



April 2010

CALOOSA HATCHEE
BROMELIAD
SOCIETYs
CALOOSA HATCHEE
MERISTEM

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Billbergia 'Gene McKenzie' is just one of the bromeliads named to honor the founder of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society. It was made by Bob Stickney of Sarasota with *Billbergia* 'Pink Champagne' X 'Red Raven'. In strong light its spots are hardly noticeable. On the back cover is a *Neoregelia* 'Gene McKenzie' created by Dr. Sam Smith from *Neoregelia lilliputiana* and 'Break of Day'. At the 2000 BSI WBC, Hattie Lou Smith donated about 2 dozen of these plants as judges gifts. The plant can now be found in many collections today.



THE CALOOSA HATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY

MEETING TIME AND PLACE:

***April Meeting* Sunday April 18th, 2010**

will be at the Garden Council Building on Virginia Ave. in Fort Myers. Virginia Ave is just two blocks north of the Edison Home off of McGregor Blvd.

The Annual CBS Birthday Party

We are doing something different this year for our Birthday

Party. For many years Betsy and Bill Burdette has been graciously hosting our Birthday Celebrations, this year they get a reprieve. The party will be held at the newly renovated Garden Council Building at 2166 Virginia Avenue, Fort Myers.

This facility has several rooms with kitchens and restrooms.

There is a large outdoor pavilion and besides our large bromeliad garden, there are several other gardens to view. In addition to the scrumptious meal and the raffle, we are also encouraging members to bring plants to sell to our other members. This winter has been tough on our collections and this will give us all an opportunity to buy and sell plants.

Please see inside for a map and details.

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society is an active Affililate of:



FM-LCGC



**Cryptanthus
Society**



**Bromeliad Society
International**



FCBS

Society News

Our Annual March Auction

In spite of a lower attendance compared to last year and with only 50 or so auction items, we were able to raise nearly \$1200 to benefit the CBS and FCBS. Many thanks to those who brought items, those who placed the winning bids and all the volunteers who helped this year's Auction to go so smoothly.

CBS's BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION 30 Years and Still Going Strong

This year we are celebrating at the LCFM Garden Council Building at 2166 Virginia Ave. Ft. Myers. A map is provided in this issue for help locating this location. It is really easy to find. Virginia Ave is only 2 blocks north of the Edison Home on McGregor Blvd. (this is the street on which the Church we meet is located). If you are having difficulties finding the building call Betty Ann Prevatt on her cell phone at 239-229-7781 or Larry Giroux on his cell phone at 239-850-4048

Please plan on arriving about 12 noon; we'll eat about 1 PM. You might want to bring a folding table and chairs to be sure of sitting room, although there should be lots of chairs. Bring food to share - such things as salads, casseroles, finger sandwiches, relish trays, and although we will provide a birthday cake, your special deserts will not go uneaten.

Our Birthday and Holiday raffles are always an important part of our celebration so try to provide nice clean plants or bromeliad related items for our raffle. Items that other members would relish. Friendship Plants are those extra plants from your garden that might be of value to other members. These freebies are always appreciated.

For the first time we are encouraging members to bring plants to sell. Make some extra money off your extra plants or sell some to make more room for others you have your eye on. Many of us are in the market for some replacement plants after this winter.

Friends, neighbors and relatives are always welcome to our parties; so bring them along for a great time.

Bromeliad Expose By Larry Giroux

Anne Collings, a CBS member and the former official photographer of CBS events, is in the midst of packing up and moving out of state. While going through her thousands of photographs, which she has taken during the years, she found and sent me several pictures of me with members at CBS events held in the mid 1990's. This has made me nostalgic and I've decided to introduce or reintroduce to current CBS members some of these memorable people I've known since joining the CBS.



