



# Orlandiana

Newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida

Volume No. 30      Issue No. 07      July 2004

**Next Meeting: Monday, July 26, 2004**

**Where: Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Ave. Orlando**

**6:30 pm Refreshments**

**6:30-6:55 Member Market**

**7:00 Meeting Starts**

This month's program is **Bromeliads and the Digital Camera**, presented by Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies' web master, **Michael Andreas**. Michael will offer an overview of digital cameras and how to use them to take bromeliad pictures, indoors and outdoors in the landscape, as well as how to get close-ups of flowers. Michael runs the Bromeliad Encyclopedia, the number one bromeliad website in the world, where, in addition to a wealth of information, more than 10,000 bromeliad pictures are posted. Michael is a member of the BSI board of directors; he is the official photographer for the upcoming World Bromeliad Conference in Chicago. Michael works at the Kennedy Space Center where he manages the computer networks at night.

**Raffle Plants:** All members

**Refreshments:** N – T

## President's Message

Summer is here with days alternating between hot and humid and torrential downpours. It sure is a challenge to keep up with our bromeliads these days. At last month's meeting, Dr. Barbra Larson gave us lots of information on pests and pest management. Look for an article in this month's newsletter with some information from her program.

This month's guest speaker is Michael Andreas who is the web master of the Bromeliad Encyclopedia, the web site of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. Inspired by that great bromeliad photographer and *Billbergia* hybridizer Don Beadle, Michael started taking bromeliad pictures using a digital camera about ten years ago. Many of his pictures are on the web site, including pictures from our own annual shows as well as from past World Bromeliad Conferences. Recently he has scanned more than 1800 slides from the collection of our late member, Carol Johnson. Look for the best of those to be posted on the Council site in the near future.

Speaking of conferences, the next World Bromeliad Conference will be held in Chicago next month and it's not too late to register. You can go either to the BSI's website at <http://bsi.org> to register or look for forms at our meeting.

See you Monday night!

Karen Andreas

The meeting was called to order by President Karen Andreas at 7:05 p.m.

Karen reminded members to sign in, pay dues and purchase raffle tickets at the back table. She pointed out the supply store, silent auction table, Members' Market and refreshment table for the benefit of new members. Everyone was invited to enjoy the birthday cake for John Boardman during the break.

New members Robin Norton of Winter Park, Marilyn Sandoz of Maitland and Bill Hall of Audubon Park were introduced and welcomed. There were no guests present at the meeting.

Bob Stevens and George Aldrich led members in presenting their Show and Tell items, including an *Orthophytum* cultivar by Eloise Beach.

Bob Stevens introduced Dr. Barbra Larson, of the Florida Integrated Pest Management Program. Dr. Larson presented a program on bromeliad pests and integrated pest management techniques, which included slides and handouts.

At 8:25, Karen Andreas announced a five-minute break.

Minutes – There being no discussion, the minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report – Betsy McCrory reported that in the month of May, BSCF received \$11,982.40 and disbursed \$10,142.09, for a remainder of \$2,149.52 in the checking account. The Wachovia Money Market Account received \$6.87 interest for a balance of \$12,840.86. Cash on Hand is \$35.00. The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented.

Mother's Day Sale – Betsy McCrory reported that the Mother's Day Sale at Florida Mall was a success with BSCF realizing a profit of \$738.12.

Bert Foster – At the last meeting, members approved a \$100 contribution to the BSI Color Separation Fund in memory of Bert Foster. The Foster family has since requested the contribution go to the Parkinson's Foundation. After discussion, Eloise Beach moved that the contribution be changed to: \$50 to the BSI Color Separation Fund and \$50 to the Parkinson's Foundation; Ed McNulty seconded the motion; and the motion was unanimously approved.

Bylaws – Betty Salvas reported that copies of the edited Bylaws will be distributed to all members in time to be discussed at the August meeting.

Pam Flesher displayed a copy of the book, "Bromeliads for the Contemporary Garden" and announced that Leu Gardens is offering a discount to BSCF members if we get enough orders. Interested members should contact Pam and she will let us know the resulting discount.

Karen Andreas reminded everyone who is going to the Conference in Chicago to make their reservation by July 19 in order to get the \$129 room rate.

Next Meeting – Bob Stevens announced that Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies Webmaster Michael Andreas will speak on plant photography at the July meeting. The Members' Market will be open again at the next meeting, so bring clean, labeled plants for sale as well as a plant for the raffle table.

