# Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc.



### **Happy Holidays!**

Vol. 25 Issue 4

November 2005

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The list of affiliated societies and Council officers continues on the inside back cover.

# Thank you, Sarasota Bromeliad Society for hosting the 2005 Bromeliad Extravaganza!

All the members of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies appreciate the dedication and many efforts that went into making this year's Extravaganza a successful event.



hosted by
Bromeliad Society of South Florida
September 30, 2006
Miccosukee Resort
and Convention Center
Miami

See page 5 for more information



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#### Catching Up ... Staying Even



In spite of the threat of Hurricane Wilma hanging over the state of Florida, the 2005 Extravaganza went on as planned, thanks to the diligent efforts of the members of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society. Sales opened on Saturday morning as plenty of bromeliad people came prepared to buy and to sell. The auction was well attended and great fun, and everyone raved about the food. Thank you, Sarasota Bromeliad Society!

Once again, Florida was hammered by hurricanes this fall. We understand only too well the challenges of surviving the aftermath of these storms, and so throughout our state, our thoughts go to our bromeliad friends in south Florida on both coasts and in the Gulf states. Many of our members participated in relief efforts and, here in Florida, members of the Florida Council used the Internet to network information about friends' safety and whereabouts. It was heartening to see what concern our members have for their fellow bromeliad enthusiasts.

How did this season's hurricanes affect your bromeliads? Did they survive unscathed or did you see damage beyond shredding of the leaves and bromeliads being knocked over? In central Florida, on the east coast, some Neoregelias appear to have leaf burns as a result of the storm, prompting an interest in hearing of others' experiences. Send your observations about hurricane damage to your bromeliads to karen@fcbs.org; they will be reported in the next issue of the newsletter.

Thank you, members of the Treasure Coast Bromeliad Society, for hosting the quarterly meeting on October 8. The draft minutes from that meeting are online at the Florida Council site (http://fcbs.org, click on About FCBS, then click on Minutes of FCBS Meetings); if you do not have Internet

#### **News from FCBS Affiliate Societies**



Seminole Bromeliad Society president Sudi Hipsley reported that the society is looking to broadening its membership base by changing its name to the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society. They will keep their main interest in bromeliads as a focus for the society but will also welcome other types of plants for programs and discussion. It was noted by other society representatives that this was indeed an interesting concept, and they would be interested in hearing of the results that this may produce. At the Seminole October meeting, the name change was approved.



The **Bromeliad Society of South Florida** has a new slate of officers and conducted a very successful annual auction in lieu of their regular October meeting. They will be having their annual show on April 22-23, 2006, at Fairchild Gardens in Miami.



The **Bromeliad Society of Central Florida** is celebrating its  $33^{rd}$  anniversary. Its representatives noted the challenge of finding bromeliad programs for meetings. It also is diversifying its programs to include orchids and other horticultural fields of interest to members. They will be participating in the annual Leu Gardens Spring Sale, March 25 – 26, 2006, in Orlando.

The **Bromeliad Society of Broward County** reported that its membership is growing and that they have worked toward using the newsletter to stimulate members' interest in the society. A local nursery had an open house that attracted

new members. The society holds an annual bromeliad auction in October which is open to the public. At each meeting, there is a guest book; visitors who sign will have a newsletter mailed to them for the next meeting to encourage them to return and to join.



The **Treasure Coast Bromeliad Society** reports that although it is a small club, they have been encouraged by an increase in membership. They meet at Heathcote Botanical Gardens in Fort Pierce and will be participating in the Gardens' sale in November.



# Extravaganza 2006 Hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida September 30, 2006

The Bromeliad society of South Florida is already at work on next year's Extravaganza. A contract has been signed with the Miccosukee Resort and Convention Center, which is convenient to members on the west coast and northern Florida.

All events will be under one roof.

