

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

February 2011



NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:

Tuesday, February 1, 2011
Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30.

Location:

Hope Presbyterian Church
1698 South Belcher Road
Clearwater, Florida 33764

Program

Dennis Cathcart makes a very welcome return visit as our speaker. As most of you know, he is a life member of our society and a world-renowned bromeliad collector, grower, hybridizer, and expert, and owner of Tropiflora Nursery in Tallavast (Sarasota), Florida. He plans to talk to us about, and show us plenty of slides of, bromeliads in their native habitats from Mexico down through Argentina and into Brazil. He will include tales of some of his (in)famous collecting adventures, including some fairly risky situations. Dennis gives terrific and informative talks, always a treat.

Plant Sales

Pursuant to the newly revised Standing Rules (see *This and That* section below), there will be no member plant sales at this meeting.

Refreshments

Cindy Redmond, Refreshment Chair, reports that the folks who signed up to bring food for the February meeting are Mary Ann Albert, Patty McCloskey, Bert Smith, and Sharon Smith.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Program

Peter (Pieter) Bak of Cornelis Bak B.V. Nursery gave a presentation on *The Art of Breeding and Producing Millions of Seedlings*. Located 10 miles west of Amsterdam in The Netherlands, Corn.Bak



is a three-generation nursery that specializes in growing seedlings and small plants, primarily bromeliads along with other tropical plants. About 5% of their production includes tissue culture. (Note: The photographs used here are courtesy of Mr. Bak.)

Peter's grandfather started the nursery in 1936 with plants other than bromeliads. In 1965 Peter's father began growing bromeliads, initially only *Vriesea splendens*. Over the next few years, they added a few other varieties of bromeliads and in 1965 began producing bromeliad hybrids. In the 1970s, sales took off and grew steadily, and today they produce and sell millions of seedlings and small plants. About 60% of their sales are to other Dutch growers and, while the remaining 40% is primarily to nurseries in Belgium, Germany, and Italy, they also sell to growers, wholesalers, and exporters all over the world, from Europe to the United States and Japan.

Aerial view of Corn.Bak nursery →→

To meet the demands of increased sales, they have expanded their facility several times and today it covers 7.5 acres of greenhouses with sections for breeding, stock plants, testing, and production. They make their own hybrids from stock plants



and patent almost all of them. They work five years ahead to produce seedling stock and 10 to 15 years to get reliable hybrids. They test new hybrids twice before releasing them to the public.

The scope of their operations requires state-of-the-art technology. Corn.Bak uses rooftop reservoirs for fresh water supply and robot machinery that grades seedlings by size on an assembly line that processes about 10,000 plants an hour. Greenhouse roofs are ventilated with shade curtain on rolls that are computer driven to adjust the amount of shade provided, depending on the needs of the various plants.



Greenhouse roof system



Plant tables with shade curtain above

The plant tables are on rollers and mobile, and can be moved about the greenhouses as needed for access and tending. One to two times a week, the tables are moved to a stationary, overhead watering station that adjusts the amount of water and fertilizer for specific plant types. Corn.Bak is sensitive to environmental impacts and uses integrated pest management with biological control as much as possible. For more information, go to the Corn.Bak website: <http://www.bromelia.com/en>.



Seedling tables on rollers



Stationary, overhead watering system



←Corn.Bak displays at trade shows →



2011 Dues

Treasurer Brian Corey reminded members their dues are payable through February. You may pay dues at the February meeting, or send a check, payable to FWCBS, to Brian at 1153 Williams Drive South, St. Petersburg FL 33705.

Show and Tell

Bob Herberich *Bil.* 'Miz Mollie'
Alton Lee *Bil.* 'New Year's Eve'; *Aec. fasciata* (smooth-leaved form)
Gary Lund *Aec. caudata*
Helga Tarver *Til. bulbosa*; *Til.* 'Humbug'; *Til. ionantha*; *Bil.* "Lou Wilson"



Bil. 'Miz Mollie'

←← *Bil.* 'Miz Mollie'



Til. ionantha; *Bil.* "Lou Wilson"

THIS AND THAT

Standing Rules Revised

At the January 2011 FWCBS Board of Directors meeting, the Board voted to revise the Standing Rules to give a guest speaker the option of being the sole vendor of plants during the meeting at which they give their talk. In this event, there will be no member sales during that meeting. Copies of the revised rules will be distributed when they have been finalized.

Raffle Table

Keep up the good work with the raffle table, both with donations and ticket purchases. For the last two meetings, there have been some lovely plants and, as such, resulted in near-record sales.

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (FCBS) Report

Our Society's representatives to the FCBS, John and Janet Bankhead, report the following regarding the FCBS quarterly meeting held January 7, 2011, and hosted by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay:

- The FCBS website, fcbs.org, was renewed for another year with the hosting company, Network Solutions.
- The FCBS Webmaster Michael Andreas has posted Chapter 6 of a series of articles by Oscar Riberio of Brazil that offers an understanding and appreciation of where bromeliads grow and the people who live with them, as well as a look at the culture, history, environment, and pressures on the ecosystems in Eastern Brazil. Chapters 1 and 2 were posted on the website in January 2009 and Chapters 3, 4, and 5 were posted in January 2010. Mr. Riberio's nursery, Bromeliads Imperialis, located in Brazil, is dedicated to the cultivation of bromeliads in landscapes.

- There will be no Bromeliad Extravaganza® in 2012.
- The BSI World Bromeliad Conference (WBC) will be hosted by the FCBS on September 24-30, 2012. There is a contest to name the event, to give it a theme. For example, the last time a WBC was held in Orlando, the theme was “Orlandiana”, and in 2002, when our Society hosted the conference, it was “Bromeliad Beach Party”. The prize for the winning entry is a one-year BSI membership, or one-year extension of a current membership. Send your entries to John Bankhead.
- The FCBS will continue to suspend donations to the Bromeliad Identification Center (BIC; formerly at Marie Selby Gardens in Sarasota) until such time as a center has been re-established and an affiliation agreement has been signed with the BSI. In the meantime, societies may consider sending donations previously intended for BIC to the BSI, which can hold them or direct them as instructed.
- The next quarterly FCBS meeting will be on March 26.

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2011

March 26-27, GreenFest Plant Sale

University of Tampa, Tampa, FL (tampagreenfest.com)

April 1-3, Tropiflora Spring Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267 (tropiflora.com)

April 2-3, Bromeliad Judged Show and Sale

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Tampa Bay Garden Center, Tampa, FL

April 9-10, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

April 30-May 1, Green Thumb Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL (Chairman: Carol Lucia, 727-393-8276)

April 30-May 1, Sarasota Bromeliad Society Annual Show and Sale

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, FL

November 5, Bromeliad Extravaganza® 2011

Daytona Beach, hosted by the Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

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