The evening's silent auction results were announced, door prizes and raffle tickets were drawn and prizes distributed.

There being no further business to come before the membership, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Betty Salvas, Secretary

## Bromeliad Pests

by Karen Andreas

At our June meeting, Dr. Barbra Larson discussed insects found on bromeliads and integrated pest management strategies to handle infestations. Among the pests that may be found on bromeliads are aphids, leaf miners, thrips, grasshoppers, moths, mites, snails and slugs, and mosquitoes. Scales (which include mealy bugs) are the most common pests, however, and the one pest we all probably deal with most often. The key to managing infestations is to try to prevent them in the first place by good cultivation practices.

Give your bromeliads room and be sure not to crowd them against each other or other plants. Tightly crowded leaves create perfect breeding grounds for pests and allow scale to move around. Remove dead or declining leaves to eliminate another area where pests like to hide. Ample room between plants, good air circulation and conscientious grooming discourages insects and other pests from getting a foothold in your collection.

When you do find a problem, however, use chemicals only as a remedy of last resort. Chemicals may also kill beneficial insects that feed on pests such as ladybugs and parasitic wasps that prey on scale. In addition, chemical runoff can accumulate in the ground and be washed into surrounding bodies of water. Before you turn to chemicals, first assess how widespread the infestation is and then look for evidence of natural predators. It could be that there already is a natural management program active in your environment.

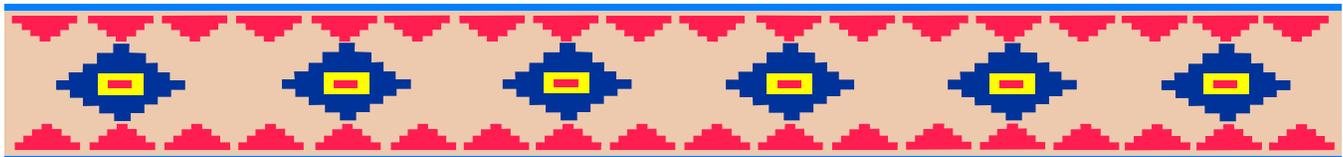
If you need to treat scale, use insecticidal soap or a mild liquid soap such as Ivory. You also can use swabs and alcohol to remove individual scale for a minor infestation although you may still need to flick the scale off with your fingernail to actually remove it. Afterwards, use a strong water spray to wash off the eggs. With chemicals and with benign treatments, you can only kill the adults. The eggs must be washed away or the plant will need to be re-treated.

There is a common misconception that bromeliads are breeding grounds for mosquitoes but that is less of a problem in central and south Florida than it is in northern Florida. In central and south Florida, a native mosquito displaces the West Nile-transmitting mosquitoes in tank bromeliads. However, good cultivation techniques are still in order. Do not allow organic material to accumulate in the bromeliad tanks. Flush out debris with fresh water from a garden hose at least once a week; this also will flush out mosquito eggs.

