



FLORIDA COUNCIL OF BROMELIAD SOCIETIES

Volume 41
Issue 1
February 2021

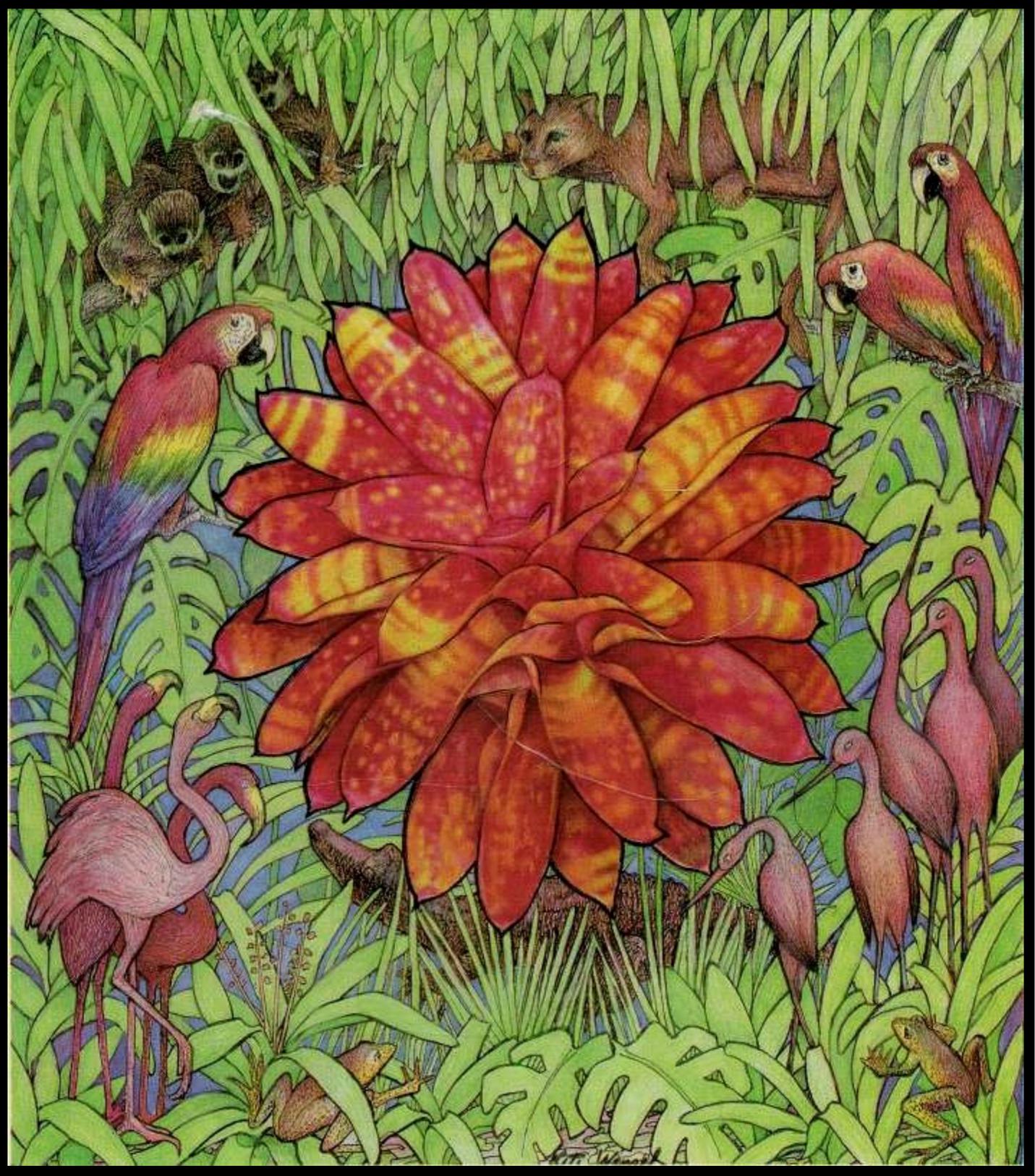




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PUBLICATION: This newsletter is published four times a year, February, May, August, and November, and is a publication of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. Please submit your bromeliad related activities, articles, photographs, society shows, news and events of your society.

DEADLINES FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS ARE:

January 15 for February issue

April 15th for May issue

July 15 for August issue

October 15th for November issue

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FRONT COVER:

*The poster for the 1992 World Bromeliad Conference
Neoregelia X Big Bands Painting By Kiti Wenzel*



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Bromeliad Society of Palm
Beaches



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Sudi Hipsley
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**Seminole Bromeliad &
Tropical Plant Society**
Sudi Hipsley &
Greg Kolojeski

COMMITTEES MEMBERS:

*The following Committee Members and guests
have a standing invitation to FCBS Meetings as
Non-Voting Members unless serving in the dual
role of Member Society Representative.*

Al Muzzel Weevil Fund:
Tom Wolfe

FCBS Editorial Panel:
Carol Wolfe, Editor
Tom Wolfe, Assistant Editor
Calandra Thurrott, Copy Editor

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Howard Frank, PH.D
Ron Cave, PH.D
SFBCP@savebromeliads.com

BSI Officers & Committee Members from Florida:

Gregory Kolojeski, Vice President
Barbara Partagas, Secretary

BSI Directors from Florida:

Bruce Holst; Rick Ryals; Alex Bello &
Alan Herndon

BSI Archives Committee: Steven C. Provost

BSI Judges Certification: Betty Ann Prevatt

BSI Nominations: Larry Giroux

BSI Wally Berg Award: Teresa Bert

*I love Bromeliads... By Carol Wolfe, Editor*

Let's turn back the hands of time to say 1992...hmm...28 years ago, where did the time go? As we approach the 24th World Bromeliad Conference, let's look back to the Tenth conference known as "Bromeliad Safari" held at Saddlebrook Golf and Tennis Resort and sponsored by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay. Tom Wolfe was Chairman and I, as secretary, had the privilege of typing all the papers, minutes, programs, etc., on my old IBM Selectric (before the internet)! . In addition to Tom and I working almost full time on the conference for two years, there were many, many people who contributed countless hours and expenses in preparation for the conference.

The one thing that stands out most in my memories are the wonderful members of the BGTB who contributed their time, talents, and resources to support the conference and worked diligently to make it a success. They raised over \$7,000 to support the conference with monthly auction, shows, exhibits, sales and Extravaganzas. Secondly, you could give them volunteer jobs and know that they could be trusted to do the job and they worked independently with excellent results. They were driven by a strong desire to be the best host society possible. In the following pages, I will tell you about some of them and the projects that they worked on for many, many months.