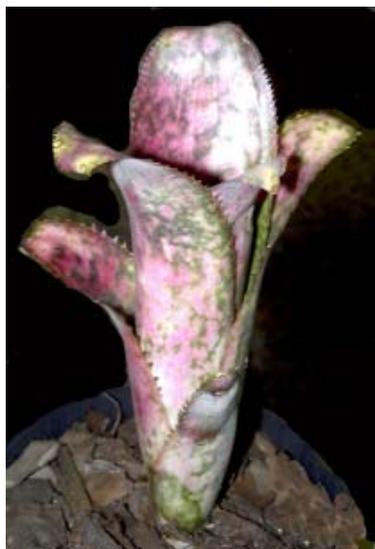
The first photo shows Gene McKenzie, myself and Joe Bailey. Joe Bailey and his wife, Peggy, were avid members who lived in Buckingham, Florida. Charter members of CBS since 6/

1980, both attended all CBS events, BSI WBC's and FCBS Extravaganzas whenever possible. Joe was considered the "surrogate boyfriend or husband" at these events since he watched over all the ladies who were traveling alone; Peggy never had a problem sharing him. Joe and Peggy due to failing health, moved back to Texas to be with family. Joe passed away several years ago, but Peggy keeps in touch and remains a member of the CBS.

Although they are known for their many contributions to the CBS and the bromeliad world, Joe's outstanding *Neophytum* 'Galactic Warrior's always caught the attention of the judges at our shows and sold quickly at our sales.

Some of you might have already heard the story about how one evening at their Buckingham home, Joe and Peggy, who had been raising some seedlings of the grex of *Neoregelia* 'Dexter's Pride' X 'Fantastic Gardens', acquired from Bullis Nursery, were sitting around the dinner table with friends Dean Fairchild, once part owner of Bullis Nursery and his partner Craig Allen. They were discussing these plants, which were now sending off numerous offsets. It was at this gathering that they decided on names for the different appearing cultivars. The names 'Isabel', 'Marsala', 'Bailey', 'Buckingham', 'Chardonnay', 'Las Vegas' and 'Tossed Salad' gives us a good idea where they were and what they were doing that night. These plants are now ubiquitous in their distribution around the world.

Plainly said, CBS owes Gene McKenzie for its existence. In 1980, Gene contacted several other bromeliad growers (remember bromeliads were not common



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Bromeliads for Modern Living





Opposite Page Left- Top to Bottom
Billbergia ‘Lou Wilson’ made by Don Beadle

Neoregelia ‘Lou Wilson’ made by R.L. Frasier.

Front cover of Dr. Lou Wilson’s book, first printed in 1977. There were very few commercial vriesea hybrids at that time so suspect that the cover photo is of *Vriesea pulmonata* seen elsewhere in the book.

Billbergia ‘Marie Bessellieu’ made by Don Beadle.

An example of *Neophytum* ‘Galactic Warrior’, for which Joe Bailey was considered one of the best growers of this bigeneric.

5 cultivars of the multitude of hybrids made by Jim Irvin--*Cryptanthus* ‘Vanity’, ‘Anne Collings’, ‘Sweet Tooth’, ‘Cosmic Storm’ and ‘Cutting Edge’.

Tillandsia albida from the collection of Gene McKenzie.

This page- Top to bottom.

The “Don Beadle Collection” at Michael’s Bromeliads in Venice, Florida.

5 of the Grex of *Neoregelia* ‘Dexter’s Pride’ X ‘Fantastic Gardens’--*Neoregelia* ‘Chardonney’, ‘Bailey’, ‘Las Vegas’, ‘Toss Salad’ and ‘Marsala’. The one not shown here is ‘Buckingham’.

Photos except the one of Jim’s cryptanthus, which was by Jim Irvin, were taken by Larry Giroux.



entities at that time) in the Fort Myers and North Fort Myers area and founded the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society. When I met Gene in 1992, she became my mentor concerning bromeliads and I became her computer Guru. Together we wrote and edited the CBS Meristem, which she also had started in 1980 with the help of Victor Yingt and a mimeograph machine at the Lee County Extension Office where Victor worked.

Although she was knowledgeable about bromeliads in general, her true expertise was concerning tillandsias. Other than her dachshund Dietrich, named after A. Dietrich, who according to Gene, apparently named the genus Tillandsia, her tillandsia collection was her pride and joy. She was generous to a fault with her plants and knowledge. After her passing, the money from the sale of her plants, which she donated to the CBS is still helping to fund conferences and other projects. At WBC's, Gene was responsible for having Newsletter Editors' meetings to better disseminate information about bromeliads to society members throughout the world. She was truly the gloating mother of the CBS.



