

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa Newsletter



www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org

January 2024

Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society of Tampa Meeting: Monday, January 15, 2024 Speaker: Mike McMahon “Vrieseas: What’s to Be Afraid Of?”



Our speaker, Mike McMahon, first came across bromeliads in 1973 when he was in law school in Philadelphia. A biology professor at the University of Pennsylvania kept a personal collection of Billbergias in a corner of a small greenhouse hidden behind a classroom building. It was not open to the public, but that greenhouse was an escape from Philly’s cold, wet and gray winter days. He acquired his first one in 1975 when he moved to Tallahassee, and has been acquiring them ever since.

After moving to Orlando in 1977, Mike joined the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida and volunteered to write a monthly article on different bromeliads for the newsletter. He held various positions, including serving as president during the 1980 World Conference. He chaired the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies when it completed publication of its glossy, full-color Grande magazine. Subscribers had been promised four issues, but only two had been published and there was no money for refunds. Getting the third and fourth issues published was Mike’s proudest accomplishment with FCBS.

At one point in the 1990s, Mike’s collection numbered over a thousand species and hybrids in many genera, much grown outdoors among a wide variety of other plantings.



These days, his focus is on Vrieseas and Tillandsias. His 300 square foot shadehouse is devoted almost exclusively to Vrieseas, with the patterned foliage Vrieseas getting the prime space. But, green-leaved ones grown for their blooms are in shady spots dotted around the garden.

“Forty years ago everyone had Vrieseas in their collections. Today, not so much. I’d like to see that change. Everyone who has a spot too shady for Neos to be their best has just the place where a Vriesea can thrive. Besides, they do not scratch you up and can take cold weather better than most bromeliads.”



Presidents Column
Carol Wolfe

Happy New Year! 2024! This year is not so much about making resolutions, that we usually keep a few weeks or months, but it is about HOPE for a better year for our Nation...hope that power bills, gas prices, interest rates, food and other essentials will stop their price escalations for the American people. There were so many needs during the holidays in our area for feeding and clothing families but people in our communities were very generous with raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to meet these needs.

We had a delicious Christmas meal together. Thanks to everyone for bringing tasty covered dishes and to Rick and Marcia Hunter for taking care of purchasing the meat for the club and to Marilyn and Steve Byram for providing the coffee and drinks.

It was a great party for our 60th Anniversary and members Herb & June Hill and Mike & Linda O’Leary joined us for the evening making it a very special occasion. These couples have been such an integral part of our history; it was so wonderful to have them with us to celebrate our Anniversary.

Our annual Award of Excellence was awarded to John Miller, posthumorously, and Kay Miller. The Millers were members of our Club for many years and supported the Club's activities and auctions. They were always generous with annual donation of funds in support of our budget and donating and purchasing bromeliads at our auctions.

John was President and CEO and Kay was Comptroller of Pyramid Paper Company, a company that John's father began in Tampa, and then owned by John and Kay and their sons. The company became Pyramid School Supplies and is the second largest company in the nation for supplying schools. John and Kay worked full time until the last few years and worked part-time until just weeks before John's death. The company continues under the capable leadership of their sons and grandson.

John and Kay were an integral part of our annual shows. John would order bromeliad blooms and foliage from Hawaii and local vendors and share them with our members and the Tampa Federation of Garden Circles. They provided unusual vases from their collection for members to use. Kay was an accredited Master Flower Show Judge and was well-known for her awards for artistic arrangements. Kay loved using nature products and was often seen collecting pine cones and wild flowers to use. Prior to our shows, Kay held Artistic Arrangement classes for interested members and many of us made our first artistic arrangement after attending her classes! We all really enjoyed learning from Kay and we were so proud of our arrangements when we won blue ribbons! Because of Kay's influence and teaching, our club probably had the most artistic arrangements in annual bromeliad shows.

It was a real privilege to know John and Kay. They were wonderful hard working people, great members and wonderful friends. Many of our new members did not have the privilege of getting to know them as John quit driving at night so they were unable to attend the meetings. However, we were able to keep in touch with them and they were always interested in the welfare of the club and really enjoyed their bromeliads.

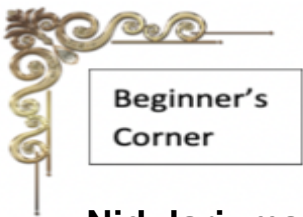
Our thanks for all of the great bromeliads you brought in for the auction! Speaking of generosity, a special thanks for Mike O'Leary and Herb Hill for their generosity of donating beautiful bromeliads for the auction. Thanks to Tom, Herb Hill and Ken Stokes for auctioning our bromeliads. We all went away with some very special bromeliads and the club received almost a \$1000 from the proceeds. Thank you for donating the bromeliads and for bidding and buying them.