And then there were the members of the FCBS who put their full support behind the BGTB and filled many of the jobs that required their expertise as well as supporting us financially:

Carl Perryn was the Assistant Chairman and he and Wally Berg were in charge of staging the show and society exhibits along with Herb Hill handling the commercial displays and as a team they did an extraordinary job;

Mike and Ruth LeVasseu were the judged show coordinators and they worked tirelessly in preparation for the show and had over 700 entries with excellent results;

Hattie Lou Smith was Judges Chairman and Peggy Bailey was Clerk's chairman and they put together a fantastic team of judges and clerks for the show;

Mary Jane Lincoln did a great job arranging the head table and Annette Allen managed the ribbons;

Kay Miller, a Flower Show Judge, was in charge of Artistic Staging with beautiful results and the most artistic arrangements ever entered in a world conference;

Gwen Carnegie as our Registrar was amazing as she was a stickler for details with no mistakes in registrations and many people praised her for her efficiency in handling their registration;

Linda O'Leary took on the job as Treasurer which was a huge responsibility, while expecting her first child, and she did an unbelievable job with the finances, and husband Mike was extremely helpful in negotiating our conference contracts and assisting Linda with the finances and bank runs. We are glad that Kevin waited until after the conference to be born;

We were so fortunate that Bill Boothe, a Planner for the City of Tampa, joined the BGTB just as we started working on the budget and guided us through the process;

Carol Johnson, owner of Pineapple Place in Longwood, Florida, obtained our conference speakers;

Our banquet decorations and centerpiece committee, Patty Rabin, June Hill, Debbie Groves, Rita Guerette, Jack & Denyse Noyer made awesome decorations for the table;

Bob Steiger, the Agriculture agent for Pasco County, took on the enormous job of publicity chairman and did a great job in getting the news to the public and around the State;

Ron and Carolyn Schoenau brought their leadership abilities and expertise in running conference plant sales and as always, they did an excellent job with a team of workers assisting them;

Bill Frazel and his team headed up the Rare Plant Auction netting \$11,832 for BIC at Selby;

Dave Fulkerson, a tremendously creative and talented man, was in charge of Special Effects; and

Jim Plato and Sue Welborn were in charge of the profitable Raffle.

It takes a lot of people to put on a conference and there were many BGTB members, FCBS reps, and BSI volunteers, to numerous to name, but to whom we will forever be grateful for their help. So here is the scoop in the following articles and photos of things you might not have known about the conference! Enjoy the trip down memory lane with us!



BROMELIAD
SAFARI



TAMPA
1992

BROMELIAD
SAFARI



TAMPA
1992

1992 World Bromeliad Conference Planning—Step 1



One of the first things you have to do in planning a World Bromeliad Conference is to order the essentials, stationery and envelopes. However, we wanted a logo that would carry out our theme for the conference, *Bromeliad Safari*.

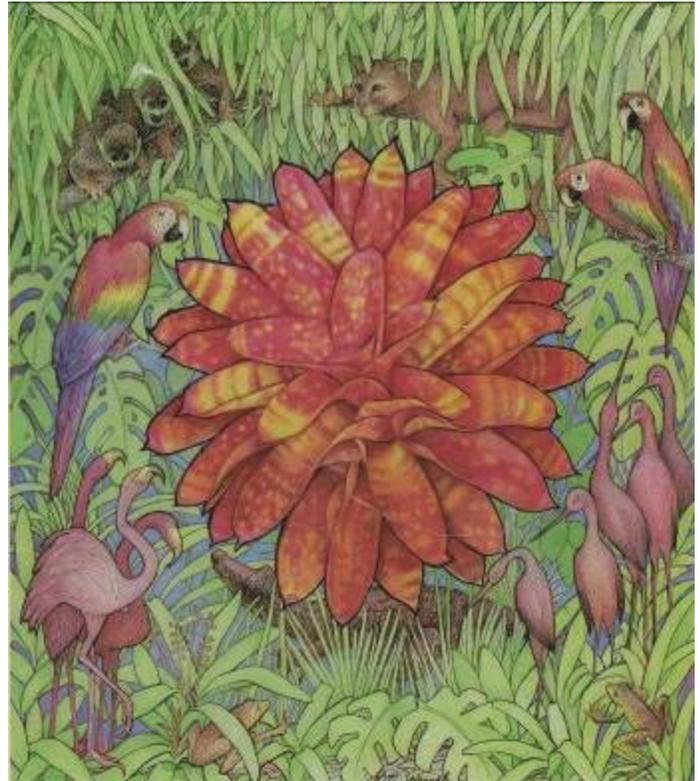
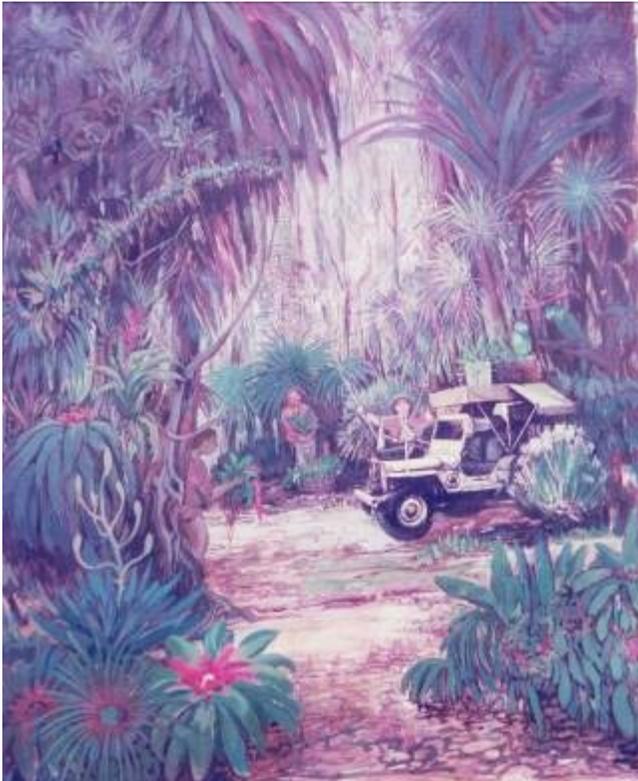
The Executive Committee met for the first time to discuss the logo and all agreed that we should contact Kiti Wenzel for her input. She came up with the alligator which we quickly renamed “Alley Gator” and we begin the first of many decisions by deciding what color coat and hat the gator should wear. As you can see from the photos of Kiti’s sketches, she painted him in various colors of hats and jackets for our review. The red jacket and hat won the contest and we begin to labor over the rest of the logo.