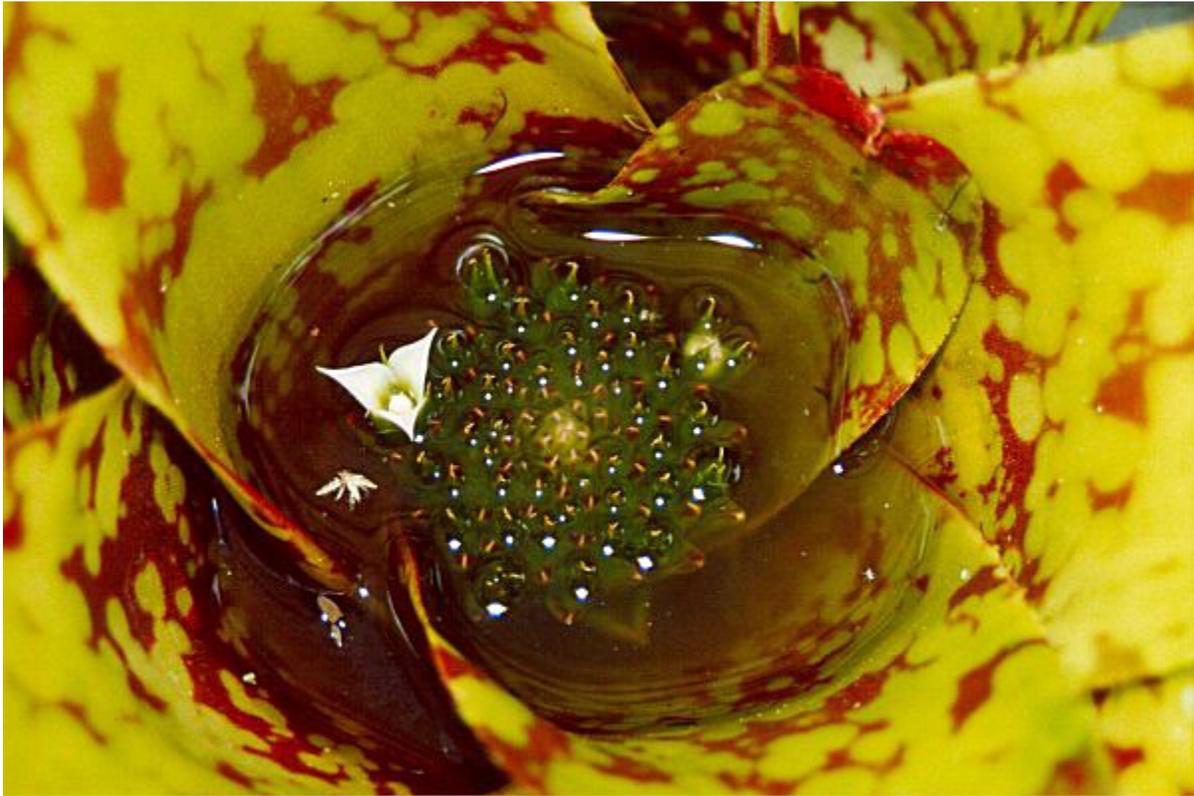
As for those large, colorful grasshoppers that some of you report are dining on your bromeliad leaves, the only control that exists for them is a mechanical one: the bottom of your shoe.

The Mexican bromeliad weevil also is a major – and the most dangerous – pest damaging bromeliads in our state today. That will be the subject of a future article for our newsletter.

Barbra provided a wealth of information. If you would like to see her slide show, you can go online at the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies website at <http://fcbs.org> > Bromeliad Information > Insect and Related Pests of Bromeliads.



*Neoregelia* is a popular bromeliad for the landscape, patio and house. While it does not have an inflorescence that rises above its central water cup as do other bromeliads, dramatic and colorful foliage are the hallmarks of many members of this genus.



***Neoregelia marmorata***

photo by  
Luiz Felipe Nevaes de Carvalho

The first *Neoregelia* was described in 1825, although it was incorrectly described as a *Tillandsia*. Plants of this genus were known by various names until Lyman Smith created the name *Neoregelia* in 1934, in honor of Eduard von Regel, botanist and the superintendent of the Botanic Gardens in St. Petersburg, Russia. There are 134 species identified mainly in southeastern Brazil, although some are found in the Amazon, in eastern Columbia and in Peru. Size in species varies from about one inch wide and five inches high (*Neo. lilliputiana*) to the large *Neo. carcharodon*, which can grow to four feet wide. In native habitat, they grow from sea level to 4,000 feet and in rain forest and also in coastal rocks and scrub near the ocean. Of all genera, *Neoregelia* is the most popular bromeliad for hybridizing; there currently are 3095 registered cultivars (and many more unregistered).

*Neoregelias* often flush intense colors in the centers before blooming. While the flowers open inside the center and last for a day, the blushing foliage will stay in color for months, often until the final decline of the mother plant. *Neoregelias* depend on good light to maintain foliage color. In general, tough, leathery leaf *Neoregelias* can be grown in higher light than softer leaf *Neoregelias*, which do best in dappled light and some shade. In Florida, morning exposure brings out the best foliage color while *Neoregelias* planted in southern or western exposure need some protection (such as a canopy provided by a bush or a tree) from the intense afternoon sun.

The most well known *Neoregelias* have a round, somewhat flat growth habit, as opposed to the upright, deep tank type bromeliads. They need room to achieve their full, symmetrical form. *Neoregelia* pups that grow close to the base of the mother plant need to be removed when half to two thirds the size of the

mother plant so the bromeliads won't be crowded and lose shape. Some *Neoregelias*, such as the popular *Neo. 'Fireball,' Neo. 'Rambling Rose,'* and *Neo. 'Martin,'* grow "stoloniferously." The stoloniferous pup grows out from the mother plant on a stem ("stolon"), which makes it easy to remove from the mother or allows the plant to grow in clumps, crawl up tree trunks or on mounted material, or in hanging baskets. Australian growers recommend growing miniature *Neoregelias* "hard," in bright light and shallow pots, to maintain their color and shape.

