



THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY'S

MERISTEM

Sept-Oct 2024



CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OFFICERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT— Julie Stein 919-522-1182 FLAGIRL56@aol.com

Past— PRESIDENT— Vicky Chirnside 941 928-3111 (dampearth@me.com)

**Vice-PRESIDENT— Dale Kammerlohr 863-558-0647
(dzdaze@embarqmail.com)**

SECRETARY— Alison Ackerman 239-851-3176 (Alison@spikowski.com)

TREASURER—Betty Ann Prevatt 239-229-7781 (bprevattpcc@aol.com)

STANDING COMMITTEES CHAIRPERSONS

NEWSLETTER EDITOR—Larry Giroux 239-850-4048 (DrLarry7@gmail.com)

FALL SALES CHAIR—Brian Weber 941-256-4405 (brianweber1b@hotmail.com)

PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON—Acting Chair: Julie Stein

WORKSHOP CHAIRPERSON—Acting Chair: Julie Stein

CBS FCBS Reps.—Vicky Chirnside 941-928-3111 (dampearth@me.com)

Julie Stein 919-522-1182 (flagirl56@aol.com)

MEMBERSHIP—Betty Ann Prevatt 239-229-7781 bprevattpcc@aol.com

Larry Giroux 239-850-4048 Drlarry7@gmail.com

OTHER COMMITTEES

DOOR PRIZE—Debbie McPhail 239-332-4607 or 239-910-3836 ;

email- deb.mcphail@yahoo.com

HOSPITALITY (Monthly Refreshments)—Diane Cornelison 239-233-7037

Party Chair—Vacant

RAFFLE TICKETS—Greeter/Membership table volunteers—Dolly Dalton, Luli Westra

RAFFLE COMMENTARY—Larry Giroux

GREETERS/ATTENDANCE—Betty Ann Prevatt; Dolly Dalton (dollyd@comcast.net), Luli Westra

SHOW & TELL—Dale Kammerlohr 863-558-0647

FM-LEE GARDEN COUNCIL—Alison Ackerman 239-851-3176 Alison@spikowski.com

LIBRARIAN—Vacant

MARCH AUCTION CHAIR—Larry Giroux 239-850-4048 DrLarry7@gmail.com

The opinions expressed in the Meristem are those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the official policy of CBS. Permission to reprint is granted with acknowledgement. Original art work remains the property of the artist and special permission may be needed for reproduction. Printed by Stinger Digital Print & Graphics, Cape Coral, FL.



THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY

**September Meeting: Sunday, Sept 15th 2024
October Meeting October 20th 2024**

**Our September and October Meetings will be at the
Ft. Myers– Lee County Garden Council Building
2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers.**

The facility is north of the Edison Gardens parking lot and about 1/2 miles north of our previous meeting location— Covenant Presbyterian Church. Virginia Ave is approximately 3 miles north of the intersection of Colonial Blvd. and McGregor Blvd. and is the 2nd Street north of the Edison Gardens

**Please bring food, Friendship, Raffle and Show and Tell Plants
There will be NO membership sales allowed at the September meeting.**

Please Note that the CBS Board has changed the SCHEDULE of our meetings to accommodate our out of town speakers.

12:30 – 1:15 Doors open, check-in, membership, door prize tickets, raffle ticket sales, members donate refreshments & raffle plants, Show & Tell area set-up, speaker or member plant sales

1:15 – 2:15 Call to order, announcements, and featured Program

2:15 – 2:45 Door Prize followed by Refreshments. Plant sales continue

2:45 – 3:15 Business meeting followed by Workshop

3:15 – 4:00 Show & Tell & Raffle drawing followed by Adjournment

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2024 ARE DUE Please contact Betty Ann and RENEW Membership renewal fees are \$15/20 single/dual; New member dues: \$20/25, single/dual payable by check or cash at the meeting or by mail to Betty Ann Prevatt, CBS Treasurer 2902 Second Ave. Fort Myers, FL 33916

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society is an active Affiliate of:



Cryptanthus Society



BSI



FCBS



FM/LC GC

September CBS Program
“Cuba”
By Dennis Cathcart

Dennis and Linda Cathcart, owners and operators of Tropiflora Nursery in Sarasota, are finally going to visit us again. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Dennis has been unable to give us a program recently. During the interim he has continued to explore as well as write about his early adventures in two books. Hopefully he will bring copies of these for sale.