A map of Florida was popular with everyone and a diamond background was added and colored blue to indicate the water surrounding the peninsula. Soon we went from a black and white logo to a colored logo. The printing company advised us to limit our colors to three for a better price; but, in the end we were not satisfied until we had everything in the logo colored the way we liked it! We spent extra dollars on the additional colors but we really liked our logo once it was done and printed.



THE WBC POSTER painted by Kiti Wenzel

The runner-up poster (below) was never released to the public and was also painted by Kiti Wenzel. Unfortunately stored for years, its beautiful colors have faded, but it was the runner-up poster. It depicted Bromeliad Safari perfectly!



The bromeliad on the poster (right) is a *Neoregelia* X *Big Bands*, an Oser hybrid #100, secured by Joe and Peggy Bailey of Flortex Bromeliad Nursery in Fort Myers, Florida.

Peggy & Joe purchased the plant many years ago (prior to 1992) in California. This particular bromeliad was a clone of *Big Bands*. It was the only one of its kind and as far as we knew at the time, it was no longer in existence. It was selected as the poster bromeliad because of its uniqueness and beauty. Once the committee members knew the story behind the painting, it was unanimous that we should save this extinct bromeliad, painted by Kiti, for future generations.

When we took on the job of getting the poster and the programs printed, Tom and I knew nothing about the printing business, making posters, programs, color separations, paper weights for various mediums, electronic printing and color runs and processing. We started visiting printing companies on a weekly basis and learning the print business. We were fortunate to have people who were patient and willing to work with us and guide us through the process.

We choose Hillsborough Printing Company in Tampa for our printing and they did a great job at very reasonable prices. Once printed BGTB Member, Herb Gramstroff, BGTB member, took on the full responsibility of selling the posters. He ordered mailing tubes for them and did a great job. We placed our advertisement in the Journal and in our program and they sold for \$15 including postage and a second one in the same mailing tube was an additional \$10. They sold like hot cakes at the conference and even after the conference mail orders arrived.

We were so blessed to have Kiti as our artist and what a beautiful job she did for us! We were blessed also to have members like Herb Gramstroff who took on the responsibility to purchasing supplies, taking orders and filling them. It is great to have members in your club that take responsibility and fulfill them independently.



*Honoring Kiti Wenzel
for her contributions to
the Bromeliad World*

**Kiti Wenzel
1908-2007
by Dr. Larry Giroux**

(This article originally appeared in the October 2007 Caloosahatchee Meristem)

Kiti Wenzel was an extraordinary woman, teacher and artist. On Friday, September 14th, 2007, she was taken from us, four months shy of her 100th birthday.

Kiti was already demonstrating her artistic talents in high school; it was a series of drawings in her high school paper that earned her a full scholarship to the Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Here she started her artistic career after graduation. Much of her time was spent educating children in the principles of art. Kiti moved from Philadelphia to Florida in 1956. During the 1960s she and her husband owned and operated a restaurant, art studios and gallery on Fort Myers Beach, while still teaching art to a limited number of students. After a move to Sarasota, where she continued her career as a professional artist, she then moved back to Fort Myers.



It was in 1981 that Kiti did her first drawing of a bromeliad, *Billbergia pyramidalis*, which was given to her by a friend. In 1985, she joined the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society and was intrigued by the wonderful and varied forms of bromeliads and other botanicals. Her switch from impressionistic and abstract painting to the realism of growing plants was fueled by the various plants she intentionally grew for the purpose of using for study and as models. Kiti once wrote "the surprise of each different and individual inflorescence is enough excitement to inspire drawing to record the many varieties nature produces."

Till. cyanea



There are hundreds of her original watercolors and colored pencil drawings of bromeliads adorning homes throughout the world. Kiti's collection of horticultural print greeting cards remain cherished gifts when sent by a friend. Her numerous Art Exhibitions held over the last four decades here in Florida were memorable events.



Billbergia pyramidalis

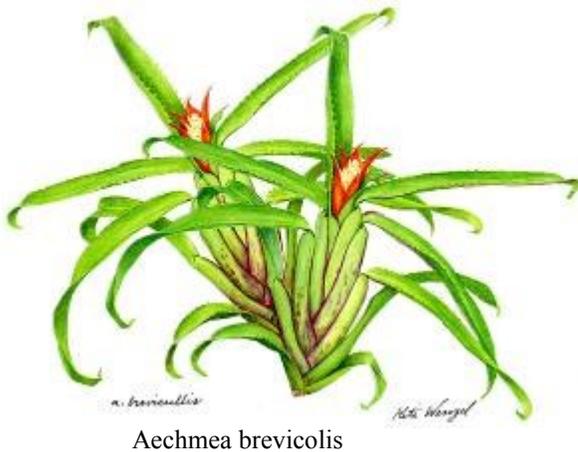


Continued Kiti Wenzel...



Her generosity is well documented by her contributions of her works to many auctions of local and international organizations as well as providing posters and original designs for World Bromeliad Conferences' publications.

Although we will never see her picture surrounded by the Smucker's logo on the "Today Show" with Willard Scott... announcing to the world her 100th birthday, Kiti has still left her own unique label on canvases, cards, tee-shirts and most importantly on the hearts of all who knew and admired her.

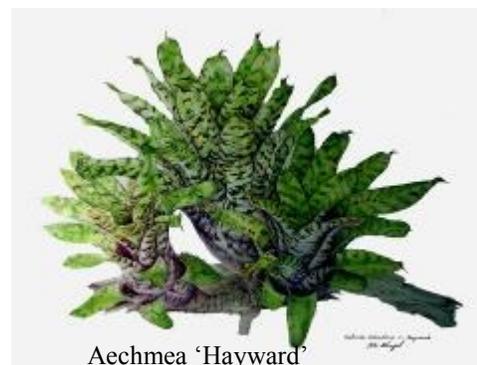


Aechmea brevicolis



Neo. 'Takamura' princeps

For more than 75 years, she constructed a legacy as a teacher and creator of beauty. The diversity of Kiti's work has distinguished her as a truly exceptional artist and especially as a master of "botanical art". She captured nature with pencils, ink and paint so that many others could enjoy it; and in so doing, Kiti Wenzel, in spite of her passing, allows us to keep her creativity and inspirations close to us for a long time to come.