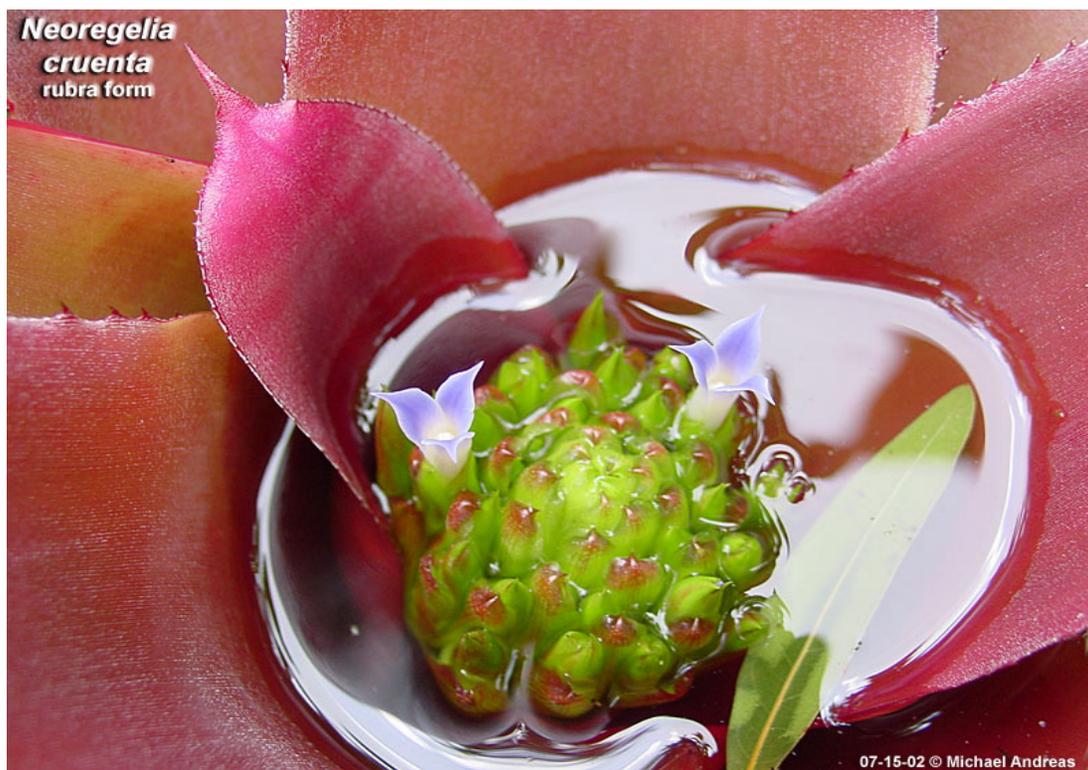
Growers are divided on fertilizing *Neoregelias*. While some suggest a fertilizer with low nitrogen content (such as 5-59-10), used weekly at a quarter of the recommended strength, others do not fertilize, believing that fertilizing results in the loss of color and form.

Although they are true epiphytes, *Neoregelias* adapt to pot and in-ground culture. If potted, make sure the potting mix drains well – *Neoregelias* do not like soggy conditions. If you find a potted *Neoregelia* that is over-wet, you can remove it from the pot and place it in an empty pot, giving the underneath part of the bromeliad a chance to dry out. They do very well when mounted on driftwood, cedar or cypress. Remember – no pressure treated wood! The key to successful mounting of any bromeliad is to closely affix the plant to the surface to encourage root growth.

Large *Neoregelias* for the landscape include *Neo. cruenta*, *Neo. carcharodon*, *Neo. Takemura* hybrids, *Neo. 'Yin'* and *Neo. 'Yang'*. There are many large hybrids available. Some *Neoregelias* are cold hardy or cold tolerant and can be found in the list on page six.

*Neoregelias* also do well indoors, inside pool enclosures and lanais. Be sure to keep them in bright light to maintain their color and in areas of good air circulation (but away from heating and air conditioning vents).

Pests and problems in *Neoregelias* are limited to scale, both white soft body scale and black flyspeck scale. Treat with Safer soap and make sure that the *Neoregelias* are given ample room to grow. Overlapping leaves and areas with poor air circulation create opportunity for scale.



