

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2015

Celebrating over 60 Years of Bromeliads



February 2015 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:

Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

Location:

Good Samaritan Church

6085 Park Boulevard

Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Program

Teresa Cooper

Dr. Teresa Cooper, entomologist at the University of Florida Indian River Research and Education Center, will talk to us about *New Tactics for Saving Florida's Native Bromeliads*. She and others have been trying to establish a biological control (a predatory fly) to control an exotic Mexican weevil that has been destroying native bromeliads in Florida. Those efforts have met with limited success and the researchers are now rethinking their strategy, with one idea being to investigate why *Tillandsia utriculata* in Central America is resistant to the weevil while the same form of that plant in Florida is not.

Plant Sales

All members are welcome to sell bromeliads at the meeting. Sellers are requested to donate at least one plant to the evening's raffle table.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Program

Susan and Larry Sousa and Helga Tarver conducted a hands-on bromeliad mounting workshop with members invited to participate in the mounting process, and it was a resounding success. It was an appropriate follow-up to the mounting demonstration Helga and Chip Hill presented to us in January 2013 (see FWCBS February 2013 newsletter, *How to Mount Tillandsias and Grey-leafed Vrieseas*.) This most recent workshop was aimed at the newer members who missed the earlier demonstration and long-term members who wanted an excuse to mount a plant or two.

Susan and Larry, aided by Annie and Mitch Armstrong, had acquired a large inventory of bromeliads to mount, wood and shells to mount them on, and a selection of tools to use to attach the plants to the mounts. Plants and mounting materials were made available to members at a minimal cost.

Susan began the workshop with an overview of mounting based on information she gleaned from several sources including an article in the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies May 1984, Issue 2 newsletter, *Mounting Bromeliads*. After her introductory comments and mounting tutorial, she showed us examples of bromeliads that had been already been mounted so we could visualize the variety of finished products we could produce. The group then set about selecting plants and mounting media and eagerly settled in to putting their creations together. Several tables laden with various tools appropriate to the task were used as work benches, and Helga and a few others gave guidance and assistance where needed/requested.

Below is a summary that combines information from Susan's tutorial and Helga's 2013 presentation along with pictures of the supplies, members mounting their plants, and some of the finished products.

Examples of Mounted Plants

Below are pictures of the mounted bromeliads Susan showed the group, to inspire and encourage.



The Plants

- Plant choice: Most successful for mounting are epiphytic bromeliads (those that grow on tree branches and other surfaces) and saxicolous bromeliads (those that grow on rocks). Do not use terrestrial bromeliads such as Ananas, Cryptanthus, Deuterocohnia, Dyckia, Hechtia, Orthophytum, Pitcairnia, and Puya.
- It is best to mount a bromeliad when it is young, with root growth in progress. The young roots will set and anchor the plant to the mount. Do not use a blooming or spent plant as these will not be putting out new roots.
- For our workshop, we had a selection of young plants/pups that included Tillandsia, Neoregelia, Vriesea, and Aechmea, as pictured below.



The Mounting Material

- Use a solid, sound mounting material, something that will last.
- Rocks, shells, and ceramic objects work well with bromeliads that are saxicolous.
- Typical wood mounting materials include cork bark, rough strips of cypress, tree fern slabs, pine, cedar and driftwood.
- Do not use wood that has been treated with preservatives.

- Some say salt found in driftwood can have an adverse affect on plant roots and this wood should be soaked thoroughly in fresh water before use. Others have found salt in the wood does not have a negative effect.
- According to Helga, wood can be soaked in vinegar to increase the acidity in the wood which in turn aids root growth.
- The wood and shells selection we had at the workshop is pictured below. Pursuant to Helga's advice, Susan had soaked the wood in vinegar.



The Tools

The following are suggested tools and materials for mounting your bromeliads. Be thoughtful about the supplies you use in terms of their utility, longevity and appropriateness for the particular plant and mounting material.

- Bolt cutters, scissors, pliers
- Gloves (cloth or vinyl)
- Labels, either purchased or homemade (for example, venetian blinds slats)
- Pencil, to put plant name on a label. Note: marker pens will fade over time.
- Electric drill (for holes for hangers and ties)
- Staple gun with stainless steel staples and multiple depth nails. Do NOT use copper staples or copper nails; copper can damage the plant.
- Adhesives such as Goop, E-6000 craft glue, Ducco cement, Elmer's carpenter glue (takes a while to dry), wood glue, Loctite super glue, Liquid Nails, Tilly-Tacker (dries quickly, waterproof), and silicone caulk (clear, dries overnight). Do NOT use a hot-glue gun because it can burn the plant. Be aware of how long the adhesive selected will take to harden and plan accordingly.
- Ties to hold plant on the mount, such as floral tape, garden ties, hose, twine, cable ties (black not white; white will degrade quicker), plastic-coated wire (do not use bare copper wire), Velcro, lace, and nylon stockings. These can be removed, if desired, once the plant roots have anchored onto the mount.
- Hooks and hangers such as commercially available S-hooks, homemade hangers (using chain-link fence tension wire), nylon monofilament line, and Christmas decoration hooks.

- Sphagnum moss, if needed to keep roots wet and/or to hide roots.
- Susan and Larry had rounded up examples of most of the tools listed above for the workshop and these are pictured below.



