

# **FLORIDA COUNCIL of BROMELIAD SOCIETIES INC. Newsletter**

This Newsletter published by Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc. & mailed to all paid up members of those Bromeliad Societies of Florida which make up the Council. Non-members may subscribe for \$2.00 per year.

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Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

Mail to:

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DECEMBER 1992

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CATCHING UP - STAYING EVEN

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Many thanks to Bud Martin of Blossom World Bromeliads, Sanford, for keeping me up to date on the situation at the new USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Station (APHIS) at Orlando International Airport. He reports that he recently received his first shipment of plants from Europe at the Orlando center, and is very pleased with the facility. The most important factor at APHIS is that all plants remain in bond until they are cleared through inspection. Restrictions are stiffest for plants coming in soilbound. Individual plant collectors who are bringing in bare root plants must still have the plants cleared through APHIS by a bonded broker. This is good. With all its other problems, Florida does not need to import new predatory insects or diseases. Remember, if you have an individual plant import permit, it must be amended to include the port of Orlando if you plan to use that facility.

Those of you who attended the Extravaganza in Fort Meyers will remember the delightful guest speaker preceding the plant auction, Mr. Don Beadle. Well, guess what? Don has moved to Florida. Besides being the King of Billbergias, Don is Hybrid Registration Chairman for BSI. Welcome to Florida, Don!

GOODBYE 1992! Florida will be happy to see the end of this disastrous year. Floods, destructive hail storms, tornadoes, and the worst wallop of all, hurricane Andrew make 1992 a year to file and forget. It will be a long time before the beautiful Miami bromeliad collections are restored. If they will tell us what was lost, we in the rest of Florida who are lucky enough to have our collections intact will do our best to restore their lost plants. Bromeliad Society of South Florida and its members have always been most generous in any endeavor to promote bromeliads. Now perhaps we can reciprocate. Expect more on this next year.

The first issue of the BSSF Newsletter following Andrew, prior to the November meeting, says it well:

"WELCOME BACK

The Bromeliad Society of South Florida is alive and well. Many of us have been battered and bruised, but we are not beaten. We will repair and rebuild. Many of our members suffered damage from Hurricane Andrew, but to our knowledge, no one was injured. Many of us lost our screen enclosures and shade houses. Some lost part or all of our homes. A few have temporary addresses, but we will survive. "

Elsewhere in this Newsletter is a reprint of an article about the palms at Fairchild Garden. Florida Council at its last meeting voted to donate \$500.00 to Fairchild to help rebuild. Individual donations would be most welcome, and are sorely needed. Fairchild Garden re-opened in November.



# Experts try ruined palms in search for new drugs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Hurricane Andrew's devastation of the world's largest collection of rare palms and related plants has provided a unique opportunity to search for potential new cancer and AIDS drugs, researchers said Friday.

The National Cancer Institute dispatched a research team to the Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami in a race to collect samples from downed and dying palms before the palms began to decompose, said team leader Michael Balick of the New York Botanical Garden.

"What we have here is a priceless opportunity to collect palms from around the world, a real once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to look at palms that no one has ever looked at," Balick said.

Samples from 25 palms were shipped Friday morning to cancer institute laboratories in Maryland, Balick said.

The samples will be tested against the AIDS virus and 60 kinds of cancer to see if they have any potential as drugs, Balick said.

After the hurricane thundered through South Florida, Balick asked the cancer institute if it would be interested in an emergency collection of the samples. The institute said yes.

"In the light of the destruction, I felt we certainly could take some of those materials and see if there were any potential uses," said Gordon Cragg of the National Cancer Insti-

tute.

Before Hurricane Andrew's arrival, the Fairchild Tropical Garden contained 700 species of palms and 150 relatives called cycads, palmlike "living fossils" that have been on Earth for 200 million years, said William Klein, the garden's director. It was the largest palm and cycad collection in the world.

"Our estimates are that between 60 percent and 70 percent of the collection has been seriously damaged or destroyed," Klein said. "I really don't know how to put a value on a collection like this. In some cases, it's an absolutely irretrievable loss."

About 50 downed palms have been righted and may survive the damage, he said. But others were ripped from their roots and cannot be saved.

"On those plants that cannot be saved, we are undergoing a massive salvage operation of the information that these plants contain," he said.

In addition to Balick's team from New York, botanists are flying in from around the country and from England to help recover as much scientific data as possible from the killed plants, Klein said.

The palm and cycad collection was established 50 years ago, Klein said. Many of the specimens came from wilderness habitats that have since been overrun by development, he said, meaning they cannot be replaced.

Klein said officials would do everything possible to restore the garden.