For more information and special hotel rates call Ed Prince at 305-251-5289 or e-mail at Edwardjprince@aol.com

#### Extravaganza 2007

will be hosted by Bromeliad Society of Broward County

# Culture Tips Winter is on its way – are you ready? by Jay Thurrott



Each year as we enter the winter season, bromeliad growers wonder if this will be the year of "big freeze". Those living outside of the state may say, "Come on, it's Florida – how cold can it get?" but it can happen! There were the freezes of the 70s when water lines and well pumps froze and split in our area. Then there was the Christmas freeze in the 80s when so much electricity was used to keep warm that there were rolling brownouts across the state as the power companies struggled to meet the demand. And of course, if we go back over a hundred years there was the freeze that killed orange trees all the way to West Palm Beach that resulted in Henry Flagler extending his railroad further to the south...and the development of the Miami area.

The truth is that no matter where you live in Florida, you are likely to see a few days of weather each year that are cold enough to make you want to stay in bed and wait for spring to arrive...and every now and then we will be on the receiving end of a truly killing freeze.

What does the appoach of winter mean with respect to the care of bromeliads in Florida? First of all, you should recognize that as days become shorter, most bromeliads will be slowing down from their active growing period. Accordingly, you should back off on your fertilization program. I've often heard it said that you should only fertilize from March through October of each year, and I believe that this is good advice for most of us hobbyists. Fertilizer is not only wasted during the winter months, but there is a risk of spurring the plants into producing new growth during a time when they are most vulnerable to cold damage.

Secondly, if your plants are not actively producing new growth, their water requirements are not as great as they were during the peak of the summer. Reduce your watering frequency and monitor the media moisture content a little more closely. We are entering that time of year when the risk of losing plants to rot organisms is at its greatest, so stay alert! Did I just say to watch your watering practices because too much water can lead to rot problems? Also, watch your watering practices because when the humidity gets low (like it does in the winter around here), those potting mixes can get pretty dry. Most bromeliads are very tolerant of dry conditions, but others don't appreciate being left to dessicate. This is why some bromeliads just never do well mounted on driftwood for display. Don't over water (to avoid rot and fungus organisms) but don't under-water either!

Also keep in mind that if you haven't already separated and potted up your Neoregelia pups, you may want to leave them alone until the spring. Neoregelia pups started in the late fall and winter often don't seem to get the good start necessary to develop well. Maybe the shortened days have something to do with it or maybe it's because the plants are not in their active growth mode. Whatever the reason, when compared with offsets started in the fall, those started in the spring seem to develop roots more rapidly, establish themselves more quickly, and generally develop more robustly

Now, concerning the approaching cold weather, this is the time to have a frost or freeze protection plan in place for those sudden cold spells we are apt to see. Don't wait until the 11 o'clock news announces an impending freeze to decide what to do with your plants! Some bromeliads are surprisingly cold hardy and others are just as surprisingly sensitive to cold temperatures. Know beforehand which plants need protection and how you intend to provide it. Will you bring those plants indoors? Will you cover them with blankets? Should you move them to a warmer portion of your yard? Do you know where the warmer portions of your yard are? Should you purchase some of the material known as "frost

cloth" or "freeze blanket"? There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. You need to select the choice which works best for <u>you</u> – but don't wait until the last minute. A few moments spent planning for cold weather today can spare you from frantically scrambling to protect plants later or, even worse, losing many of your favorite bromeliads to cold damage!

Also keep in mind that if you bring your plants indoors or crowd them togther in a greenhouse or other protective cover, you are providing ideal conditions for scale to run rampant through your collection. Scale has the uncanny ability to select those favored plants that you had in mind to enter into the next show, so look at your plants frequently and at the first sign of scale don't hesitate to begin treating for it.

Let's hope that this won't be a cold winter but if it is, and you have a plan for protecting your plants that you feel is both realistic and effective, the effects can be minimized. For those with a smaller collection, this can be as simple as loading your outdoor bromeliads into the bed of a pickup truck, driving into the garage and putting the door down. For those with a larger collection - you're going to need a bigger truck!