The CBS is very proud to call Lou Wilson, pictured here to the left with Gene McKenzie and Jim Irvin, as one of its own after he moved with his wife, Diane, from his home state of Michigan. Their new home was the site of many CBS parties. After more than 30 years, copies of his book, "Bromeliads for Modern Living" are still popular and

available on the internet and I encourage collectors to search them out. It was one of the first affordable books for the hobbyist bromeliad grower. With this book he has probably encouraged more northern US growers to start up with bromeliads than any other writer on the subject. Lou's favorite bromeliads were the mini-neoregelias. To accommodate his large collection he constructed on his Punta Gorda property a massive, free standing, state of the art shadehouse that anyone would be envious of.

Besides having bromeliads in common, Lou and I were nearly obsessed with the ancient Egyptian mysticism. Diane, who is still an active member of our society, was kind enough to give me Lou's collection of books dealing with this topic when Lou passed away. I'm still touched by Lou's memory when I read one of his books.

Jim Irvin, known to the general public through his business, Irvin Pest Control, was known to us at the CBS as an exceptional hybridizer. His green thumbs were only part of his green hands. He was hardly older than a kid when he joined the CBS as a charter member in December 1980. I met Jim years later when he became my patient. Over the years I developed a deep interest in cryptanthus, in large part because of Jim and his fantastic cryptanthus hybrids. By sheer numbers

of registered plants, Jim and Carole Richtmyer are the two most prolific cryptanthus hybridizers in the US; they are only exceeded by Grace Goode of Australia for the title in the world. Jim's accomplishments don't stop there; he has a long list of other bromeliad cultivars including those of billbergias, neoregelias, orthophytums, tillandsias and pitcairnia, as well as several new orchid crosses, which he has created. Not surprisingly, as an entomologist, Jim has amassed an amazing collection of insects. Going from the organic to the inorganic, Jim has also been an amateur petrologist (rock collector) for much of his adult life.

Still surrounded by many of his favorite plants, cats and other collections, he and his wife, Ruth live in Cape Coral.

Add an extraordinary artistic talent to the generosity, commitment and service that her sister, Betty Ann Prevatt, our Treasurer and her mother, Eleanor Kinzie, our President, bring to the CBS and you have the Marie Bessellieu we all adored. Marie is seen to the left in the picture above as she is sworn in as CBS President.



She always gave her all, whether it was contributing her drawings for a yearbook or Show program, exhibiting or selling her beautifully grown plants or her participation in every aspect of her hobby; Marie was exceptional. For several years before her passing, Marie and I had the opportunity to judge bromeliad shows together. I was always alert to her comments and assessment about an exhibit, since she was the only one in our judging class to get a higher grade on the final exam than I.

I am very pleased to still have some of Marie's outstandingly grown bromeliads and artwork to remember her by.

Standing next to Marie, is the one and only "Mr. Billbergia", Don Beadle. The truth as far as I know, is that he has made more billbergia hybrids than anyone, period. Grower, judge, hybridizer, lecturer and the author of the 1998 comprehensive Bromeliad Cultivar Registry, Don has provided bromeliad enthusiasts with invaluable services, like very few have. Don's nursery, which he started in Venice, Florida, was purchased and updated to a full service facility by Michael Kiehl, when Don retired. Among Michael's Bromeliads numerous shadehouses is one devoted to the enormous number of Beadle's hybrids. Besides creating superbly beautiful plants, Don has immortalized many friends and bromeliad people by naming plants for them. *Billbergia* 'Marie Bessellieu' and 'Lou Wilson' are just two of the many he named in friends' honor. To this day as an indicator of Don's productivity, Michael Kiehl, the custodian of Don's collection, still hasn't registered all of the unnamed cultivars created years ago.

Don is currently enjoying life in Venice and occupying his time with tennis and boating. I wonder if he keeps any of his "friends" around him these days.

CLONE PRESERVATION PROGRAM MARCH 2010 UPDATE

By Alan Herndon

Greetings,

The second installment on the *Aechmea orlandiana* - *fosteriana* group is finally complete. Please note that this is officially an update for March 2010. There will be no update for Feb 2010 even though I was too lazy to change the file name. Sorry about the delay. Preparations for our upcoming annual show have been more challenging than usual this year.

Please let me know of any other bromeliad growers who might be interested in receiving this series.