"We're bent, but not broken," he said.

## REQUIEM FOR A GENUS

Carol Johnson

Word was passed at the Extravaganza in Fort Myers that all species of the genus *Streptocalyx* were in the process of being transferred to the genus *Aechmea*. So far there has been no documentation of this action, but it is a generally accepted fact. There are 15 or 16 species in the genus *Streptocalyx* and it is said that wherever possible the species names will remain the same.

The plants are spiny, temperamental, cold sensitive and mainly shy bloomers but when they come into bloom all these faults are forgiven. Bracts and blooms range from white through pale yellow and into pink, bright rose and blue, rivalling the best colors of *Aechmea fasciata*. Being from the Amazonian basin and contiguous areas, they do well at low altitudes but will tolerate very little cold. Central Florida should be the farthest North for the plants to be grown unless a uniform warm environment can be maintained. Collectors usually shy away from *Streptocalyx* as most of them take a lot of bench space and have bloodthirsty spines. My collection is probably the most extensive in Florida and only one of those was purchased. The rest were collected in Ecuador and Peru. Change the genus to *Aechmea* if you wish--they will always be *Streptocalyx* and special to me. Hopefully, they will remain together in a new subgenus of *Aechmea*.

In their native habitat *Streptocalyx* are decidedly epiphytic and usually found in huge masses of plants in various coming and going stages. Climb a tree and locate a likely offset, then touch the clump and watch the bull ants emerge to do battle and defend the territory. Timid souls should collect the seeds which are always present, or stay on the ground and scrounge through the windfalls. We notice in the greenhouse that epiphytically grown *Streptocalyx* host the stinging ants, but are not bothered by them when grown as pot specimens. The plants do best when fed, but then the foliage tends to lose color and the foliage color is very important to the beauty of the plants. We compromise by underpotting in rich mix and then withholding further fertilizer. All *Streptocalyx* are susceptible to fly speck scale and it is very noticeable on the clear colored leaves. This occurs on many bromeliads which are shy bloomers, so my best advice is just keep after it.

As *Streptocalyx* these beautiful plants have not been a hot money maker. Perhaps as *Aechmea* this will all change. There are about seven collected potential *Streptocalyx* in my greenhouse which may turn out to be new species of *Aechmea*, if they ever bloom.

Let us say hail and farewell to the following *Streptocalyx*:

*St. poeppigii* and *St. poitaei* are very similar, both in size, foliage and bloom. Both can grow to tremendous size if treated too well. Foliage is spiny, flushes pink, bracts are bright pink (almost red) and the flowers, which are carried within the bracts, are lavender. As with all *Streptocalyx*, the leaves suffer cold damage at temperatures below 50 degrees. Both species bear



bright blue berries, which produce viable seed.

St. arenarius was collected by Geoffrey in Peru in 1984 and is blooming now. To my knowledge the plant had not been available in this country prior to this collection. The plant grows to tremendous size if given ample space and is spectacular in bloom. The center turns vivid, shiny red and this color extends almost to the leaf tips. The inflorescence is quite large, but does not rise above the leaves. White flowers emerge from beautiful deep pink bracts. Bracts and leaves are equipped with perhaps the most vicious hooked spines in the entire bromeliaceae. It is a spectacular plant in bloom, but I would not dream of exhibiting it in a show.