Aechmea 'Hayward'



“SPECIAL EFFECTS”



The executive committee started meeting monthly to hash out plans for the conference, but in Brandon, Florida, Dave Fulkerson, one of the most talented and creative men that ever lived, was busy with a crew of members from the BGTB to create special effects for the conference.

It all started with a little gold elephant that Dave owned.

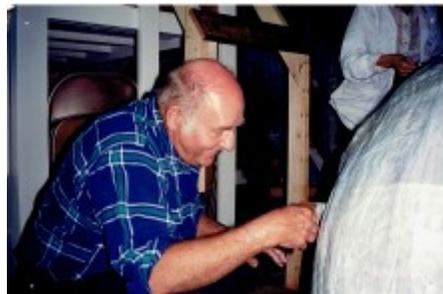
If you are going to have a “safari” you surely need an elephant! He measured and measured and then fed the measurements into his computer and from there began to enlarge the measurements to a full size elephant. Soon he was working on the frames for the head, the ears, the body, the tail and experimenting with paper mache, and training a crew of workers to put multiple layers of paper mache and paint to build a full size elephant.



Dave & Mary Fulkerson



Left: BGTB Member Bob Guerette working on the elephant's legs



Left middle: Dr. Pat Patterson became an expert with layers of paper mache.

Right bottom: BGTB member works underneath the elephant to add paper mache layers.

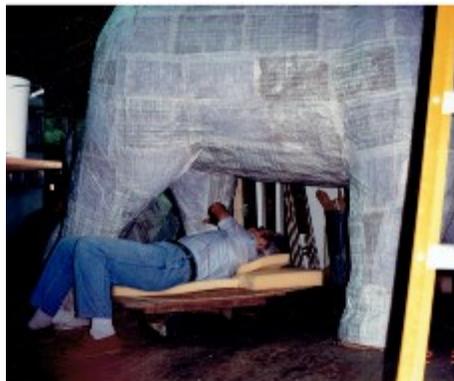
Center bottom: Jim Plato stops for a Pepsi break.

Right top: Frame for elephant body

Right 2nd pic: Dave & Pat review the plans

Right 3 & 4: A layer of brown paper as the elephant shapes up

Right Bottom: Grace Patterson working on the backside



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DRESS REHEARSAL IN FULKERSON'S BACKYARD. It took a lot of members to put the elephant together. Brian Eubanks is admiring their handiwork as they add all the decorative parts to the elephant.

**READY TO GO TO THE
WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE**

The crew finally completed and carried the assembled elephant out of the workshop into the yard. It was fully assembled with his welcome signs and blankets of bromeliads across its back.

Now, after months of planning, building and putting together the elephant, it must be taken apart to be transported. The trucks are ready to load the body, the head, the tail, the banners, the blankets and last but not least the bromeliads!

The parts are secured with many ropes to keep them on the trucks for the twenty mile transport.

So off we go to Saddlebrook where the BGTB crew will be waiting to put the elephant together again!





“NEO”

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!!

After many months of work and a few trips from Brandon to Saddlebrook, about a 20 mile drive, the elephant, now named “NEO” was put together again!

There it stood in all its majesty, 13 feet tall with raised trunk holding signs proclaiming: **10th WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE and BROMELIAD GUILD OF TAMPAY BAY**.

Over “NEO’S” back was a blanket packed with outstanding colorful bromeliads. Neos of course!

NEO stood ready to welcome the attendees to the conference. What a spectacular introduction to the Safari!

Surrounding NEO was a large hall filled with exceptional displays that razzle-dazzled the eyes with unusual and colorful bromeliads shown to perfection in exotic settings. The sounds of waterfalls, bird calls and jungle noises fell pleasingly on the ears of viewers.

Visitors expressed awe and admiration for the appropriate settings and staging that carried out the Safari theme so well.

The displays were unbelievably authentic and the Bromeliad Society of South Florida rented a truck to transport their waterfall and jungle to the conference. The sounds of the jungle and running water from the exhibit ran non-stop as visitors could hardly tear themselves away from the scene. And then there were the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society, Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society, Sarasota Bromeliad Society, Seminole Bromeliad Society, and West Pasco Bromeliad Society who worked so hard to install the spectacular and unusual displays for our education and enjoyment.

When “NEO” was reassembled, Dave and Mary and their daughters, Debra and Denise, posed in front of the elephant. “Neo” had become a family project and dominated their lives for the year before the conference.

Dave and Mary were tired but happy that Neo had finally come to fruition from a little gold elephant to full size after months and months of work to build and finally to transport it to the conference.

Today, the little gold elephant belongs to Debra and brings back special memories of the time spent with her Mom and Dad building “Neo”.

Many people enjoyed having their pictures taken in front of “Neo”. It was a real centerpiece of the exhibit area and conference attendees commented enthusiastically on the creativity and beauty shown by the elephant and the displays.

Directing the exhibits were Carl Perryn, Wally Berg & Herb Hill, who made a dynamite team and an exhibit area like no other World Conference





Eva Racine Foster
1910 - 1991

10th WBC made tributes to two outstanding and very important women in the bromeliad world:

**Eva Racine Foster
and
Velva Gooding Wurthmann**

Many stories have been written about Racine Foster and her famous husband, Mulford Foster, but she was famous in her own rights and one of the founders of the Bromeliad Society.

Tom Wolfe contacted Racine's sister, Jeanne Denny, to obtain information about Racine for the tribute in the WBC program.



Mrs. Velva Gooding Wurthmann
1907-1991

Mrs. Denny told Tom that the famous North Carolina Tom Wolfe, who attended the University of NC at Chapel Hill, was a classmate of her husband.

She was very helpful in providing information and sent a copy of the handwritten letter from Lyman B. Smith. Although we did not publish it at the time, we found it informative and interesting:

*Racine Foster, self-effacing wife, teacher and nurse
Lyman B. Smith*

Few people realize how much of his famous 200 new bromeliads Mulford owed to the assistance of Racine. He climbed trees with great skill to collect live bromeliads and sometimes made good color sketches, but these were not adequate for the botanical description for legal new species. It was Racine's making dry herbarium specimens, an especially difficult job, as anyone knows who has done it, who made it possible.

It was Racine with her education of ten years teaching and tutoring, who made possible Mulford's Brazil, Orchid of the Tropics and numerous articles of the Bulletin and Journal.

She Racine was a charming and considerate hostess to my wife and others on our almost yearly visits to Bromel-La.

Finally Racine was Mulford's kind and loving nurse as he lay slowly dying. I had witnessed it because he had wished to see me one last time.