*Neoregelia cruenta rubra form*

*Photo by Michael Andreas*

## Cold Hardy Neoregelias

Will tolerate temperatures into the upper teens for a short duration:

*Neo. cruenta*  
*Neo. 'Fosperior'*  
*Neo. 'Marcon'*  
*Neo. marmorata*  
*Neo. macwilliamsii*  
*Neo. spectabilis*

## Moderately Cold Hardy

Will tolerate temperatures into the upper 20s for a short duration

*Neo. carolinae* & cultivars  
*Neo. 'Burgundy'*  
*Neo. 'Bossa Nova'*  
*Neo. 'Yang'*  
*Neo. 'Yin'*

The Genus Neoregelia Sources:

Bromeliad Society International: <http://bsi.org>

Bromeliad Society of Australia, Inc., Barry E. Williams, editor. Growing Bromeliads.

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies: <http://fcbs.org>

Luther Harry. Journal of the Bromeliad Society. Vol. 47, July-Aug 1997.

Padilla, Victoria. Bromeliads Beautiful, Impressive, and Easy to Grow.

Padilla, Victoria. The Colorful Bromeliads: Their Infinite Variety.

Smith, Lyman B. The Bromeliad Society Bulletin. Vol. VIII, No 5, Sept-Oct 1958.

## Mark Your Calendar

**August 21 & 22** Seminole Bromeliad Society will have a Fall Plant Sale & Display, 9 am to 4 pm, at The Sanford Garden Club, 1 mile north of Flea World on HWY 17-92.

## Welcome New Members

John Loucks-Leesburg

Marilyn & Marinell Sandoz-Maitland

William Hall Sr-Orlando

## SOLVING THE FIREBALL MYSTERY

by Nat DeLeon

In 1959 I wrote to a Mr. Walter Doering of Sao Vicente Brazil, in the state of Sao Paulo. Mr. Doering was primarily an orchid collector who had earlier written an article on the bromeliads of his area for The Bromeliad Society Bulletin, the forerunner of the Journal of the Bromeliad Society.

During that time, I wrote to whoever I could in the hope of being able to purchase or trade for new bromeliads not already in cultivation. In this instance I was primarily interested in buying at least half-grown plants of *Vriesea gigantea* and *Vriesea hieroglyphica*. He had several other species I was interested in as well. Once Mr. Doering had confirmed that he would sell me the plants, I inquired about the possibility of buying other species as well, even if he had only a few plants of each. He replied that yes, he did have others but they were unidentified. I then suggested that all such un-identified plants be numbered so that we might have a common reference point to refer to on any specific plant in the future. I would grow the plants to flowering, have them identified and, should they prove ornamental enough, I would order additional plants by name and number. Mr. Doering was agreeable to this.

Correspondence was slow and Mr. Doering needed time to collect and prepare the plants for shipment. This was no small order. In March, 1960, almost a year after my initial inquiry, the plants arrived. There were more than 200 plants in the shipment. Losses were heavy, particularly of *Vr. hieroglyphica*. Only eight out of some fifty large plants survived. Losses of other species occurred also but were far less severe.

This shipment proved to be very important, for it represented the first bromeliad introduction into American horticulture of the following species: *Vr. bituminosa*, the large form of *Vr. incurvata* then *Vr. rostrum-aquilae*, *Vr. ensiformis*, *Vr. flammea* *Vr. erythrodactylon*, *Vr. phillipo-coburgii*, *Vr. scalaris*, *Vr. vagans*, *Nidularium rosulatum*, *Nid. rubens*, *Nid. rutilans*, *Neoregelia doeringiana*, a new species to be named *Neo. maculata* and our mystery plant, *Neo. 'Fireball'*.

Only one of the four plants, later to be called *Neo*. 'Fireball' survived. As I remember it, the smallish plant was almost all green, with a faint hint of red, when received. Mr. Doering remarked about the plant in the brief note he sent with the unidentified plants. "*Neoregelia* or *Aechmea*, small plant, all mahogany colored. Flowers not yet seen." After the plant started to grow, exposed to the great Florida light, the mahogany color continued to intensify. Before long it sent out its first offset, revealing its stoloniferous habit.

The late Ralph Davis and I were rather close bromeliad buddies. As long as either of us had more than one of any given plant, his plants were my plants and vice versa. We lent one another plants for hybridizing or selfing. We also collaborated on several importation ventures. Ralph visited me one day and almost swallowed his cigar butt when he first saw my mystery plant. Of course Ralph had to have one and since by that time the plant already had two offsets, the first vegetative propagation took place. Since I was concerned about confusion in plant names even in those days I made Ralph promise he would not part with any plants until it flowered and I could have it identified.