Mounting the Plants

- Cut the wood, if needed, to a desired size for the plant that will be mounted.
- Drill a hole in the top of the wood piece for the hanger and insert the hook/hanger into the mount.
- Put a hole in the plant's nametag and slip the tag onto the hook. Secure it so that it does not slip off.
- Fasten – staple, glue, and/or tie -- the plant to the mount. It is important to secure the plant when mounting it so that it remains stable and can establish roots.
- Tying alone works well on plants with a rosette form, upright growth, and those with a small stem at the base.
- The plant should be positioned on the mounting material relative to its growth pattern. If the plant tends to grow downward and along a long stem like *Tillandsia funkiana* (picture below), place it at the top of the mounting material. And if the plant tends to grow upright like *Vriesea espinosae* (picture below), attach it to the bottom of the mounting material.



Tillandsia funkiana



Vriesea espinosae

- Tillandsias that tend to clump and have no apparent up or down growth pattern, such as *Til. bulbosa* and *Til. ionantha*, can be placed in any position on the mount.
- Not all Tillandsias need be mounted for display. Those that grow in a 'ball' form or do not grow good roots for anchoring (for example, *Til. intermedia* and *Til. aeranthos*) can be hung on a wire such as nylon monofilament.
- Fasten the young roots securely to the mounting material. With a young, small plant there will be less difficulty in keeping the roots secure when the wind blows while a heavy plant increases the burden on the roots.
- If using glue, it may be necessary to use binding or ties (see list of tools) while the glue is hardening.
- If you are mounting a plant that has been growing in potting soil, protect the newly mounted roots with wet sphagnum, tightly packed and tied on, until such time as the roots can adapt to the new environment.
- If you keep your mounted plants under cover in a greenhouse, remember to foliar feed them regularly, especially the Tillandsioideae.
- Mounted bromeliads are more compact and use overhead space that might be otherwise be wasted.

Below are pictures of the group working on their mounted plants and showing off their finished products.



Larry drilling holes.



Helga demonstrating mounting methods.





The Finished Projects



Show and Tell
by Helga Tarver

- Alton Lee *Vriesea* 'John Arden', Herb Hill hybrid (picture below)
- Franne Matwijczyk *Aechmea* 'Royal Wine' (picture below)
 Aec. 'Fascini' (*Aec. chantinii* x *fasciata*) (picture below)
 Aec. orlandiana
- Kathy Risley *Neoregelia* 'Ann Anderson'
- Linda Sheetz *Puya laxa* (picture below)
- Janet Stoffels *Aec. dealbata* (picture below)
 Aec. weilbachii var. *weilbachii* forma *pendula* (picture below)

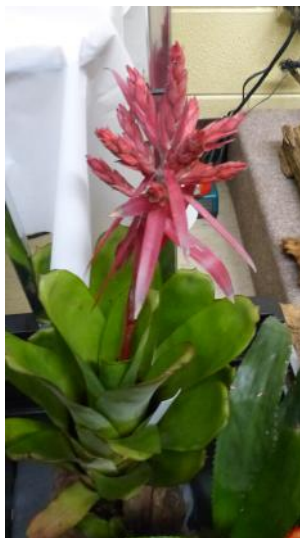
Show and Tell plants



Vriesea 'John Arden'



Aechmea 'Royal Wine'



Aechmea 'Fascini'



Puya laxa



Aechmea dealbata



Aechmea weillbachii var. *weillbachii* forma *pendula*

THIS AND THAT

Making 'S' Hooks for Hanging Plants

You do not need to spend a lot of money buying 'S' hooks for your hanging potted plants, be they bromeliads, orchids or whatever. You can make your own using galvanized chain-link fence tension wire. This wire is available for purchase at Home Depot, Lowe's and similar stores, and is typically about \$22 for a 170-foot long roll (picture on right). You will need a pair of bolt cutters (to cut the wire), a pair of pliers (for bending the wire into an 'S' shape) and a short piece of approximately 1 ½-inch diameter (or larger) metal pipe around which to bend the 'S' hook to help shape it. The advantages of using this wire are: 1) it is galvanized and sturdy, 2) you can cut it any length you want/need, 3) it is a ready supply; you can make a hook when you need one, 4) the 170-foot length will last a long time and make many hooks, and, 5) it is far cheaper than buying them.



Blooming this Month



Ursulaea macvaughii



Portea 'Candy'



Vriesea 'Robin'

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2015

March 14-15, Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale

Harry P. Leu Gardens, Orlando, FL (<http://www.leugardens.org>)

March 27-29, Tropiflora Spring Festival

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

March 28-29, GreenFest Plant Sale

University of Tampa, Tampa, FL (friendsofplantpark.com/greenfest)

April 11-12, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale

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

April 16-19, Bromsmatta, 18th Australasian Bromeliad Conference

Parramatta, Australia, hosted by the Bromeliad Society of Australia (www.bromeliad.org.au)

April 25-26, Green Thumb Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL (stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb)

August 15-16, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale

The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL (Ben Klugh at Klughka@yahoo.com)

September 26, Bromeliad Extravaganza, Bromeliads in the Magic City

Hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South FL (<http://www.bssf-miami.org>)

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