Tropiflora was established in 1976 and since then Dennis and Linda have been providing bromeliads to other nurseries, gardens, conservatory, collectors and hobbyists around the world. In the pursuit of different kinds of plants and especially bromeliads, they have made more than 100 collecting trips to more than two dozen countries throughout the world. More recently he has been traveling to Cuba. On Sunday, he will entertain us with his account of these trips.

Dennis will be bringing plants for sale so there will be *no Membership Sales* allowed at this meeting.

September CBS Workshop
“Porteas”

Our Workshop presentations will continue in September with the Basics— The plants of the *Genus: Portea*. As with previous Genera reviews, we will have discussions and presentations by knowledgeable members, photos and live plants to discuss the variety of species and hybrids and how best to grow these in our climate. Since these plants tend to be large and usually yard plants, maybe if you are lucky enough to have some *Porteas* still in bloom in your yard, you could bring in an inflorescence and a cut leaf or two. Members are encouraged to talk about their plants and ask questions. Included in this newsletter is an article about this rather small Genus.

Portea

By Dr. Larry Girux Photography credit as noted.

Portea - (por'te-a)- named to honor Dr. Marius Porte of Paris, who collected this plant in 1885. Only 7 species and 2 botanical varieties, are found along the coastal regions of Brazil from Rio de Janeiro to Bahia or maybe 6 or maybe 8 species and a couple of varieties depending on the day or the Taxonomist. The history of this genus includes the back and forth classification of many of the species of *Portea* from genus to genus. I'll go into detail later about this indecisiveness in this article.

These hardy terrestrials, which tolerate temperate climates, are found in their natural habitat growing in full sun in sand and on rocks; rarely one of the species has been found growing epiphytically. They are mostly tall, robust plants with prominently spined, green to yellow-green leaves, 2-3 ft. long. Their upright inflorescences that can reach 4 feet high, are among the most decorative in the bromeliad family with the combined lavenders, reds, oranges, yellows and pinks with bold purples of the bracts and flowers making a colorful show. The inflorescences are characteristically loosely branched or forming a dense head, as is specific to certain of the species in the genus. In my opinion the majority are too large to grow as potted plants, although many growers claim they can make very attractive house plants, just be cautious of the prominent spines; nevertheless, because of their clumping nature and simultaneous, long duration blooming period, usually starting in the Spring, they definitely make impressive, eye-catching features in your perennial garden. The more common species are *P. petropolitana* var. *petropolitana*, (named for the town of Petropolis in Brazil), *P. petropolitana* var. *extensa*, *P. alatisepala*, and *P. kermesiana* (named for the crimson colored dye: kermes, referring to the color of the bracts).

Since 1856, when the first plant of *Portea legrellei* (then called *Macrochordium recurvata* now called *Aechmea recurvata* var. *recurvata*) until the most recent reclassification in 2006 of plants in the genus *Portea*, it has been a real trial for a *Portea* to keep its name. From my estimations, a least half of the plants

classified into this Genus in the last 150 or so years have been renamed and moved to another Genus. As with some of the plants, i.e. *Portea legrellei*, they were moved up to 14 times to various *Genera*. Although the names have been somewhat stable, at least with *Porteas*, since 2006, search of the internet will still disclose the sale of “the rare bromeliad”, *Aechmea leptanthus* (its new name since 2006), as *Portea leptanthus*.

The rest of this article is a pictorial essay of the “ins and outs” of the *Genus: Portea*.



To the left is a photo from The Encyclopaedia of Bromeliads, courtesy of Eric Gouda. The true characteristics of *Portea var. petropolitana* can be well seen in this picture. The inflorescence is somewhat compact, multibranched, reaching not much more than 12-18 inches above the rosette. The leaves are a medium green; the flower petals are white and lavender; sepals are shades of pink– orange, which fade and eventually fall off when the show of colorful berries develop.

