



THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY'S MERISTEM *Mar-Apr 2021*



Aechmea 'Tropic Torch' -*Aechmea beeriana* (formerly *Streptocalyx poeppigii*) x *Aechmea chantinii* (SEE NOTICE INSIDE)

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THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY

March Meeting at Edison

March 21st 2021

**The March Meeting will be held at the
Edison/ Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers
on March 21st 2021**

**Meeting will start at 2PM at the Banyan
Café.**

**Please read the contents of this issue
closely so we can have a fun and safe
gathering.**

**Please bring a chair, mask, wear warm clothes
Show and Tell Items.**

New member dues: \$20/25, single/dual.

**WE WILL HAVE A
MARCH MEETING AT the
EDISON/ FORD WINTER GARDENS
March 21st at 2PM**

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society is an active Affiliate of:



Cryptanthus Society



BSI



FCBS



FM/LC GC

March 21st 2021 Meeting

For logistical reasons we still should not hold our CBS meetings at the Garden Council Building on Virginia Avenue. The Edison/ Ford Winter Estates continues to offer a meeting location on the grounds at our normally scheduled meeting time in March. Through the efforts of Betty Ann Prevatt, Debbie Hughes, Carly Pfalz and Tom Cowell we have established a great working relationship with the Edison Gardens' Administration. There may still be many concerns, but CDC recommendations for a safe gathering will be adhered to. These will include the mandatory use of masks, social distancing of 6 feet between attendees and availability of sanitation materials. We are encouraged by the availability of Vaccines and the vaccinations of our members and hope restrictions are lifted; but more so, our members feel comfortable in returning to our previous location and format. Our two previous meetings at the Edison facilities have worked out well. We have been fortunate to have clear days and tolerable temperatures.

Place –Edison/ Ford Winter Estates at the seating areas of the Banyan Café, which is located near the garden center. Parking is recommended in the south lot off of the main entrance on McGregor Blvd and the parking lot just off of McGregor Blvd on Larchmont Avenue, the street just north of the Estates.

Time –Sunday, March 21, 2021 at 2:00 PM. Since we are limiting our normal activities, we anticipate the meeting will last about 1 ½ hours.
Activities –Show and Tell –we still want to have our Show and Tell, so bring one or two of your interesting bromeliads to brag about or to ask questions about. We ask that you keep them at your seats since we will not be setting up rows of tables. We also ask that you do not pass them around. You can talk about them or we can have someone else knowledgeable talk about them.

Speaker –Member Debbie Hughes, who is the Horticultural Director of the Edison/Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers, will be presenting a talk entitled “Companion Plants to Bromeliads”. Debbie has had many years experience caring for and introducing plants at Edison and is highly qualified to recommend the varieties you can enjoy along with your bromeliads in your lanai or garden.

We are very fortunate in that we can grow such a variety of plants in our semi-tropical environment here in Southwest Florida. Debbie will

discuss some of the other plants that tolerate similar growing conditions such as light intensity, rain fall levels, soil conditions, etc, as our epiphytic and terrestrial bromeliads. Thinking about adding non -bromeliads to your garden, bring your questions. A great website showing 150 pictures of plants suited to our area can be found at <https://www.pinterest.com/ShopFolioApp/zone-10a-plants-and-trees/> Review such sites before you come to the meeting and be more familiar with the choices available!

We encourage members to revisit or if this is your first meeting to explore the new bromeliad gardens being created by Tom Cowell and the Edison staff. New plants are being added since all the time and of course different varieties are blooming. Except for new members, dues for paid-up 2020 members have been discontinued for 2021. To sell at our 2021 Sale new members will still have to have been a member since June 2021.

Unfortunately, still at this meeting many of the usual activities we have at our meetings will be curtailed. These include NO WORKSHOP, NO FOOD (beverages will be available from the vending machines), NO RAFFLE and NO FORMAL BUSINESS MEETING as we usually have in January.

We hope that you can attend Sunday's meeting... Remember to bring a chair (maybe a cushion), a mask, wear the appropriate clothing, show and tell plants and small bills for the vending machines. Some will be sitting in the sun so consider a hat.

This Meeting Is Contingent on the weather!! If there is any greater chance of 30% rain between 2 and 4:00 PM there will be no meeting. If there is a forecast for temperatures below 65° by 2:00 PM there will be no meeting. I will send an e-mail early Sunday, March 21st; I am only sending out this message if we are canceling the meeting based on these criteria. If you have any friends who had planned on coming and I don't have their e-mail address, please let them know of the cancellation if it is sent out on Sunday morning.