#### **Taxonomy**



Every plant and animal known to science has a name and each occupies a position with the hierarchy of one of the biological kingdoms. The following is the taxonomic rank for a type of bromeliad, using a variety of *Tillandsia*:

Kingdom Plantae

Subkingdom Tracheophyta (vascular plants)
Division Magnoliophyta (flowering plant)

Class Liliopsida (monocots)

Order Bromeliaceae (bromeliad family)

Genus Tillandsia

(plural 'genera')

Species fasciculata Variety densispica

Form alba

**Variety** is a definable group within a species that consists of one or more discrete populations and are true breedings, that is, they remain distinct under normal conditions.

**Form** is a definable individual or group within a species that usually occurs at random and may or may not breed true.

**Cultivar**, short for cultivated variety, is a definable clone or individual within a species or hybrid population that can only be maintained through asexual reproduction. It is a horticultural term not a botanical term and is always expressed in a modern language, not in Latin.

Adapted from Newsletter of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society, Harry Luther, 10/98. Reprinted from the newsletter of the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society,

#### FCBS Affiliated Society Profile Bromeliad Society of South Florida by Nat DeLeon



One summer afternoon in 1959, I visited Fantastic Gardens, the famous nursery owned and operated by Bob and Catherine Wilson. When I got there Bob was talking with Alex Hawkes, a man with a photographic mind who made his living by writing articles for various plant related publications, as well as a series of 'Occasional Papers' on plant families of interest to him, such as palms, orchids, aroids and - soon to be - bromeliads.

Alex had just returned from St. Petersburg where he attended a meeting of the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society. He mentioned they had a nice little group of bromeliad enthusiasts. I could read Alex's mind and mentioned that someday soon we should seriously consider a society for South Florida. After some discussion between the three of us, we decided to start our own society with a nucleus of 13 members we knew would be interested.

The first meeting, at Bob Wilson's nursery, was more organizational than anything else. We set a time and a day for the meetings. We agreed that each member would take a turn giving a program on any bromeliad related subject. This was a real challenge, since there were no books to consult during that time.

Word got out and soon others were interested in joining, but we knew we would have to find a meeting site to satisfy a growing interest. We were able to get a meeting room at the First Federal Savings and Loan of South Miami. However, as it was a long drive to South Miami for some members, we moved to the Simpson Garden Center, just off Miami Avenue in the downtown section of Miami, making it easier for people from Broward County. It meant that almost every member had some driving to do to get to the meeting, but everyone was happy.

With our new home, things started to flourish. We had programs by Morris Henry Hobbs of New Orleans and Mike Kashkin who owned Fuscialand Nursery in California. Lyman Smith had become good friends with Ralph Davis and started coming to Miami during the winter to escape the cold. Twice he came to our meetings with Ralph. David Barry, owner of California's Jungle Gardens, gave a great slide presentation on European bromeliads he encountered on several of his trips there.

Early on we put on our first Bromeliad Show at Fairchild Gardens. Bob Wilson designed the show which was a display of bromeliads, and we had shows every year since at Fairchild.

In 1964 a number of members from Broward County felt it was time to start their own society. In February of 1978 we had a special Sunday meeting to hear a talk by Victoria Padilla. It was a joint meeting of our society and Broward's. Victoria had just had her first book published and she had them available at the meeting for signing.

When the Florida Council was formed, our society hosted the first State Show. In 1988 our society hosted its first World Conference. It was truly unique in every way. We had a lot of help, thanks to the Florida Council. It marked the first and only time the three major European wholesale growers put in displays as well as some of our local growers. We had two Brazilian nurseries sell their wares. The Conference was highlighted by a talk by Prof. Dr. Werner Rauh and the first time in this country Elton Leme showed us the stuff he's made of.

Our society is still going strong. Like any other society, members move away, lose interest or go to that big bromeliad garden upstairs. But we have been able to replace those losses with new blood.



#### Why a Cryptanthus Society?

by Lawrence Giroux, M.D.