The most commonly encountered, at least in Southern Florida, variety of *petropolitana* is *var. extensa*. (picture to the right) In nature, its common habitats are swamps among the mangroves, which might explain why they do so well here. Their not so stiff, up to 36 inches long leaves, are yellow-green and the dark spines are relatively large. This clumping bromeliad has a inflorescence with a coral-red upright stalk and stems with numerous relatively long, loose branches. The flower petals



Photo by Dorothy Berg

are a lavender–pink with apple green ovaries.

A third variety of *P. petropolitana*, although less common in cultivation, is the *var. noettigii*. During the late 1800's, many plants were changing classification between *Aechmea*, *Streptocalyx* and *Portea*. If you look at plants of these Genera you can see the similarities of many of them. It wasn't until 1943, after its recollection, that this plant lost its own species status and became a variety of *P. petropolitana*. This illustration of *Aechmea noettigii* shows some of its characteristics. They are available from vendors.



The plant to the left is NOT a *Portea*...well it use to be a *Portea* until 2002 when Elton Leme became interested in certain plants of Brazil's Atlantic Forest. This now is *Canistrum pickelii* after his reclassification. To be honest, it really doesn't look like the *Porteas* that I've shown you so far, but hold on, some *Porteas* do have denser heads; and have remained in the genus.

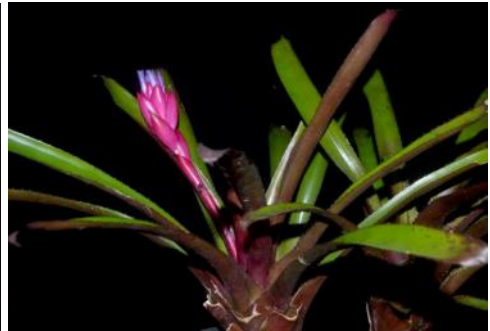
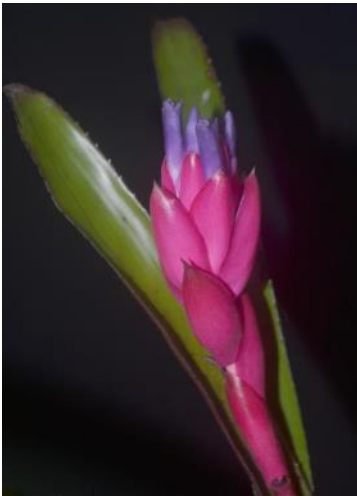
Although considered a *Billbergia* until the late 1800's, the relatively small *Portea kermesina*, discovered in 1856 has retained its name. Probably because of its smaller size compared to the other *Porteas*, the



Photo by Dorothy Berg

Portea kermesina

© Dorothy Berg



discolor leaves as well as the vivid rosy bracts and lavender-blue petals had made this a recommended house plant in the Victorian Era.

A second more compact plant that doesn't resemble a typical *Portea* is *P. nana* (pictures above). With its discolored leaves and its small colorful compact inflorescence and few relatively large flowers, it is not the poster child for this *Genus*.

It seems strange that the previous two species have remained *Porteas* while several others including *Portea legrellei* and *P. tillandsioides*, which are now *Aechmea recurvata* var *recurvata* and var. *ortgesii* (see pictures on top next page), have been transferred to other genera. Maybe a genus change are in their future?

The rest of the species of *Portea* I'm going to show have inflorescences more typical of *Porteas*.



Portea filifera (drawing to the right), since its introduction into cultivation, seems to be restricted to botanical gardens and its native country of Brazil. Actually I found it for sale on the internet in Brazil, although considered a threatened species in the wild there.

Portea alatisepala is a commonly found plant here in South Florida. With this moderate sized

A botanical drawing of *Portea filifera* by L. B. Smith.



plant we are offered an ever changing show. Before the flower petals emerge from the floral

Photo courtesy of Brom
L Picture Gallery –
frapix.nl

bracts, we have a beautiful rosy –pink inflorescence, all parts appear this color, then for the next weeks, the dark lavender flowers erupt to completely encompass the inflorescence. After blooming we are still privileged to a pink show for additional weeks as the petals dry up. As a specimen plant or as a clump this is a great addition to the garden or patio.

