In the case of *Aechmea fasciata*, less than ideal growing conditions often produces a plant with longitudinal “wrinkles” in the leaves, misshapen leaves, and pale yellow areas that may also be the result of a viral or bacterial disease – something quite rare in other varieties of bromeliads.

Back to the name – ‘fasciata’ is a Latin word meaning ‘stripes’, a reference to the silvery banding on the undersides of the leaves of this bromeliads – although in some, the banding may be absent. So, whether your *Aechmea fasciata* is banded, striped or just plain frosted, this is a very decorative plant and a worthy addition to anyone's bromeliad collection!

### Volusia County 2014 Fall Home and Garden Show



This was a nice opportunity to acquaint some of the community with the wonderful world of bromeliads. We distributed quite a few of our postcards telling when and where our meetings are held and we talked with some really nice folks who were curious about what these plants are and how to grow them...and we also sold a few plants that members had brought for sale. All in all, a nice event – and the best part was that we had a free booth space!



Bryan Manion and Robert Jacks introducing a visitor to the world of bromeliads!

Thank you Alan Bennett, Jane Upham, Jane Villa-Lobos, and Jacquie Mamele (those were beautiful dish gardens by the way!) for providing the plants for sale and thank you Jane Villa-Lobos, Randeel Laskewitz, Calandra Thurrott, Bryan Manion, Robert Jacks, and Bill Hazard for

tending the booth through the three days of the show!

**Out and about...**

We saw quite a few FECBS members at the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant sale last month. This is always an enjoyable event and a chance to renew old acquaintances as well an opportunity to pick up some really nice bromeliads at bargain prices.



If you missed it, keep an eye out for the announcement of their next sale – it’s well worth attending!

**Birthdays for September:**

Happy Birthday this month to:

George Aldrich	Mary McBride
Rick Ryals	Doreen Hodge
Randee Laskewitz	Ronald Tucholski

**Looking ahead:**

**September 8-14, 2014** – BSI World Conference. Ala Moana Hotel. 410 Atkinson Drive. Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. Go to [www.bsi.org](http://www.bsi.org) for the latest information.

**September 11, 2014**

“Gala” at Florida Federation of Garden Clubs headquarters – 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**October 25,26, 2014**

36<sup>th</sup> Annual Southwest Bromeliad Guild show and sale in Houston TX. To be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton at the Houston

Intercontinental Airport,  
15747 JFK Blvd.. Houston, Texas 77032  
For more information, contact Gene Powers  
(713)-907-7049, [powersgw@aol.com](mailto:powersgw@aol.com), or  
Allyn Pearlman, (713)-858-3047,  
[deliboys@comcast.net](mailto:deliboys@comcast.net).

**March 27-29, 2015**

Everybody’s Flower Show at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach

**September 26, 2015**

Bromeliad Extravaganza hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida. “Bromeliads in the Magic City”. More details to follow as they become available, but mark that date on your calendar!

**October 21, 2014 – 7:00 PM**

Annual BSSF Auction  
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables (Miami). For more information go to: <http://www.bssf-miami.org/>