Thanks

Alan Herndon

Clone Preservation Project Update - Mar 2010

When we get into the unvariegated clones of *Aechmea orlandiana*, we

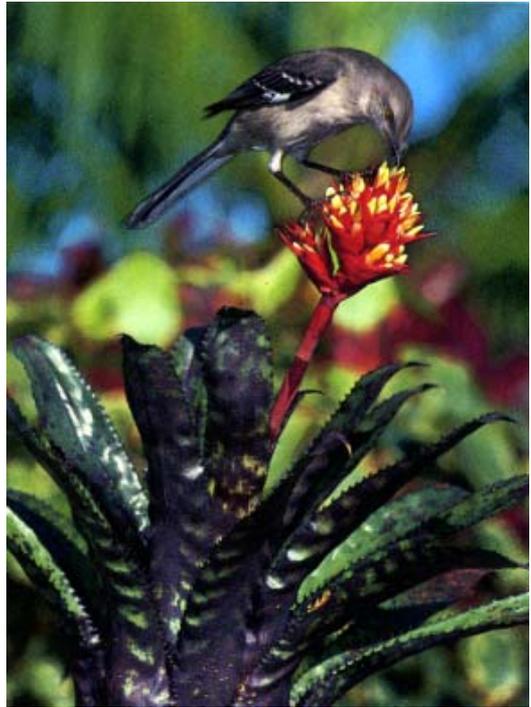
immediately run into a problem trying to sort out the hybrids created by William Frase. Frase (in the *Journal of the Bromeliad Society*, Volume 34, Number 4, Page 170, published in 1984) described his starting point as plants of *Aechmea orlandiana*, *Aechmea fosteriana* and *Aechmea* 'Bert' (the hybrid between *orlandiana* and *fosteriana*). Crosses were apparently made in all possible combinations between these plants. Three seedlings were



Aechmea 'Black Marble' Photo by Larry Giroux

***Aechmea* ‘Black Beauty’
Photo by Baensch, Blooming
Bromeliads. Courtesy of
fcbs.org**

selected from the results of the first crosses on the basis of especially dark color (presumably this means the cross bands were either darker than usual, or more closely packed, making the overall color of the leaf darker; the text is not clear on this point). These were grown to maturity and given the names *Aechmea* ‘Black Marble’, *Ae.* ‘Pickaninny’ and *Ae.* ‘Shadow’, but there was no indication of the exact cross responsible for each of these hybrids. When the names were entered into the Cultivar Registry, they were all listed under a putative hybrid formula: *orlandiana* x ‘Bert’ x *fosteriana*. Given that the initial pollinations were reportedly made in 1959 and the seedlings were separated out in 1960, this is misleading. Unless the reported dates are mistaken, each of the seedlings had to be the result of a single cross between a pair of the parental species/hybrid, or a cross between two distinct clones of *orlandiana* or a selfing of ‘Bert’ (the text suggests two clones of *orlandiana* were available). These three cultivars were apparently maintained as vegetative lines, but innumerable seedlings were produced by crosses between these cultivars and the original parents. None of these crosses were given a recorded cultivar name, but at least some were sold and entered our collections. They were assigned numbers (although, there is no indication whether the actual parents of each seed batch was ever recorded.)



In summary, every time you run across an unlabeled plant in this complex, you have to contend with the fact that there were an unknown number of hybrids, with no known indications of origin, that might resemble *Aechmea fosteriana*, *Aechmea orlandiana* or any possible intermediate between those two.

I have a plant labeled *Aechmea* ‘Pickaninny’ that matches the pictures on the FCBS website well enough. It has a typical *Aechmea orlandiana* bloom (very compact with no visible separation between the lower branches) and typical *Aechmea orlandiana* leaves. This could be found in a selfing of *Aechmea*



***Aechmea* ‘Pickaninny’
Photo by Larry Giroux**

‘Bert’ (as suggested by Nat DeLeon in 1979 [Grande Volume 1, Number 3, Page 10]), but is more likely to be found in a cross between *Aechmea* Bert and *Ae. orlandiana* (especially if the *orlandiana* is the seed parent) or a cross between two clones of *Ae. orlandiana*. There is also a photo of *Ae.* ‘Black Marble’ on the FCBS website, and a brief description provided by Frase is copied in the Cultivar Registry. I have not found any more information on *Ae.* ‘Shadow’ than the

description provided by Frase. I will note that Nat DeLeon (see reference above) considered all three names to apply to a single cultivar (that may or may not correspond to a clone), but have no interest in commenting further without more information.