Portea fosteriana (right) except for its smaller size at first appearances resembles *Portea petropolitana* in many ways. Although the colors are very similar, the branches are nearly non-existent with a tighter inflorescence; in the picture provided by Eric Gouda, the bracts appear wider and tend to cling closer to the stem than seen with other *Porteas*.



Entirely colored coral/ pink/ red, *Portea silveirae* (the two pictures above), which came on the scene 125 years ago, shows no other color until the reddish/ lavender petals emerge from the floral bracts. By the way, the name doesn't refer to a silver coloration of the leaves, which it does not have, but to the discoverer, A. de Silveira. The shape of the inflorescence is similar to *P. alatisepala*, but the bracts are of a darker rosy-coral.

All of the *Porteas* displayed so far have had upright inflorescences. *Portea grandiflora* (below), as its name suggests has a large compact inflorescence that tends to flop over when fully developed, especially after watering as demonstrated in the picture below. The stem and the prima-



ry bracts are the typical rosy color, but the light/dark lavender petals are enclosed by grey/ pink floral bracts. Spines are very dark and tall. The yellow green leaves are tipped with rosy/violet coloration.



The registration records of this plant (pictured above) are not too detailed; this plant was presumably registered by Bullis Nursery in 2010,

Photo to the left by L. Giroux

Photo to the right by Bullis?

although it probably has been around a lot longer. Harry Luther examined the plant and inflorescence in 2009 and felt from the information he had at that time that it was likely a cultivar of *Portea petropolitana*. "Harry Luther's comment (August 2009): "A good example of *Portea petropolitana* var. *petropolitana* is *P.* 'Jungles' and we all know the type clone of var. *extensa*, both have different foliage and conformation"." This cultivar has become widely distributed. Picture on the previous page was taken at a Botanical garden in California and the plant is readily available online and I'm sure at Bullis Nursery.

Our own CBS member Dale Kammerlohr has been dabbling in bromeliad hybridization for over two decades. Around 2010, Geoff Lawn, the BSI Registrar, made a trip to Florida. The pictures on the front cover and below is of *Portmea* Dale Kammerlohr taken by Geoff Lawn while on a tour of Betty Ann Prevatt's gardens. The cross is



Aechmea mulfordii x *Portea petropolitana* var. *extensa*.

Dennis Heckart from the southern portion of the big island of Hawaii has been continuously hybridizing in Paradise for decades. Several years ago he created a series of hybrids using *Portea petropolitana* var. *extensa* and a variety of *Aechmeas*. One of these is *xPortmea* Star Gazer ((*P.* var. *extensa* x *Aechmea mulfordii*) x *P. alatisepala*). This hybrid appears to have unique clumping of the flowers on the nearly equally sized-branches. The ovaries are a tan color with a



slight scurfy covering. Photo by Dennis Heckart.

There aren't all that many hybrids of *Portea* or bigenerics using *Portea* in cultivation. I encourage you to check out www.fcbs.org and the BCR on www.BSI.org for more information and pictures. I also want to thank Eric Gouda and the Encyclopaedia of Bromeliads. This website which can be accessed from the BSI website is an excellent source of information about the thousands of bromeliads species from their first introduction into cultivation with pictures, plates and drawings.

I want to leave you with the history and pictures (see below and back cover) of a very unique *Portea*. Below is the registration information from the BSI's BCR. Photos by Ramey Lien.

***Portea* 'Top Secret'** Skotak, Chester/ Eloise Beach* 2008

Mature, open rosette to 85cm. diameter x 60cm. high. Arching, mid-green tongue-like leaves (5cm. wide) , saw-edged with tiny brown spines and randomly striated yellow (in strong light) and can develop pink foliage flushes, or lime green stripes in shade. As of July, 2019, nobody has reported it flowering. Developed sport from a variegated seedling. Reg. Doc. 7/2019 by Eloise Beach.