We have an excellent speaker, Mike McMahon, for the January meeting. He will be giving the program, "Vrieseas: What's To Be Afraid Of? "

Mike will be bringing plants for sale, including his great Tillandsias. He gave us a program last year and many of you requested that he return. Please come out and support Mike. His program will be first on our agenda. He will set up at 6 p.m. and will be able to sell plants until 7 p.m., and again after his program during break time.

The vote for changing our meeting to Sunday afternoon was positive and counted by Steve Byram, secretary. However, we will continue on Monday nights at our present location until we can secure a meeting place that is more centrally located for our membership. Due to the holidays, we were not able to meet anyone about Sunday afternoon rentals; however, when we have something positive the Board will meet and we will report to the membership. If you have any suggestions for meeting rental places available on Sunday afternoons, please let me know.

Guests are always welcome at our meetings. Please invite someone to come to the meeting with you and we look forward to seeing you!



By Tom Wolfe

Nidulariums

Plants in this genus are often confused with those in the genus *Neoregelia*. The inflorescences of both genres have sunken or bird's nest type flower heads. However, *Nidularium* inflorescence shows the bracts distinctly while the inflorescence is buried in the leaf rosette of *Neoregelia*. Those medium-sized epiphytic plants have broad, flexible, lightly spined leaves that form an open rosette. The blooms last in good color for up to 90 days. They like shade or bright filtered light (1,500 foot candles or less) and are cold hardy in central Florida. They provide a great landscaping plant for shady gardens.



Nidularium innocentii



Neoregelia compacta



Catopsis

Catopsis is a rather obscure genus in cultivation especially since there are only three species of Catopsis native to Florida: *Catopsis berteroniana*, *Catopsis floribunda* and *Catopsis nutans*. I collected all three in the Big Cypress swamp in the late 60's and early 70's. None of them were in abundance but often a hard day's hike you might come across one or two of them usually high in the canopy except for nutans which was usually found in dense brush close to the swamp water.

It has been observed that *Catopsis berteroniana* is a carnivorous plant. Carnivorous means flesh-eating or in this case insect-eating. The inside surface of the leaves are covered with a waxy substance which provides a slippery slope for some insects. The insects are trapped in the cup and die creating an organic soup for the plant to feed on. The plant doesn't actually eat the insects; therefore, it's rather a stretch to call them carnivorous.

Catopsis berteroniana has a powdery scurfing on the outer side of the leaves which helps protect them from the sun. All the ones I observed in habitat have been growing high on the trunks of bald cypress. Since this tree is deciduous they receive full sun in the winter months.

Catopsis berteroniana is stingy about pupping, producing one or two pups after blooming. Growing from seed seems difficult in cultivation. It's hard to get them past the two to three inch size.

Because of over collecting of the plants during the last 30 years, all of the three Florida native *Catopsis* species have become rare.

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa

Minutes of Meeting November 20, 2023

The Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Inc., held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, November 20, 2023 at the Woodmont Clubhouse, 415 Woodmont Avenue, Temple Terrace, Florida 33617.

President Carol Wolfe called the meeting to order. Carol asked if there were any changes or corrections to the October minutes as they appeared in the newsletter. There were no changes. Tom Wolfe made the motion to accept the minutes as written and the motion was seconded by Ken Stokes. Motion carried.

The Treasurer, Rick Hunter, was called on for the Treasurer's Report. There were no questions on the report and a copy will be filed for future audit.

Carol welcomed our visitor, Tessie Kizzy, a contact from the USF sale. Carol thanked everyone who helped with the clean-up of the clubhouse last month. She announced that Cheryl Victor will head up the Florida State Fair Exhibit in February and will need your help and plants for the exhibit.

The birthday plant was won by Marcia Hunter. Happy birthday also to our newsletter editor, Marilyn Byram, and members Bill Carr, Clark Hull, and Anthony Pino.

On behalf of the nominating committee, Taira Hoopes presented the following slate of officers for the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay to serve for 2024: Tom Wolfe, Vice President; Steve Byram, Secretary; Shellie Sweet, Treasurer; Directors: Martha Kirby, Mike Foley, Mark Victor, and Taira Hoopes.

Rick Hunter made a motion to accept the slate of officers as presented by the nominating committee. The motion was seconded by Ken Stokes. Motion carried.

The nominating committee was unable to secure the position of President. The Board of Directors will consider approving qualified volunteers to serve less than a one-year term. Carol Wolfe will fill the role of interim President. If you are interested in serving in this position, please let Carol know and she will submit your name for board approval.

The Board of Directors recommended to the club a consideration to change the meeting date and time to Sunday afternoon. The board will also try to find a more central location for our meetings. We have a great meeting place at present but it is too far for some members. Several bromeliad clubs, Florida East Coast, Seminole, and Fort Myers hold their meeting on Sunday and are thriving with membership. With the majority of our members getting older and some not driving at night, it would be an advantage for them to meet during the day.