Why does the genus Cryptanthus have its own society? This is a question I often hear, especially when new bromeliad hobbyists learn about the Cryptanthus Society International. Are its members that egotistical when it comes to this group of plants? Why do they shun the BSI? To answer this inquiry, I like to compare the Cryptanthus Society to the African Violet Society. Here is a society, based on the love of a specific genus of plants, which differ from each other not so much in their leaf appearance or size, which are all about the same, but rather their flower grouping and color. There is some leaf variation, which adds interest to this collection of small plants, but these characteristics can hardly explain the devotion felt by some for this genus. It is much the same with the members of the Cryptanthus Society. Individually they may have different reasons for liking Cryptanthus and subscribing to a specialty bromeliad journal, but regardless, I don't feel that it is just "faith" that keeps them seeking out new species or cultivars and acquiring more information about these special plants. There is much more to Cryptanthus than African violets, and in the view of many, there is more to Cryptanthus than most of the other bromeliad genera.

Size has always been an important factor why people keep these plants. Although there is a wide range of dimensions among Cryptanthus, as terrestrials, size can be in part controlled by nutrition rationing. Here in Florida, where we grow mostly outdoors for the majority of the year, we seldom restrict the growth of our plants. In the cooler climates throughout the world where Cryptanthus are often the preferred bromeliads for small greenhouses, windowsills and under fluorescent lighting, limiting size is important. Their diminished size, in general, also makes them practical for many other uses besides specimen plants.

For the exhibitor due to their smaller size and large variety of colors, patterns and shapes, Cryptanthus can be used in decorative containers or artistic arrangements. Over the years, Cryptanthus exhibitors have become resolved to the fact that Crypts just don't win Best of Show. We accept that the special Cryptanthus Society

awards, The Warren Loose Best Cryptanthus Hybrid Award and The Bob Whitman Best Cryptanthus Species Award were all we could look forward to. This year, Cryptanthus exhibitors have been inspired by a surprise capture of the Mulford B. Foster Best of Show Award at the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida's BSI Standard Show by a spectacular *C. microglazioui*, exhibited by John Boardman, and an additional win of the Morris Henry Hobbs Award for Artistic Division winner with an all Cryptanthus design at the Sarasota Bromeliad Show by Larry Giroux. So it can be done!

Exhibiting bromeliads is a relatively small part of our horticultural hobby for the average collector. The majority of Cryptanthus growers are very limited for space in which to enjoy their plants. Terrariums for the home and office, with or without living crawly creatures, are still a popular way to express your green thumb talents. There are few bromeliads that will tolerate the increased humidity, are relatively resistant to scale, require low light conditions and are small enough with controlled growth to fit in a bottle or aquarium. Cryptanthus are perfect for these situations. Possessing the above-mentioned traits, unlike the larger Neoregelias or Aechmeas, Cryptanthus are ideal for a coffee table dish garden or a centerpiece for the dining tabletop. During the holidays, Cryptanthus can be used in imaginative ways: in wreaths, as tree ornaments and artistic arrangements to brighten up tables and mantles. In Europe, they decorate headstones during visits to cemeteries and are used for holiday corsages.

At one time it seemed that *Aechmea fasciata* was the only bromeliad to be had from a florist. Today with the use of florel and other bloom inducing chemicals, many other blooming bromeliads are available as gifts from florists and nurseries. Cryptanthus "diehards" will admit that Cryptanthus are not known for their flashy flowers. Few of you will probably remember, however, that during the 1970s and 1980s, Cryptanthus, in spite of their inconspicuous flowers and the limited number of cultivars and species

readily available, were popular houseplants. In 1977, Kathy Dorr in her book, <u>Cryptanthus</u>, showed photos and described nearly 100 or so "common" Crypts in cultivation. Lou Wilson, in his book, <u>Bromeliads for Modern Living</u> printed in 1977, had no less than 17 Cryptanthus displayed in decorative containers growing in the home.

*Cryptanthus* 'Pink Starlite' sitting on a table in the Oval Office of the President! And as a tribute to the loyalty of Cryptanthus growers, there are still "pure-line" 100-150 year old Cryptanthus cultivars maintained in collections today.

By 1986, Cryptanthus had emerged in Europe, Australia and all areas of North America as a favorite among many bromeliad growers. Hybridizers around the world were making more and more cultivars available in spite of a relatively small gene pool derived from the few species discovered in Brazil.