Another cultivar characterized by overall darker appearance is *Aechmea orlandiana* ‘Black Beauty’. This cultivar is defined by the photo in Baensch (Blooming Bromeliads, Page 44, published in 1994). The separation of the lowest inflorescence branch suggests it may be a hybrid.

Frase also mentioned that he obtained a distinct cultivar of *Aechmea orlandiana* from Wyndam Hayward, a pioneer Florida bromeliad (and bulb) grower. The plant, briefly described as larger and more perfect than other clones, was given the cultivar name *Aechmea chantinii* ‘Hayward’ in the Cultivar Registry. This clone apparently came from the Florida Department of Plant Industry, so it should be possible to check the old DPI distribution lists for more information on the original source of the plant. There is a photo of a plant with this name on the FCBS website.

***Aechmea* ‘Jean Merkel’
& *Aechmea* ‘Medio Picta’
Photos by Larry Giroux**

Forms of *Aechmea orlandiana* with a brown band running down the center of the blade has been recorded at least three times: as cultivars ‘Jean Merkel’, ‘Medio Picta’ and ‘Mueller?’. I am only familiar with the cultivar ‘Jean Merkel’. The brown band is not evident under all conditions, but, when well developed, extends nearly the entire length of the leaf blade. Interestingly, all three of these cultivars were discovered in Florida. Given this, and the apparent similarity of the cultivars, it is possible that they all represent a single clone. FCBS has a photo of ‘Medio Picta’, but I have no information on ‘Mueller?’. It would be extremely useful to bring labeled plants of each cultivar together, so they could be compared directly.

Some cultivars with modified (mostly lightened) ground color on the leaf blade have been named. *Aechmea orlandiana* ‘Black Bands’ is defined by a photo from





A e c h m e a
‘Hayward’ Photo
by Larry Giroux

Bird Rock Tropicals. ‘Snowflakes’ reportedly arose in the Hawaiian garden of W. W. G. Moir. This cultivar has nearly white ground color between the dark cross-bands. ‘White Knight’ is attributed to Jim Irvin. Again, the leaf color between the cross-bands is nearly white. ‘Rainbow’ is one of many cultivars coming from the Kent establishment. It is characterized by an

array of colors in the sections of leaf between the dark bands. Photos of all these cultivars can be found on the FCBS website.

Finally, there are a some cultivar names without enough associated information to even assess whether they should be linked to *Aechmea orlandiana*. These are Ae. ‘Charlie’ (attributed with question marks to Tropiflora), Ae. ‘Ignotus’ (attributed to Ralph Davis) and Ae. ahinelandia’ (attributed to Thelma O’Reilly).

To judge from the photo in Baensch (Blooming Bromeliads), *Ae. Pernandae*’ is a hybrid. The inflorescence appears to have the same structure as *Aechmea orlandiana*, although the inflorescence branches are clearly much more robust than in the species. Acute leaf tips, leaf shape and lack of dark crossbands on the leaves demonstrate a significant distance between this hybrid and the species.

In my own collection, I have plants that match quite well with the photo of the species in the Fosters’ book ‘Brazil, Orchid of the Tropics’, where the initial discovery of the species is described. Unfortunately, I do not have any records