*Lyman B. Smith
August 12, 1991*

**Racine Foster, self-effacing wife,
teacher and nurse**

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Lyman B. Smith, August 12, 1991



Velva was a charter member of the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Inc., and an integral part of the formation of the society. She was well known in Tampa as the “Office Garden Lady” and the founder of Velva Deans Tropicals, an interiorscaping firm. She was always eager to share her plant knowledge with anyone seeking help. She was also well known for her watercolored paintings and her paintings of bromeliads on china plates.

We value the three hand painted plates displayed on my kitchen counter as a reminder of the wonderful person that she was. The plates were gifts to Tom for serving as President of the Guild for many years.

Velva never met a stranger and was one of the most hospitable persons in the society. Her wonderful, caring personality attracted many people to become members of the BGTB.

BGTB Holds “Queen for a Day”



Velva Dean Wurthmann’s hand painted bromeliad plates.

Velva Wurthmann

After Velva was robed with a red and white robe fit for a queen and a diamond tiara, President Tom Wolfe started the party by honoring Velva with a bouquet of twelve red roses for her years of service to the club.

He shared his special memories of her followed by charter member, Art VanHyning, Carl Perryn, Roland & Jean Schnabel, Mike O’Leary, and other BGTB members gave their best speeches about Velva.

She was surprised and delighted with the party!

I don’t recall when two women in bromeliads were honored at the same time, but they both passed away in 1991, a year before the conference.

Racine was still attending the quarterly FCBS meetings and Velva was active as long as her health allowed her to attend the meetings.

These two women, Eva Racine Foster and Velva Gooding Wurthmann were honored posthumously at the conference and deserved to be remembered and honored for their life of service to others.



Art VanHyning giving accolades to Velva



Grace Goode Handmade Rug for Auction

Grace Goode of Australia, world renown grower and hybridizer, is also well known for her artistic talents, rug making being one of them. She started in the late 1940s and was selling them at "Finney's" (a department store) in Brisbane, Australia. It is not known how many she made, must have been hundreds. All magnificent. Grace was very generous in contributing to fund raising efforts for other Societies and Conferences. She continued this support, at age 100, by donating one of her handmade rugs to Sunny Broms also known as the Sunshine Coast Bromeliad Society Inc., in Queensland, Australia, for their Auction.

Now you know why so many bromeliads carry the name of "Grace" because she was so loved, admired and generous!

Grace donated a beautiful hand woven rug from her collection to the BGTB and she sent a note requesting the proceeds from the auction of the rug were to go directly to the BGTB World Conference to

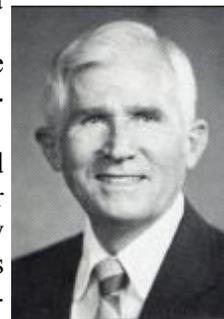
help defray expenses but instead the proceeds were co-mingled with the BSI auction funds and never received by the club. However, it was no problem as sales were great and the club made an excellent profit of \$25,296.64, paid all expenses, and made donations to many worthwhile projects: \$5,000 to the Weevil Fund, \$2500 FCBS general fund for their valuable support to the host society, BGTB, giving us enough money to buy the rare plant seedlings for our guest at Saddlebrook, donated awards for the show, donated the Extravaganza auction monies for WBC expenses, secured Harry Luther as the Keynote speaker for our banquet, and its members donated many hours of hard work to the conference, \$500 purchase a library cabinet, \$750 installed new lights, permanent screen and a new refrigerator in our meeting facility, \$500 donations to Eureka Springs County Park for a display house, and helped with other park projects in the area, and purchased a money market account to secure the future finances of the BGTB.

Ardie Reilly of the Greater Chicago Society was the lucky bidder and won the rug at a final bid of \$700.00.

Once the 10th WBC was over, the acknowledgement of our conference by the BSI was made by the BSI President, Odean Head in the *Journal, November-December 1992* as follows:

"Our latest World Bromeliad Conference in Tampa was just great. These world conferences are the best means we have for promoting fellowship within our membership on a wide scale. Tampa excelled in this area with approximately 568 registrations. This could well be a record attendance and certainly indicates a growing interest in world conferences. When you add the outstanding displays, the beautiful plants, the informative seminars, the wonderful sales, and the food and facilities, we enjoyed one of the best conferences ever."

Prior to the conference, Carl Perryn assured Tom and I that he would make pictures of the conference and give us a set of his pictures freeing us up to do other things; however, before the conference was over, his camera was taken from under a table so neither of us got pictures. Recently, Debra Fulkerson, shared her parents WBC photos with us which are included in this Newsletter. What a privilege to get to share these with you after 28 years! Our heartfelt appreciation to Debra! We hope to put these pictures, articles, and more online for future generations as well!



Odean Head,
President, BSI
1992-1995



CATOPSIS

By Tom Wolfe

The *Catopsis* genus includes 18 species, three of which are found in south Florida. Others are found in West Indies, Southern Mexico, Central America as well as many South American countries.

Most *Catopsis* species are epiphytic, sometimes saxicolous. Consequently they grow very well mounted on driftwood, tree fern slabs, cork bark or directly on trees. If potted, they do well in an orchid mix which is well-drained. They grow well in temperatures above 40°F in bright filtered sun. The leaves are soft with white powdery scurfing on the underside and free of spines.



Catopsis morreniana by George Aldrich
Best in Division, 2004 WBC—Chicago

Catopsis morreniana is one of my favorites. It's stoloniferous about the size of *Neoregelia* 'Fireball', dark green foliage and looks at home in a hanging basket.

Catopsis floribunda is the largest of the three Florida *Catopsis* natives. It has many narrow green leaves which form a tank. It has almost invisible trichomes on the underside of the leaves. This plant is found in dense hammocks of the Big Cypress Swamp growing on cypress, pond apple, red maple and oak.

The inflorescence has a semi pendant, twenty inch long bloom spike. It produces light green sepals which house the yellow petals. When ripe (mature) they pop open releasing many hairy seeds which are caught by the wind and hopefully attach to another host where it germinates to form a new plant. This is another dioecious plant so pollination is extremely important.

Catopsis berteroniana is formed in scrub cypress habitat on the western side of the Big Cypress Swamp growing virtually in full sun. Since cypress trees are deciduous they provide little to no shade in the winter months.