In 1986, on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Cryptanthus introduced into cultivation, with help from advertisements in local Bromeliad Societies' newsletters, and after quickly meeting a goal of 100 charter members, the Cryptanthus Society was formed. From the very beginning the Cryptanthus Society has been an Affiliate (currently I believe, the largest Affiliate) of the Bromeliad Society International. In Bob Whitman's words, from "A Message from the Secretary" in the first issue of the Cryptanthus Society Journal:

"Being the first Bromeliad Society, Inc. specialty, we are obligated to the rules and regulations of the parent society, assisting where ever possible in representing the genus, Cryptanthus. Our goals are to provide knowledge of Cryptanthus to the general public, providing cultural information for everyone - from the small indoor enthusiast to the greenhouse grower. As a Society we encourage the showing of Cryptanthus and shall assist in educating BSI judges to accurate Cryptanthus judging standards."

Before there was a picture index at www.fcbs.org linked to the BSI Bromeliad Cultivar Registry (BCR) online and before Don Beadle created his outstanding publication the BCR, the Cryptanthus Society had developed a standardized form for the registration of Cryptanthus cultivars. To date, nearly 1000 cultivars have been registered, many with photos and detailed descriptions printed in the Journal beginning in 1986. The CS Journal is proud to be recognized as a "scientific" journal where taxonomists have published their descriptions of every species of Cryptanthus discovered since 1986.

Close examination will indicate that nearly all of our approximately

250 members are also members of the BSI. Cryptanthus growers are seldom monogamous to Cryptanthus and the BSI supplies their fix for their addiction to the other bromeliad genera. The Cryptanthus Society is grateful to the BSI for permitting us to hold our Board meeting and Rare Plant Auction during their World Bromeliad Conference (WBC). On the off-years of the WBC, an Affiliate of the Cryptanthus Society hosts our International Cryptanthus Show in conjunction with their own Show.

So for those of you who have never kept Cryptanthus, I encourage you to experience plants of this genus. There are Cryptanthus of shapes, colors and patterns to appeal to nearly everyone. Their adaptability to indoor or outdoor culture, ease of propagation from seeds or offsets and their many uses has and continues to captivate bromeliad growers since the second bromeliad (*Cryptanthus bromelioides*) was introduced into cultivation. I recommend to those new to Cryptanthus or to the more experienced growers who already have these unique plants in their collection, to join the Cryptanthus Society and read about new cultivars, newly discovered species, proper culture and care in our colorful quarterly journal.

To subscribe, send your check for \$20 for single membership or \$25 for dual membership to:

Carole Richtmyer 18814 Cypress Mountain Drive Spring, TX 77388 or contact her at planobrom@aol.com.

To offer the special Cryptanthus Awards at your next show, get your Society to also become an Affiliate of the CS.



#### **FCBS Affiliated Bromeliad Society Meetings**



When you are traveling in the state of Florida, check to see if a bromeliad society is meeting in the area where you will be. It's always fun to visit another society!

#### **Boca Raton Bromeliad Society**

Third Thursday, 7:30 PM (except December) Boca Raton Community Center, 150 Crawford Blvd., Boca Raton

#### **Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay**

Third Monday (except December), 7:30 PM Tampa Garden Center, 2629 Bayshore Blvd., Tampa

#### **Bromeliad Society of Broward County**

Third Monday, 7:30 PM Broward Agriculture Extension Building, 3245 College Ave., Davie

#### **Bromeliad Society of Central Florida**

Fourth Monday (except December), 7:00 PM (Social at 6:30), Harry P. Leu Gardens, 1920 Forest Ave., Orlando

#### **Bromeliad Society of South Florida**

First Tuesday (except December), 7:30 PM Fairchild Tropical Gardens, 10901 Old Cutler Road, Miami

#### Caloosahatchee Bromelaid Society

Third Sunday (except April and December), 2:00 PM (workshop at 1:15), St. John the Apostle's Church, 3049 McGregor Blvd., Ft. Myers

#### Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Second Sunday, 1:00 PM

Garden Club Building, Corner of Jessamine and Oleander Ave., Daytona Beach

#### Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society

First Tuesday, 7:30 PM

Hope Presbyterian Church, 1698 S. Belcher, Clearwater

#### **Gainesville Bromeliad Society**

Fourth Sunday, 2:00 PM

Entomology and Nematology Building at the University of Florida

#### Sarasota Bromeliad Society

Second Monday, 7:30 PM

Selby Botanical Gardens, 811 South Palm Ave., Sarasota

#### **Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society**

Third Sunday, 2:00 PM

Sanford Garden Club, 200 Fairmont Drive, Sanford

#### **Treasure Coast Bromeliad Society**

Last Wednesday of the month, 5:30 PM

Heathcote Botanical Gardens, 210 Savannah Road, Fort Pierce

The names of the Florida Council representatives from each society are on the inside front and back covers of each issue of this newsletter. Further contact information for each society is on the Florida Council website at http://fcbs.org, under Member societies.

#### What is the Florida Council?

The Council is a confederation of bromeliad societies in Florida; it is a non profit organization registered with the state. Each member bromeliad society has two representatives to the Council, both of which are voting members. Any person belonging to any Florida bromeliad society affiliated with the Council is automatically a member of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

The meetings are held quarterly throughout the state and are hosted by a different society each time.

Among its ongoing activities, the Council sponsors an annual Extravaganza, a state-wide gathering of bromeliad enthusiasts hosted by a different society each year. The Council supports the Bromeliad Encyclopedia, the number one bromeliad destination on the Internet. The Council also supports the ongoing program to control the invasive Mexican bromeliad weevil, an imported pest that imperils Florida's bromeliads, both native and in collections.

To learn more about Council activities, visit the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies' website at fcbs.org or talk with one of your society's Council representatives.



#### Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies Web Site

http://fcbs.org by Karen Andreas

#### **Bromeliad Biota**

Check out this feature on the Florida Council site to learn more about the critters that live in and around bromeliads. Many live in deeply symbiotic relationships with the bromeliads wherein the animals and insects depend on the bromeliad for shelter, food and water and the bromeliad enjoys benefits from nutrients leftover from its residents or visitors. Others are just passing through. Ants, snakes, lizards, frogs, and birds are among the creatures who frequent bromeliads.

There are pictures posted here from Brazil, Florida, Australia, and New Zealand. Click on one of the small pictures (called a "thumbnail") and another window will open to show you a larger version. On some of the thumbnail pictures from Brazil, the larger window will also translate the name of the insect. Central Florida members Mike and Karen Andreas have several pictures posted, including two of a struggle between a snake and a bromeliad resident frog and a dragonfly asleep on a bromeliad at night. Florida West Coast member Jim Boynton contributed a picture of a ribbon snake coiled around his bromeliads. In the Australian pictures, you will see a native Miner bird and a hummingbird pollinating bromeliad flowers.

Here you will also find a link to Dr. Howard Frank's web site on Bromeliad Biota. Many know Dr. Frank from his research on the Mexican bromeliad weevil. You will not only find information about bromeliad biota, but also information about plant and insect associations.

If you have pictures of bromeliad biota you would like to share, contact the webmaster at webmaster@fcbs.org or (321)453-0366.



#### **Upcoming Events**



#### November 18 - 20, 2005

Independent Plant Breeder's Conference Organized by the Environmental Horticulture Department at the University of Florida (UF), Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

More information is available at http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/IPBC/

#### 2006

#### April 22-23, 2006

Bromeliad Society of South Florida Annual Show and Sale Fairchild Gardens, Miami

#### June 6 - 11, 2006

Bromeliads on the Border

#### **Bromeliad Society International**

17th World Bromeliad Conference Town and Country Resort & Convention Center 500 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, California 92108 Information at http://bsi.org.

#### **September 30, 2006**

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies' Extravaganza Presented by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida Miccosukee Resort and Convention Center, Miami

#### **Next Florida Council Meeting**

January 14, 2006
Hosted by Bromeliad Society of Broward County
See your Council representative
for more information.

## FCBS Affiliated Societies and Representatives (continued)

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### Happy Holidays And Happy New Year!