Aechmea ‘Snowflakes’ &
Aechmea ‘White Knight’
Photos by Larry Giroux

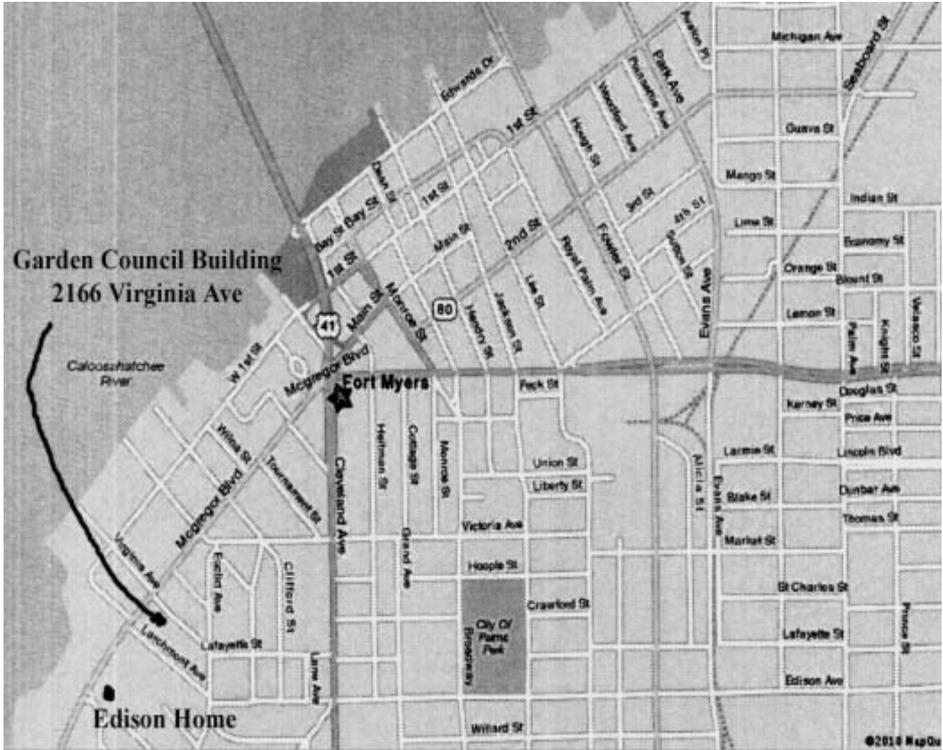
that link these plants directly to Foster. It would be very desirable to have plants that are vegetatively linked to the original plants Foster brought back from Brazil. I also have the three variegated cultivars mentioned in the Jan 2010 update (‘Ensign’, ‘Gold Tone’ and ‘Reverse Ensign’). Otherwise, I only have *Ae.* ‘Pickaninny’ and two unnamed plants of uncertain origin. One of these two appears to be intermediate between



Aechmea orlandiana and *Ae.* ‘Bert’ (perhaps one of the unnamed Frase hybrids.)

As usual, please look at your own collections. If you have plants of any cultivars mentioned above, particularly the cultivars lacking adequate data, please let me know. Pictures of blooming plants, notes on growth habits, any other information you might regard as useful to understanding this group of plants is also welcome.

The Garden Council Building is about 1 1/2 miles NORTH of our current meeting place at the Church on McGregor and Virginia Ave is 2 blocks NORTH of the Edison Home.



Time is growing short to make arrangements to attend the 19th WBC in the great, fun city of New Orleans. There are 5 full days of activities including tours, sales, a really big show, banquets, Auctions, raffles and seminars. This is not including the excitement of the city with Bourbon Street, the Casinos, the Garden District, the Riverside parks, antique shops...the list goes on and on.

Go on line to www.bsi.org and confirm your registration for the Conference; then make your room reservations at the beautiful downtown Astor Crowne Plaza Hotel and be in the middle of it all.

Read the Expanded Newsletter

I have been asking members who have e-mail, if they can start receiving the Meristem exclusively by e-mail and I have gotten a good response from the membership. I want to remind the members that even if they can not receive the e-mail version, because they have dial-up internet service, they can still go to www.fcbs.org and read the expanded Meristem directly online. The April issue continues the Preservation Program Updates from Alan Herndon. Go to www.fcbs.org to view this expanded electronic issue, if you are not already opting to receive it or let me know if you want me to send it to you. Editor

Calendar of Bromeliad Events

April 10-11 USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

April 16-18 Judged Bromeliad Show and Sale, Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Tampa Bay Garden Center, Tampa, FL

April 17-18 Sarasota Bromeliad Society Annual Show and Sale, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, FL

April 17-18 Bromeliad Society of South Florida Annual Bromeliad Show and Sale, Fairchild Botanical Gardens, Miami, FL.

May 8-9 Bromeliad Society of Central Florida's Annual Mother's Day Bromeliad Show. For further information contact Betsy McCrory at betsymccrory@aol.com

July 26-August 1, 2010

The BSI World Bromeliad Conference - Bromeliads in the Big Easy (Astor Crowne Plaza - New Orleans). "Catch the Fun".

To all of our our readers

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for less than \$0.80 per week

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See Betty Ann Prevatt for more information.



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**OUR ANNUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY IS THIS
MONTH AT THE VIRGINIA AVE,
GARDEN COUNCIL BUILDING**