Country of origin: Costa Rica

Seed Parent: *petropolitana* var. *noettigii*

Pollen Parent: *petropolitana* var. *noettigii*



This picture and the one on the back cover are by Ramey Lien. It will be quite interested to see what the inflorescence looks like.

Minutes of the CBS General Meeting

LC/FM Garden Council Building July 21st 2024

Meeting called to order by President Julie Stein at 1:20 p.m. 7/21/24

Members in Attendance: 29. Guests: Rose Ford, Christine Ford & Reggie Wilson [former CBS member]

General Meeting: Announcements; There will be a bromeliad sale on December 7-8, but no show. Please review the rules for selling from last year's rules.

Workshop: Dr. Larry Giroux did a PowerPoint presentation on the Genus: *Nidularium*. As bromeliad of this genus matures, blooming stages start with bracts displaying color, then inflorescence and flower in center. All *Nidularium*s come from Atlantic Rain Forest. Members who brought *Nidularium* bromeliads gave brief description of each. Workshop was also led by Dale Kammerlohr on the topic of *Nidularium*. Several members brought in their *Nidularium*s. *Nidularium* are endemic to the Atlantic rainforest coast of Brazil. *Nidularium* with green and white leaves are "striated". *Nidularium procerum* is the most common variety. *Nidularium fulgens* leaves are grass green spotted with forest green. They all do best in shade.

Program: Dave Johnston of *Bromeliads Galore* did an informative PowerPoint presentation "Foliage Vrieseas: Take 2" with pertinent facts & photographs. Dave discussed Genus: *Vriesea* & varieties/hybrids: *fenestralis*, *fosteriana*, *seideliana*, *gipantea*, *hieroglyphica*, *platynema*. Dave told members that *Vriesea* are tank type epiphytes that grow well in shade. The group he was discussing today, have very attractive foliage rather than a stunning flower. His power point showed the extensive variety of colors and patterns. They are slow growers (may take 7 years to maturity), heavy feeders, and prefer shade. (low but bright light). Important points to know are sun [light], soil, water quality & nutrition. Geographic location is also an important factor. His goal is to have acidic soil at about 5.5. Rain water is 7-7.8 acidic. Adding peat, pine bark with 6.5 acidity helps. Potting soil should be very loose, using slow-release fertilizer. Dave recommended Nutricote 360 at the rate of 1 Tbl./year for about a six inch pot.

May is month with strongest sun intensity; December is month with lowest sun intensity. "Full sun" = all day sun exposure. September is month with highest rot [too much water] so you may have to spray fungicide if fungus appears. Dave also talked about the meaning of full sun when referring to light needs of bromeliads. When referring to full sun it means that the sun is on the bromeliad from dawn to dusk. However that does not work for every part of the world. While Hawaii has the perfect temperatures and light, most other countries do not. In May we have the strongest light at 20,000 ft. candles, December has the lowest at 10,000 ft. candles. Growers may want to invest in a light meter. (a member said he had an app on his phone to measure light intensity).

Dave primarily follows these hybridizers: David Fell – Hawaii Michelle Cameron – Australia; Andrew Maloy – New Zealand; Jack Koning – Australia; they have proven to be the most innovative hybridizers of the foliage *Vrieseas*.

He covered a lot of other topics such as correct punctuation for plants. A common mistake in naming is to use all caps. The correct format is capitalizing the genus and use lowercase for species.

After plant raffle, meeting was adjourned at approx. 4 PM

Thank you to the Committee who provided the minutes for Alison Ackerman.

Minutes of the CBS General Meeting

LC/FM Garden Council Building August 18th 2024

Call to order: 1:10 by President Julie Stein

In Attendance: 27; Guests: Marty and Katie Baxley

General Meeting: Workshop: The topic this month was *Orthophytums*, named for the Greek "orthos" which means straight (referring to the inflorescence on which the bloom and often offsets develop) and "phyton" which means plant. These plants are found naturally only in eastern Brazil. Formally there were 2 distinct forms. The 1st form has a sessile inflorescence which means the flower blooms close to the stem; the 2nd form has erect inflorescences. Those with a sessile inflorescence are now classified in the genus *Sincoraea*. Julie Stein, Rick Batt, Pete Diamond, Betty Ann Prevatt, Larry Giroux, and Dave Denholm brought in several of their personal *Orthophytums* which showed the members the various forms, colors, and shapes these plants can take. They thrive in really bright light which brings out their color. With low light, they tend to be more lanky and greener. The scurf, resembling hairs, is extremely fragile and is easily damaged during a heavy rain or with contact with other objects.