In addition to these considerations, income from the USF sale has been reduced since they increased their commission and expenses on the plants which greatly reduces the clubs and the vendors income. Our monthly fixed expenses are \$275 per month (our speakers \$150 per month and the rental of the building is \$125 per month). We need to build up our membership and to look for opportunities to increase our income for the future of the club. The Board will continue working and bringing you more information.

Next month we will celebrate the club's 60th Birthday and we will be honoring John and Kay Miller with the Special Service Award for their many years of dedication and annual financial support to the club. Please sign the food list to bring your favorite covered dish, salad, casserole, or dessert and the club will provide the meat and drinks.

A motion to close the meeting was made by Tom Wolfe and seconded by Rick Hunter. Meeting adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Wolfe (acting secretary)

2024 Florida State Fair Display February 8 to February 19, 2024

Set up of the bromeliad display will be Monday, February 5th at 6:00 PM

Please use the Orient Road Gate entrance to the Fairgrounds and go to the Family Life Center where our horticultural display will be set up.

Pick out three of your blooming or non-blooming bromeliads for the display.

Mark and Cheryl Victor are in charge of the display and have previously arranged the bromeliads into an award winning exhibit for us. If you cannot meet with them on February 5th, please bring your display plants to the January 15th meeting and they will take them to the Fair Display.

We will have a sign up sheet at the next meeting for members that would like to sit our exhibit and pass out information to the public. We will have two time slots: 10 AM to 1 PM or 1 PM to 4 PM. Each person signing up for one shift will receive a free ticket and you will be able to enjoy the other features of the fair, either before or after your shift.

This year a new feature of the Horticultural area will be (4) four (30) thirty minute workshops presented by our club. All clubs with exhibits will be required to do four workshops. We can do the same workshop four times, or do four different workshops. The schedule will be:

Saturday or Sunday, February 10 or 11, 2024

and

Saturday or Sunday, February 17 or 18, 2024

If you would like to volunteer to present a workshop, such as mounting, dividing plants and removing pups, potting soil, disease effects, identifying genus, or other interesting phase of bromeliads, please let us know at the January meeting. You will also receive a free entrance ticket.

As of now, the time has not been scheduled by the fair. They will be preparing a schedule to advertise the workshops to the public and will let us know; so if you volunteer, we will get you a time for your workshop soon.

Christmas Party & Auction - December 18, 2023



BROMELIAD & TROPICAL PLANT SOCIETY OF TAMPA

Membership Application/Renewal

Memberships: January 1 to December 31 each Year

Please Print

Name _____ Birth Month _____

Second Name _____ Birth Month _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Date of Application _____

Please check one:

_____ \$25.00 Single Membership

_____ \$30.00 Family Membership

Make checks payable to BTPST

Submit with application to:

Shellie Sweet

3015 Waylon Lane,

Valrico, FL 33596

FOR FIRST-TIME MEMBERS: How did you hear about BTPST?

___ Friend ___ Newspaper ___ Facebook ___ BTPST Website ___ Florida State Fair

___ Plant Festival or Show Other (Please specify) _____

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa

Established 1963 as Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay

Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of every month.

Plant sales at 6:30 p.m. Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Informative programs, Show & Tell, plant sales, door prizes, raffle & refreshments

BTPST is affiliated with Bromeliad Society International, The Cryptanthus Society, Inc., Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc., and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, FL.



Refreshments

Refreshments for the January meeting will be provided by Marilyn Byram, Carol Wolfe, and Marilyn Byram.



December and January Birthdays - Happy Birthday to: Loretta Hodgdon, Martha Kirby, Cheryl Victor, Frank Bursa, Julie Lessard, and Richard Poole



Sunshine Greetings

Please notify Verna Dickey of any illness, surgery, birth of a child, death in the family, or other concerns you or another member may have. Call 813-244-3637 or email vernadickey@aol.com

Officers for 2023

Interim President: Carol Wolfe 813-376-5251 bromstudio@hotmail.com

Vice President: Tom Wolfe 813-391-1542 bromscape@outlook.com

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Bromeliads Online

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/366210778024864>

Bromeliad Society International— www.bsi.org

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies— www.fcbs.org

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens— www.selby.org

Bromeliads Online - <http://www.bromeliads.co.nz/index.html>





The Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa was established in 1963 as the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay. In July, 2022, it expanded its focus to include other tropical plants. BTPST is affiliated with the following: Bromeliad Society International, The Cryptanthus Society, Inc., Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc., and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, FL.

When: Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of every month.

Where: Woodmont Clubhouse, 415 Woodmont Ave., Temple Terrace, FL 33617

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Informative programs, workshops, Show & Tell, plant sales, door prizes, raffle & refreshments
Visitors welcome!

**NEWSLETTER OF THE
BROMELIAD &
TROPICAL PLANT
SOCIETY OF TAMPA
21535 Northwood Dr.
Lutz, Florida 33549**