The leaves underside show a powdery wax on the leaves making part of the leaf look chalky white. Some literature classify this plant as carnivorous. As the sun shines on the wax-coated foliage, it provides a slippery slope for insects who fall into the tank or land on the inner side of the leaves and fall into the water becoming digested materials available for the plant to absorb. This designation is a photo-carnivore rather than a full-blown carnivorous plant such as the Venus flytrap.



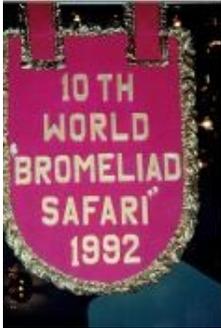
Catopsis berteroniana
By Karl Green,
BSSF Show

Catopsis nutans is the smallest of the Florida *Catopsis*, the rarest, and very endangered. They have very few green leaves with a chalky like wax scurfing on the underside. It's found only in the deep hammocks of the Fakahatchee Strand of the Big Cypress Swamp. The inflorescence is pendant with green sepals producing yellow petals. It can't tolerate bright light because of the lack of protective trichomes.

When I toured the Denver Botanical Gardens with the BSI Board of Directors, for a 'behind the scenes' tour of the bromeliad greenhouses, I happened to notice a *Catopsis* in bloom. I asked the curator, who was guiding us through the garden, if one of those *Catopsis* were available. He promptly acquired a pup for me. When I got home, I mounted it on driftwood and hung it in the greenhouse where it has been growing ever since. It turned out to be *Catopsis subulata* which produces a unique orange-yellow inflorescence which is rather showy for a *Catopsis*. I also noticed that the foliage was slightly marginated. The plant is definitely worth having in your collection.



*Catopsis
subulata*



I hope you have enjoyed the visit to the 10th World Bromeliad Conference and we have more stories, bromeliad pictures, and show plants to share in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Howard Frank, Professor Emeritus, Entomology & Nematology Department, University of Florida (jhfrank@ufl.edu) has notified us that his website: <http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/frank/bromeliadbiota/> is on the University of Florida website. Since Dr. Frank is retired, he does not know how long UF will carry the website but you will always be able to find it on the FCBS website at: <https://fcbs.org/Frank/bromeliadbiota>.

PROJECT UPDATE: SAVE FLORIDA'S BROMELIADS CONSERVATION

by Martha Pessaro, Florida Native Plant Society– For the full story view online at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HLJ2S63Dfk>

*Martha and her team were awarded a 2019 Conservation Grant to create, establish and implement a method to prevent the endangered Giant Airplant, *Tillandsia utriculata*, from going extinct while continuing to search for a way to control the weevil.*

BSI WORLD CONFERENCE SAME PLACE will be held on June 8, 2021 to June 12, 2021, at same place.

Information can be found at:

<https://www.bsi.org/new/conference-cor>

The **World Bromeliad Conference 2021** will be held in Sarasota, Florida, USA from Tuesday, June 8, 2021 through Saturday, June 12, 2021 at the [Hyatt Regency Sarasota](#). We will celebrate the **24th World Bromeliad**

Conference! Events will include tours of two of the world's leading Bromeliad nurseries ([Michael's Bromeliads](#) and [Tropiflora](#)), a visit to the renowned [Marie Selby Botanical Gardens](#) (with free admission for conference registrants), a number of notable speakers, an opening conference reception and welcome address, and a banquet with a rare plant sale and auction.



Steve Correale, 1927-2020

Member of Bromeliad Society South Florida

Over 50 members of the BSSF honored Steve Correale, Sr., at their August meeting for his 40 years of generous support, education and contributions to the Society.

Steve had devoted a major chunk of his life to the painstakingly slow, but eminently satisfying love of hybridizing tillandsias. Over a 10 year period, he had collected and crossed innumerable species and meticulously created a backyard brimming with Tillandsia hybrids strung from chain-link fence. At the time of his death, he had 66 plus hybrids and more maybe registered.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Virginia "Bea". He is survived by immediate family members: son, Stephen Correale, Jr. and daughter, Susan Styer, and granddaughter Katie Styer.



Florida Bromeliad Conservation Working Group-2020 Update

Belated Happy New Year’s greetings to everyone! We hope you all made it through 2020 safe and healthy. With pandemic closures and restrictions, we postponed the meeting of the Bromeliad Conservation Working Group that would have taken place in Fall of 2020. The last meeting in 2019 was productive and left our group with several strategic objectives in response to the devastating effects of the Mexican bromeliad weevil on bromeliad populations in Florida, especially the large tank-forming taxa. In summary, these were:

- Determine the taxonomic status of different *Tillandsia utriculata* populations across its purported range using molecular techniques to determine phylogenetic and population-level relationships.
- Investigate the possibility of weevil resistance in native Florida bromeliads.
- Investigate methods of treating or preventing weevil infestation.
- Continue efforts to preserve GAP’s on conservation lands where weevil activity threatens the populations through targeted caging, seed collection and dispersal, and continued monitoring.
- Establish a shared, online platform to track weevil spread and occurrence.

Despite the profound challenges of 2020, work on these objectives has been ongoing and many of you have contributed updates of your current work. Thank you to all of you that have continued these efforts and your willingness to share your work with the group is appreciated!

Update From Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

—Sally Chambers, Elizabeth Gandy, and Bruce Holst

Bromeliad seed storage work has been ongoing. Recent results show good germination for *T. utriculata* seeds that have been stored in the fridge or freezer, with 89% and 73% germination, respectively, after 30 months of storage, compared to zero germination after two years of storage in ambient conditions (Table 1). No efforts were made to clean or dessicate the seeds prior to storage so these results can be easily duplicated by anyone needing to store seed short term.