Text or call or e-mail questions to:

Dr Larry Giroux 239-850-4048, drlarry@comcast.net or Betty Ann Prevatt 239-229-7781, bprevattpcc@aol.com

Please remain safe and healthy and get your vaccinations.
Dr Larry Giroux, CBS Editor



Front and Back Cover: Photo on front cover was taken and submitted by Lyle Bowen about 14 years ago. This weekend Lyle is having his annual Sale and Garden Tour. The picture to the left and on the back cover are current views of his park-like back yard. Don't forget your cameras. From Lyle:

Bromeliad Sale and Garden Tour
March 20th, Eagle Ridge Golf Community off Daniels Pkwy.
 signs will be posted 9-3. Over 200 hundred potted bromeliads, 5 dollars each; tray of 6 for 25.00. Lyles home is on Twin Eagles Ln.

Bromeliad Expose by Larry Giroux

Sam and Hattie Lou Smith had both been involved with the bromeliad hobby as organizational officers, growers, and hybridizers for decades. Pictured here is *Neo-*



Photo by Hattie Lou Smith



regelia 'Gene McKenzie', named to honor the founder of the CBS. It is one of the many miniature stoloniferous neoregelias produced by Sam Smith. Sam also created several *Pitcairnia* hybrids among others. *Pitcairnia* 'Hattie', named for his wife, is a cross of Pit. 'Beaujolais' and Pit. smithiorum, which happens to be a bromeliad which was named after Sam and Hattie Lou following their discovery of the plant in Peru.

Jim Irvin was one of the most versatile hybridizers I know. Starting in the late 1980's he has created numerous cultivars using many of the genera of bromeliads. Although probably most well known for his cryptanthus hybrids, he has numerous *Billbergia*, *Neoregelia*, *Tillandsia* and *Pitcairnia* crosses among others to his credit. Pictured here are *Neoregelia* 'Carol Johnson' and *Cryptanthus* 'Betty Ann Prevatt', two of Jim's creations named for people who have been important in this life.



Photo by Jim Irvin



Photo by Jim Irvin



Named for the Egyptian Sun God, *Cryptanthus* 'Aten' is one of the first registered hybrids by me since I started hybridizing about 30 years ago. Although new hybrids may take 3-8 years or longer to reach the stage where they will be stable enough to determine what they will look like; the feeling of accomplishment is well worth it.

A *Cryptanthus* cross of two flowers may give you only 12-15 seeds, sometimes less, while other genera may have hundreds of seeds that can be planted. The hybridizer is often faced with hundreds of seedling they must cull at different stages. Responsible hybridizers are selective about what they register and will not register several look-alikes, but rather only unique specimens. This can be very hard to do when you have spent so much time and energy to get to this point.

Although CBS member Dale Kammerlohr has registered numerous exceptional hybrids by anyone's standards, such as this *Neoregelia* 'Eleanor'; over the years in conversations and during presentations he has shown other crosses with formula names (the parentage), which he, as many hybridizers do, may keep to use in future hybridizing or for personal enjoyment. These he has not registered.





Photo by Michael Andreas

In the thirty years since Michael Kiehl produced this bigeneric hybrid *xNeophytum* 'Lisanne Kiehl' (now called *Sincoregelia*), named in memory of his youngest sister, he has experimented with dozens of *Bromeliad* Genera and has registered and introduced into cultivation innumerable beautiful new hybrids.

Don Beadle with his passing left us with a legacy of hundreds of registered crosses of *Billbergias*. This *Billbergia* 'Marie Bessellieu' was named in memory of Eleanor Kinzie's daughter, Betty Ann Prevatt's sister, and CBS member, Marie Bessellieu. This hybrid and hundreds more continue to be available from Michael's Bromeliads in Venice, Florida, which happens to be the former site of Don's nursery.



Nearly 35 years ago Grant Groves produced this F2 cross of *Neoregelia* 'Grace' and named it to honor Peggy Bailey. It is registered as *Neoregelia* 'Peggy's Peach'. Prior to his retirement and sale of his nursery, Grant blessed us by introducing

numerous colorful new outstanding and unique cultivars.

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society has had its fair share of hybridizers who have been or are currently members of our Society. Of course we are luckier than many other locations in that we have nearly ideal environmental conditions to permit growing bromeliads from seed to blooming. My photographic essay this month presented some of the hybrids of our members, past and present .

I really want to encourage our members to try their hand at this fun and albeit challenging way to add to your collection of plants.