Larry then presented a slide show created by Rick and Carole Richtmyer and Charlie Birdsong to which he added slides and commentary. One of the highlights was the cultivar *Orthophytum gurkenii* 'Warren Loose', which becomes brownish without the cross marking of the normal *O. gurkenii*, but instead is covered with a very dense scurf. Its white flowers could be seen perched on top of a tall spike. He also showed a variegated *Orthophytum gurkenii*, gorgeous, with stunning stripes, this was a sport discovered by Brian Weber on a normal *O. gurkenii*. Its status in cultivation is unknown. One particular *Orthophytum* is used in a lot of hybrids because of its striking red bracts: *Orthophytum lemei* which also has white flowers and is covered with white hairy scurf. Another example was *Orthophytum saxicola variegata* in pastel colors of greens and pinks; unusual as it has soft succulent leaves and soft spines.

Program: Marty Baxley, from Jungle Gems in St. Petersburg, gave a talk about his trip to Ecuador in June, 2023 where he stayed with the Soni community. His daughter, Katie, assisted Marty with his presentation and helped sell plants and fix computer glitches. He got into bromeliads almost by accident almost 40 years ago because he just happened to move next door to someone who collected them.

After landing in Ecuador, they flew to Coco, where they took a motorized canoe to travel 62 miles down the Amazon where they then hopped into a native dugout canoe to continue their adventure. He showed many slides of beautiful bromeliads in habitat, which were significantly bigger than what we grow here. We also saw all sorts of other plants and animals including blooming *Heliconias*, exotic mushrooms, monkeys, stinking turkeys, glass frogs, caiman alligators, toucans, termite mounds and ferocious looking ants called bullet ants as well as the villages of the natives.

Door Prizes: Debbie McPhail brought 2 gorgeous plants for our door prizes, a *Neoregelia* 'Dragonfly' and *Neoregelia pendula*, which was blooming, Vicky Chirnside donated her collection of carry bags from the last 10 World Bromeliad Conferences.

Show & Tell: Dale Kammerlohr showed and discussed 12 interesting plants brought in for discussion, including several of his own colorful *Neoregelia* hybrids..

Raffle: Larry Giroux assisted by Luli Westra and Julie Stein, gave away about 36 donated plants to the happy winners. Larry announced that at the Board Meeting held the morning of the General meeting, it was decided to recommend that donors bring in only bromeliads or bromeliad related items for the Raffle and other items be donated to the Friendship Give-away.

Meeting adjourned: 3:36

Respectfully submitted by Alison Ackerman

The long awaited Judges' Seminar was held at the home of Dr. Terrie Bert. The day long affair dealt with Judges' concerns and changes to the Show Schedule. In attendance: Dr. Larry Giroux (IN); Betty Ann Prevatt, Chair; Marion Kenner (IAJ); Debbie Hughes (IAJ); Jim Pearce; John Boardman; Dr. Terrie Bert (IN); Eloise Beach; Rick Ryals (MJ); Julie Stein (IAJ); Steve Seal (MJ); Suzanne Bogacki (IAJ); Vicky Chirnside (IN); Calandra Thurrott (IN, MJ). The letters after the names represent the certification certain members were awarded at the meeting: (IN)= Instructor; (IAJ)= International Accredited Judge; (MJ)= Master Judge. Attendees were also treated to a luncheon and tour of Dr. Terrie's beautiful gardens.





Dr. Larry Giroux, Editor
80 Skyline Drive
North Fort Myers FL 33903
(239) 850-4048 DrLarry7@gmail.com



This is your September-October 2024 CBS Newsletter