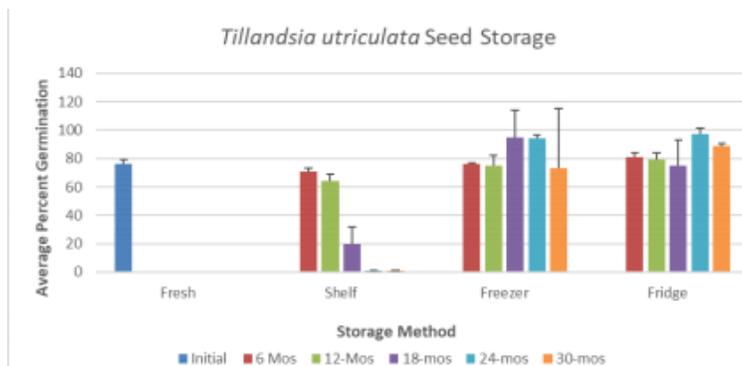


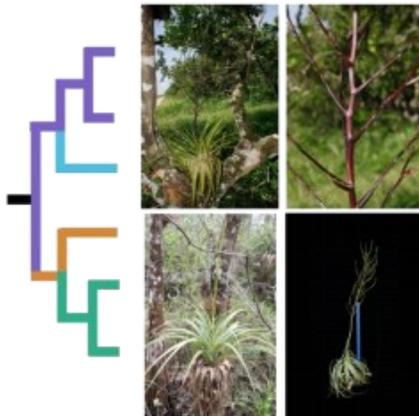
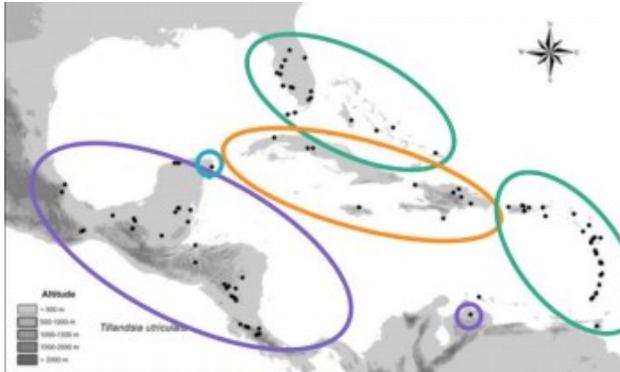
Table 1: Tillandsia utriculata seed storage up to 30 months

Selby Gardens has secured private funding to address several strategic objectives and research staff are currently working to secure all the permits to begin field collection.



First objective: Study large-scale phylogenetic patterns of the giant air plant (*T. utriculata*), hereafter referred to as GAP, across the species' geographic range – this will address the question of whether Florida populations are actually a separate species and test additional questions of phylogenetic relationships in this species as postulated by Juan Pablo Pinzon in 2016.

Taxonomic division of GAP as proposed by Pinzon in 2016.



Second Objective: Examine fine-scale patterns of genetic diversity among populations in the state of Florida. Sampling sites have been selected that span the geographic ranges of both GAPs and the Mexican weevil. These localities will also represent a mixture of areas that have documented significant weevil damage and those that seem to have evaded attack to this point. The overall goal is to see if the weevil preferentially attacks plants based on their genetic composition or if the attacks occur more or less at random (opportunistic events for the weevil). These data will also build a robust dataset allowing us to understand more of the basic biology of GAP, such as dispersal distances and reproduction (do plants nearby outcross, or fertilize one another, more often than plants that are further apart).



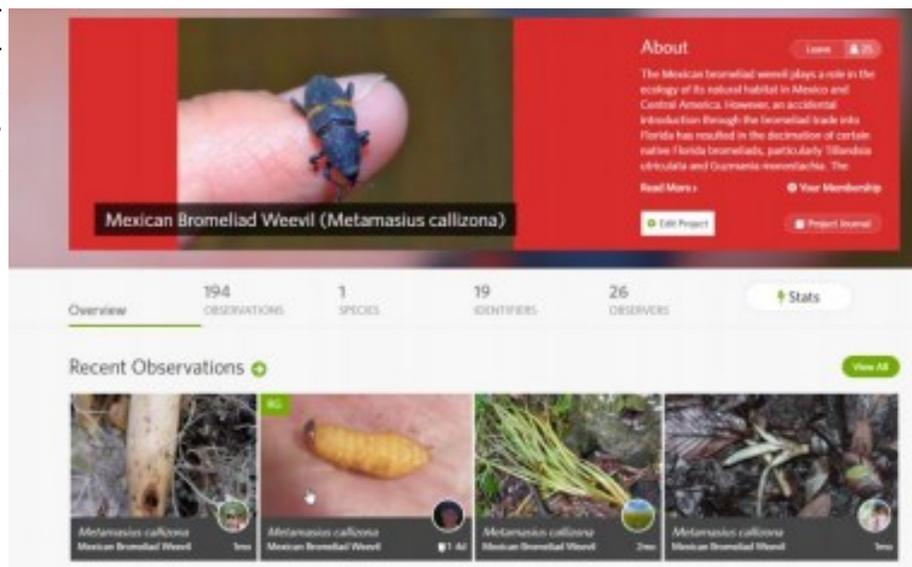
Overlap of *T. utriculata* and *M. callizona* occurrences in Florida based on published records



National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER grant proposal:

Dr. Sally Chambers submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation to address the two objectives outlined above, and to also study the tank communities of GAPs and a subset of its close relatives (*T. calcicola*, *T. pringlei*, and *T. elusiva*). Specifically, tank water would be sequenced to identify organisms utilizing the tank habitats. Water samples would also be screened directly for the presence or absence of the Mexican weevil. Educational activities were proposed to teach K-12 students about the importance of GAPs and the damage caused by the weevil while having them assist as citizen scientists with water collection and genetic screening. Although the proposal was not selected for funding this year, Dr. Chambers received valuable feedback from reviewers and will resubmit in 2021.

In response to the need to track occurrences of *Metamasius callizona* in Florida, Selby Gardens started an iNaturalist [project](#) to track observations. To date there have been 194 observations, about half of which are historic observations added from published literature. We encourage everyone to become an iNaturalist user if you aren't already and add any observations of bromeliad weevil damage that you find. Please use *Metamasius callizona* as the ID when you post and include as many images of the damage as you can. It is important to include images of the insect larvae, pupae or pupal chambers, and/or adults to confirm insect presence and elevate the observations to research grade.





Update From Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park
◆ **Mike Owen**

- Monitoring of the *Tillandsia utriculata* repatriation areas has yet to be done for 2020, but Mike observed a mature flower stalk, about 4 feet tall on a *T. utriculata* that matured and flowered in situ in the culvert area along Janes Scenic Drive where the very first GAP rescue was done in March 2014. Very exciting!
- Fresh impacts on *T. fasciculata* from *Metamasius callizona* have been observed along the Big Cypress boardwalk and within the Strand Swamp community off of Janes Scenic Drive. In April and mid-September, Mike observed 4 fallen *T. fasciculata* plants each in the Strand Swamp and on the boardwalk respectively. The *T. fasciculata* population at FSPSP was once estimated to be between 100 and 200 per acre, that's between 4.1 and 8.2 million plants, but only 5-10% of that remains post Mexican Bromeliad weevil invasion.
- There is also some good news for *T. fasciculata* as 27 new flower spikes were observed this year on a 2.39 square acre transect in the Strand Swamp.