Growing Bromeliads from Seed

By John Atlee

Growing Bromeliads from seed can be a rewarding experience. It is also a good way to acquire many plants that are the same. It is relative simple if the basic precautions are followed. Seeds are available from many sources, including the Bromeliad Society Seed Exchange, or other Bromeliad growers in your local area. It is generally accepted that the viability of Bromeliad seeds are limited. The seeds from the Family of *Tillandsioideae* probably has the shortest viability, about 4-6 weeks. The other two Families, *Bromelioideae*, and *Pitcairnioideae* will last much longer, 8 weeks to 3 months. The viability is obviously determined and lengthened with proper storage. They should be stored in clean containers or paper, stored at moderately low temperatures, and at low humidity.

I use a very simple technique to germinate my seeds. I use the bottom of a 2 liter soda bottle. I then cut off the tops of the bottles, saving the screw top, about 4-5 inches from the top, and these will be used to cover the seed in a mini-greenhouse type of environment. Other people use a simple clear or semi-opaque box, much like you would use to store food in the refrigerator. These have good tight fitting lids and will let the light pass through easily. Unfortunately, they do not have drain holes and are subject to over watering; you can add some drain holes with a hot nail or a drill. Either of these containers can be used with equal success.

Fill the containers, a little over half way full of a sterile, soilless potting mix. Dampen the mix until it is moist but not dripping. Sprinkle the seeds on the surface of the mix; they require light for germination. Then thoroughly water the seeds and the mix with water containing a fungicide. Please follow directions carefully on the fungicide container. The fungicide prevents “damping-off” which is a most common reason for failure. The technique of using finely ground sphagnum moss to prevent “damping-off” also works well. Sprinkle a layer over the potting mix, then add your seeds, and then water (without fungicide). This a chemical-free means to prevent disease.

After your seeds are watered into the surface of your potting mix, place the lid on the container and place it in very bright, but indirect light, where it will stay warm, about 70-80 degrees F. If you get too much direct sunlight you can cook your seedlings, but they do need very bright light. You should be able to see the young plantlets in about 10 days to two weeks. Do not be discouraged if it takes longer. I have waited up to 6 weeks, but that was very unusual.

Don't remove the lid until you see the seedlings emerge. Don't let the potting mix dry out. If you need to add water to the mix, place the whole container in a bowl of water so it will absorb what it needs and drain the excess.

Tillandsia seeds are a little different but still simple. The seeds of the plants that belong to the Family *Tillandsioideae* have tails and are generally airborne in na-

ture. They require air circulation along with the strong light, warmth, and water to sprout.

A nursery flat, or even a plastic berry basket can be lined with window screen wire. It must not be copper screening, this is poisonous, but it can be plastic screening. The plastic is very inexpensive and easily manipulated. The seeds are spread as thinly and evenly as possible across the screening. They will tend to stick together, tweezers or a stiff paint brush are helpful tools. The seeds can be moistened with a spray bottle or an automatic misting system. They must always be kept moist with good air circulation.

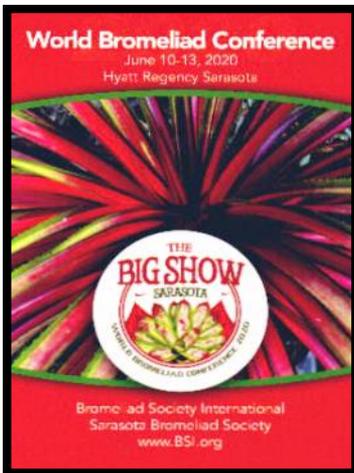
Another simple technique is to place a block of tree fern, or other absorbent material, in a shallow container. The seeds are then distributed on the upper surface and the container partially filled with water. The bottom of the tree fern should always be sitting in water. Refill the container as needed.

Either of these methods are successful. It is also a wise decision to treat the seed with a fungicide to prevent disease from attacking the young plantlets.

After your seedlings are growing strongly you can begin to harden them off, but do it slowly. Try not to stress them by withholding water, but expose them to more air circulation and temperature differences. If the plants you are growing require more light, or less, you can change their location to suit their cultural needs and comforts.

When they are fully adapted to their environment and are showing strong signs of normal healthy growth, you can separate them into their own individual containers, or pots. It will be at least 2-3 years before the plants are fully mature and ready to bloom. It will have been worth all of the attention and care you have given them to be able say, "I grew that plant from seed."

THE WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE DATES HAVE BEEN CHANGED AGAIN DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC!



WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE to be held in Sarasota, Florida. June 2022

**<https://www.bsi.org/new/conference-corner>
For more info and updates.**



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This is your March-April 2021 CBS Newsletter
We are going to meet again at Edison!