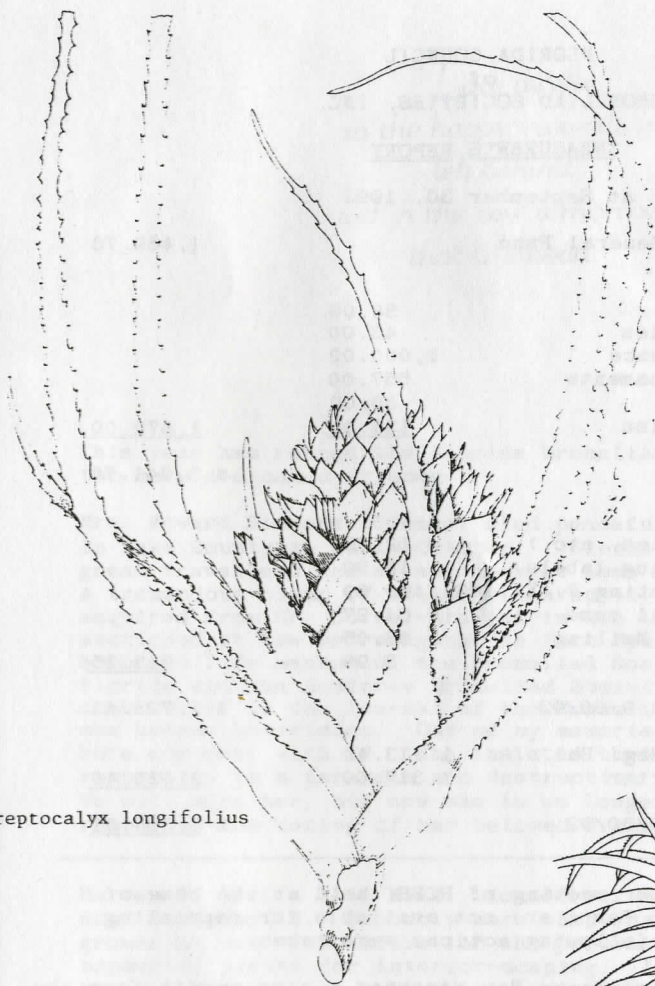
St. pallidus was added to my collection many years ago, but tagged something else. It was not described in the 1976 issue of Monograph 14 (bromelioideae), so I assume it was in my collection for several years prior to becoming official. This is not a large plant. The center leaves turn bright red, from which rises a white mound. At this stage the plant is disappointing--but wait, the next day there appears frilly, pale yellow bracts, and then in a couple of days this is followed by delicate blue flowers. After blooming the seed casings turn a violent purple and stay that way for many weeks. Warning: the plant responds to Florel treatment, but the natural bloom is much superior.

St. longifolius, williamsii, fuerstenbergii, to my notion, are all very closely related. Each clone is somewhat different from the rest and this difference is even apparent from one generation to the next. All are extremely spiny and the leaves are long and whip-like. Inflorescence and bracts may be rusty brown, white or rose and blue. We grow them in baskets and hang them out of reach of bull ants, their bosom buddies. The least attractive Streptocalyx is St. longifolius, and it has been the one species available and has probably given the genus a bad name.

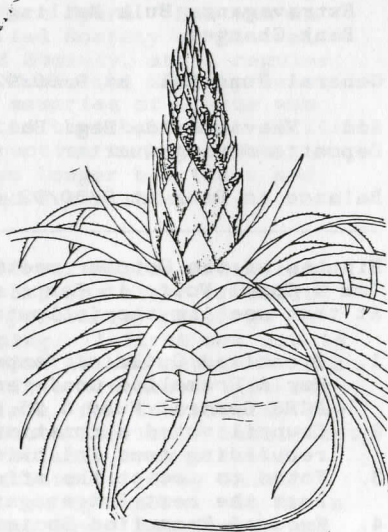
St. geminiflorus was collected on the Amazon in Peru in 1983, and identified by Harry Luther at first blooming. The non-blooming plant is very similar to Aechmea nidularioides, except the foliage is always green. From a mealy white spike the red bracts produce white buds which open progressively to reveal a yellow center. It blooms, usually, in March, but I notice buds forming now in December. In my greenhouse, the bloom spike always seems rather aborted and I wonder if the plant would produce a larger spike in a warmer habitat. This Streptocalyx more closely resembles an Aechmea than any of the others in my collection.

Streptocalyx prefer to be grown with their feet dry, but the atmosphere moist. Give them plenty of light, but no direct sun.

All my Streptocalyx are showing signs of bloom, and this is at least three months early. Can we credit the extremely wet, hot Summer or have they heard the rumors?



*Streptocalyx longifolius*



*Streptocalyx fuerstenbergii*

FLORIDA COUNCIL  
of  
BROMELIAD SOCIETIES, INC.

TREASURER'S REPORT

at September 30, 1992

Beginning Balance, General Fund		1,469.76
Deposits:		
Tape Sales	58.00	
Bumper Sticker Sales	43.00	
From World Conference	1,000.00	
1992 Society Assessments	557.00	
Annual Dues	80.00	
FCBS Meeting Auction	<u>134.00</u>	<u>1,872.00</u>
Available Funds		\$ 3,341.76
Expenses:		
Pac n Copy + (Copies, etc.)	12.25	
Lyben (5,000 mailing labels)	18.90	
Tru-Dimension Printing V. XII, #3	450.89	
Longwood P.O., Mail same	64.27	
Extravaganza Bulk Mailing	63.05	
Bank Charges	3.99	<u>613.35</u>
General Fund Bal. at 9/30/92		\$ 2,728.41
Add: Weevil Fund, Beg. Bal.	1,313.40	
Deposits during Quarter	1,317.00	<u>2,630.40</u>
Balance in Bank at 9/30/92		\$ <u>5,358.81</u>

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Minutes of the October meeting of FCBS, held at the home of Tom & Carol Wolfe in Tampa are not available for reprinting. At that meeting the following actions were taken.

1. Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay reported a nice profit from the World Bromeliad Conference and made donations of \$2,500 to FCBS General Fund & \$5,000.00 to the Weevil Fund.
2. Council voted a donation of \$500.00 to Fairchild Garden rebuilding fund following Hurricane Andrew.
3. Voted to accept the offer of Seminole Bromeliad Society to host the next Extravaganza in August of 1993.
4. Excused Bromeliad Society of South Florida from hosting the Council meeting in January, 1993. The meeting will be hosted by Imperial Polk Bromeliad Society instead.
5. 1993 FCBS Chairman will be from Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society to take the chair at the January, 1993 meeting.

The next issue of the Newsletter will carry a 1992 consolidated Treasurer's Report.

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*"Love dwells  
in the happy yesterdays  
left behind  
and in the new tomorrows  
that lie ahead."*

This year has robbed the Florida bromeliad community of two more dedicated friends.

Mrs. Edward Simmons (Glenna) died peacefully at her home in Lake County in early October. Glenna and Ed were great travellers and always brought home a few bromeliads. A tremendous clump of *Tillandsia araujei*, which Glenna acquired from Sr. Correia-Araujo in Rio in 1973, was auctioned at the Extravaganza in Fort Myers. She was an honorary life member of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida and the Seminole Bromeliad Society, and a regular contributor to the *Journal of the Bromeliad Society* until she became bed-ridden. One of my memories of Glenna was her argument with Ed. She insisted that ball moss (*Till. recurvata*) is a parasite and destructive to oak trees. We will miss her, but now she is no longer bedridden and robbed of the caring of her beloved bromeliads.

Harvey R. Bullis III, Miami, founder of Bullis Bromeliads, died November 15. Probably more than any other bromeliad grower he was responsible for the popularity of large bromeliad plants for interior-scaping. I first met him in the early seventies while hunting for *Aechmea zebrina*. His nursery then consisted of perhaps five benches, right outdoors. He was responsible, I believe, for introducing new clones of *Aechmea chantinii* from South America. Until that time *Aechmea chantinii* was only available from offsets. From all this evolved *Aechmea chantinii* cv. Grey Ghost, *Aechmea chantinii* cv. Little Harv, among others. He was a friendly, outgoing, generous man who loved his family and especially his grandchildren. How sad that Hurricane Andrew robbed him of his beloved nursery and that he could not have lived to see it restored. Our condolences to his wife, Lois, and the entire family. His memory is represented in a lot of bromeliad collections.



August, 1993 -- FCBS Extravaganza, hosted by Seminole Bromeliad Society.

The 1992 Extravaganza was held in Fort Myers on Halloween weekend. The Calcoosahatchee Bromeliad Society did its usual bang-up job staging the affair, arranging the dinner and the rare plant auction. Plant sales were not up to expectations, but that was because the city chose that time to tear up the street and parking lot at the Exhibition Hall. The auction on Saturday night produced \$2,328.50, almost the same as in 1991.

Many thanks to the contributors of beautiful auction plants and to the generous bidders. After assisting as Treasurer of FCBS with record keeping at the auctions for the past three years, it is apparent that we should have a rule that successful bidders be required to wait until the auction is over before paying for and claiming their plants. The last several plants auctioned went well below their worth because of the noise and confusion at the exit. Perhaps some compromise can be worked out.

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This Newsletter will reach you late. Actually, the Florida Council allows me the option of not printing the fourth issue every year. The shows are over for the year and the growing season is on hold. Somehow, my conscience will not allow me to skip an issue, so such as it is, here it is.

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WANTED   WANTED   WANTED   WANTED   WANTED   WANTED   WANTED

I have a note from Harry Luther. It reads:

"I just returned from a short trip to Brazil. Down there they call a green leaf, white centered neo Neoregelia fosteriana, but I remember this as a reddish plant. The original description also says red. I no longer have this. Do you? I would like to get one. Please put out the word."

Ed. Note: My recollection of Neo. fosteriana, which I got from Mulford Foster, is also of a medium sized, few leaved plant of reddish-brown color. It is extremely cold sensitive, and most disappeared after the 1985 freeze. Recently I found one old dessicated plant under a bench with one small pup. This I am growing with lots of fertilizer and it is at present as green as grass. It will get special treatment. There is also a hybrid made with Neo. fosteriana x Neo. farinosa (hearsay) by Mulford Foster. It is more cold hardy, looks a good deal like Neo. fosteriana, but I must confess it is not a hot sale item.