Tillandsia fasciculata at Fakahatchee Strand. Photo by Shawn McCourt

Update from the Enchanted Forest

--Martha Pessaro

The Mexican bromeliad weevil infestation at the Enchanted Forest has been undeterred by the Covid19 Pandemic and bromeliads

continue to be attacked. Thanks to a Conservation Grant Award from the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) and Next Generation Energy, FPL, we were able to build and install two new weevil exclusion cages and have filled them with spiking plants. The grant also funded several interpretative signs which arrived in late July and were installed with the help of Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL).



Interpretative kiosk. Photo by Martha Pessaro



Conservation cages. Photo by Martha Pessaro Intern, Natalie Harrison.

A major conservation initiative was undertaken to move bromeliad hanging garden structures from remote areas of the Forest to a more visible and accessible area near the Management and Education Facility. These research gardens will be better protected and will facilitate ongoing research projects and enhance opportunities for education. Thanks to our partners at the Sea Rocket Chapter of FNPS, Seminole College intern, Natalie Harrison, from the Cuplet Fern Chapter of FNPS, and EEL staff and equipment for facilitating this move. The plants are adapting to the new location and our first structure, FrankieFly001, had six plants that grew to 18" and were taken to the Conservation cages after their processing. We look forward to more partnerships with FNPS, academia, government conservation teams, and our special group.

Through sharing ideas and processes that work we can make great strides in conservation and efforts to Save Florida's Bromeliads.

Update from Sarasota County

--Donna Day, Ernie Winn, Sherm Stratton, and Linda Lovallo

The bromeliad conservation program at T. Mabry Carlton Preserve continues with four main areas of focus:

◆ Protecting *Tillandsia utriculata* that are ready to spike or endangered by weevils or theft by sequestering the plants in large cages after treating them offsite with imidacloprid, a systemic insecticide. At the moment we have 4 such cages in which there are 22 *T. utriculata*, 13 of which are in infructescence.

• Spreading *T. utriculata* in as widespread areas as possible, taking caution to avoid areas that might be burned. This year we distributed seed using dust mops for lower areas and a gas leaf blower for higher placement. Rather than spread seed from one plant only at a site, we now mix the seed from different plants as we learned at the workshop last year. This is definitely the most exciting part of our efforts and we spread 67,380 seeds in 2020.

• Nurturing rescued *T. utriculata* in our onsite and offsite gardens. Since our last meeting we moved 14 of the plants which had reached III = 12" from our onsite garden to permanent locations as well as moving countless others we discovered on the ground or in precarious locations.

• Providing education about *T. utriculata* to display in a prominently placed kiosk at CR. Thanks to Martha Pessaro for allowing us to adapt her wonderful posters for CR! The 3 posters explain what *T. utriculata* are, why they are important, what is threatening them, what is being done, and what readers can do.



Photo I. Sherm Stratton



Photo 2. Sherm Stratton,

Bromeliad Conservation efforts around Sarasota County:

- GAP's relocated from areas to be roller-chopped or burned at Manasota Scrub. Fallen plants in fruit are propped near good host trees to aid plant establishment (Photo 1).
- GAPS seedlings that are too crowded are separated and relocated (Photo 2).
- Capsules that are compromised are "rescued" and the seed spread on appropriate host trees.



Photo 4 Sherm Stratton

- Any weevil infested plants are dismantled and the weevils destroyed (Photo 3). We have found up to nine in a single plant in various stages of development. On occasion a weevil-infested plant has been observed with a "pup" within the rosette (Photo 4), an interesting phenomenon.
- Monitoring is done using photo metadata that includes keywords and GPS coordinates for tracking. Points and activity tracks can then be put on Google Earth maps and provided to natural resource managers (Photo 5). Implementation of Survey123 to collect data will be starting soon.

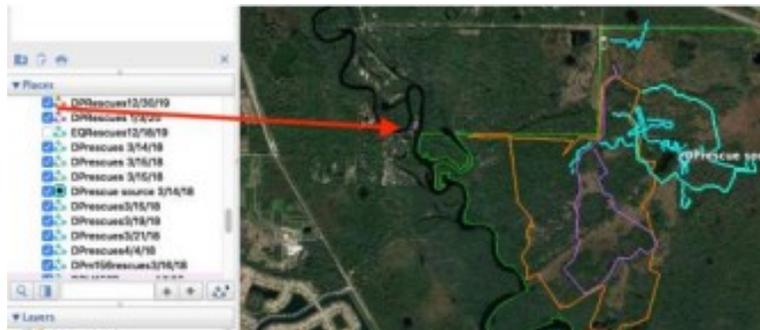


Photo 5, Sherm Stratton

Areas of concern for further research:

- Adaptation of GAP when spike damaged. We have seen a few of these (Photo 6).
- Non-viable seeds
- Continued weevil destruction – We now use iNaturalist to document areas – seems weevils might remember and return to areas of previous infestation.



Photo 6, Donna Day



Updates from New College of Florida

--Brad Oberle

Liliana Benitez, alumna New College of Florida, Sarasota, FL

Mentors: Brad Oberle, Sally Chambers and Brian Sidoti

Lili used species distribution models and microclimate data collection with data loggers to evaluate the effects of climate on distribution at large and fine scales, using two study sites: Myakka River State Park (MRSP) and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens (Fairchild), the former where the weevil has significantly reduced populations, and the latter where the weevil has not been reported. She found that at a large scale, the distributions of *T. fasciculata*, *T. utriculata*, and *M. callizona* are all driven primarily by wind speed, temperature, and precipitation, with minimum temperatures likely limiting northern *T. fasciculata* distribution more than *T. utriculata*, and dry spells limiting *T. utriculata* and *M. callizona* distributions. On a small scale, microclimate data suggests that *T. utriculata* prefers windier areas and potentially slightly warmer areas than *T. fasciculata*, however *M. callizona* presence in MRSP and absence in Fairchild despite similar model predictions suggests that its distribution in Florida might be more complex.



Environmental data collector. Photo by Sally Chambers



Anemometer to measure wind speed.
Photo by Sally Chambers

BioTECH students at Richmond Heights High School

Mentors: Brian Sidoti, Jolynne Woodmansee, Jamie Anderson and Brad Oberle

In 2019-2020 we established a site at Fairchild similar to MRSP to study the fine scale microclimatic effect on the distribution of *T. fasciculata* and *T. utriculata*. Preliminary results found that there are greater number of individuals and more varied class size of both species at Fairchild compared to MRSP. *T. utriculata* is prominent in the lowlands and *T. fasciculata* in the uplands.