Several years passed and our stocks of the mystery plant were getting quite large but there was still no sign of flowering. In the meantime, many people were starting to pester Ralph for a plant, which made it great 'trade bait'. I didn't have that problem since at that time I grew most of my bromeliads at the Parrot Jungle, away from public view. Ralph wanted to start letting some plants go and I agreed, provided we gave the plant a temporary name. Ralph told me that every time he referred to the plant he called *Neo*. 'Fireball' and I told him "That's a great name, let's call it that." The rest is history.

During the latter part of 1966 I was getting ready to treat some *Neo. carolinae* plants with calcium carbide to induce flowering. Just for the hell of it, I decided to treat a single mature plant of 'Fireball' as well. In February of 1967, I saw my first 'Fireball' flower ever. I had waited eight years to see this. By contrast, I had flowered and had identified all of the other unidentified plants in the importation group.

During those eight years I wrote to Mr. Doering several times, hoping to be able to order more 'Fireballs' and other species as well. I had also hoped to obtain information for Dr. Lyman Smith on collection sites for the various species being identified, but I never heard from Mr. Doering again.

My records show that on February 28, 1967 I sent the first flowering 'Fireball' plant to Dr. Smith for identification. It bore my number P.130. I have a letter of confirmation of that specimen, saying it needed further study. Years later, I have yet to receive any word of its status. I was told by several people that the National Herbarium does not have a specimen of 'Fireball'. I can only assume it somehow got misplaced or perhaps included in the file of some other *neoregelia*.

During the last decade or so, *Neo*. 'Fireball' has been a point of much confusion. It has been assumed to be a hybrid. This is understandable as many people in horticulture assume a plant is a hybrid if it does not have a latinized name. Yet there is nothing wrong with giving an unidentified species a temporary cultivar name. I have sometimes used the name of the town or area a plant was collected from as a reference point. One of the plants from this collection I called *Nid. saopaulo*. It was later identified as *Nid. rutilans*. Yet I still see plants around labeled *Nid.* Sao Paulo and it is usually referred to as a hybrid, which it is not.

Bob Wilson also used this method of identification. Plants he sold as *Neo*. Tingua were later identified as *Neo. carolinae*. Plants he sold as *Aechmea* Tingua turned out to be *Ae. lingulata*. The name Tingua referred to the town in Brazil near which he collected the plants.

A few years ago, the name *Neo. schultzi* was being applied to 'Fireball'. How this started I don't know. The name is not listed in Dr. Smith's monograph.

While I am still hopeful that *Neo*. 'Fireball' will someday be properly named, I have not pursued the matter. After (all these) years, it would be difficult to refer to *Neo*. 'Fireball' by any other name.

1987 FCBS newsletter, reprinted in February 1998 newsletter.

The Bromeliad Society of Central Florida, Inc. was formed in 1972 to encourage the exchange of information concerning the culture, identification and hybridization of the plant family *Bromeliaceae*; to promote & maintain public interest in bromeliads and to assist in the preservation of all bromeliads for future generations.

Meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month from 7-9 pm at Harry P. Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Avenue in Orlando. For directions: 407.246.2620 or [www.leugardens.org](http://www.leugardens.org). You'll enjoy informative programs, Show & Tell, plant sales, refreshments & door prizes. Members also receive a monthly newsletter – all for only \$10 per member, plus \$2 additional family member (no charge for full time students). Visitors are always welcome.

**BSCF is a nonprofit Florida corporation recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organizations. Donations to this society are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.**

BSCF is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International, Inc. and a member of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc and the Cryptanthus Society.

- **President** Karen Andreas [karen@fcbs.org](mailto:karen@fcbs.org)
- **Vice President** Bob Stevens Use above address to contact officers.
- **Secretary** Betty Salvas
- **Treasurer** Betsy McCrory
- **Editor** Steven Wagner
- **Mailing** Betsy McCrory
- **FCBS Rep** Karen Andreas
- **Librarians** Phyllis Baumer
  - Sudi Hipsley

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**July 2004**

**Next Meeting: Monday, July 26**

**Time: 7:00**

**Speaker: Michael Andreas**

**Program: Bromeliads and the Digital Camera**

**Refreshments: N – T**

**Show & Tell: All members, Neoregelias & other Bromeliads**

**Raffle Plants: All Members**

