

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March 2013



NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2013
Location: Hope Presbyterian Church
1698 South Belcher Road
Clearwater, Florida 33764
Time: Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

Program

Dr. Terrie Bert's presentation, *The Outstandingly Ostentatious and Particularly Picturesque O & P Bromeliad Genera*, will be the second part of a talk she gave to our group in March 2012. (See the April 2012 newsletter for a review of that talk.) At that time she told us about four of the eight bromeliad genera that begin with the letters O or P and now she will tell us about the remaining four. And, as in the first talk, she will tell us about distribution, habitats, and growing conditions for each of the additional four genera. She will give examples of various species within each of those genera as they occur in nature and will describe how (or if) they can be cultivated by a collector. She promises a surprise at the end of the talk which, in the past, has been a quiz on some feature of her talk, and those with the right answers received a plant from her. So, pay attention and maybe you will retain enough information to be competitive in the 'game'.

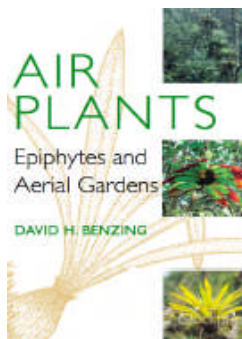
Plant Sales

Ms. Bert will be the sole vendor of plants for this meeting and therefore there will be no member plant sales.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Program

Dr. David Benzing's presentation was titled *How Does Family Bromeliaceae Demonstrate the Reality of Darwinian Evolution?* He discussed four common myths about the process of evolution and showed us examples of how bromeliads illustrate the process. He covers this topic in greater detail in his new book *Air Plants: Epiphytes and Aerial Gardens* (pictured below).



Evolution is necessary for life because it allows plants and animals to adapt to and survive changes that occur over time in their environment (habitat). How these adaptations are made is more a matter of error and trial, not trial and error. Cellular mutations or genetic accidents (errors) that occur can produce new traits or characteristics in an organism. Organisms that develop a new trait that allows them to deal with subsequent changes (trials) in growing conditions within their habitat are better suited to adapt and survive the changes. Such adaptations allow organisms to survive in a niche while others without those traits cannot.

Bromeliads are almost unmatched among plants for living in habitats that require drought tolerance and dependence on alternative and often scarce supplies of key nutrients. And this is what makes them useful for demonstrating plant adaptations. The focus of David's talk was to refute four common misconceptions about evolution and he used examples of bromeliads to make those points, as follows.

1. It is not true that newer, more complex species displace older 'primitive' species. For example, the picture on the right shows *Vriesea* growing beside a primitive plant form, a lycophyte (clubmoss). The genus *Vriesea* is no more than a few million years old and the lycophyte in the picture is essentially the same as its ancestors that lived more than 300 million years ago.
2. It is not true that characteristics or adaptations never evolve more than once. The leafy tanks of bromeliads have evolved repeatedly throughout their evolution.
3. It is not true that evolution always progresses from simple to more complex forms or structures and from less to more efficient functions. Tillandsias have minimized form and function by developing harder, fewer leaves, minimizing shoots, and being essentially rootless. These traits give them an advantage in stressful habitats. Tillandsias are the most successful in the family Bromeliaceae in adapting to a wide range of habitats.
4. It is not true that major changes in form and function require millions of years. Evolution does not always proceed in small steps and in some plants, such as bromeliads, different aspects of its body evolve at different rates.



Show and Tell

Reported by Helga Tarver

Tom Crocker	<i>Aechmea nudicaulis</i> ; <i>Billbergia</i> (species or cultivar unknown)
John Edwards	<i>Portea</i> (probably <i>Portea alatisepala</i>)
Alton Lee	<i>Vriesea</i> 'Keri Ann'; <i>Aec. racinae</i>
Gary Lund	<i>Aec.</i> 'Kashkineana'; <i>Tillandsia coinaensis</i> x <i>Til. concolor</i>
Franne Matwijczyk	<i>Aec.</i> 'Red Ribbon'
Mary Reid	<i>Til.</i> 'Veronica's Mariposa'; <i>Til. bulbosa</i> (red form)
Linda Sheetz	<i>Aec. nidularioides</i>
Larry Sousa	<i>Aec. bromeliifolia</i> ; <i>Aec.</i> 'Bert'; <i>Neoregelia</i> (unnamed Grant Groves hybrid)

Below are pictures of Show and Tell plants.



Billbergia (unknown species or cultivar)



Aechmea nidularioides



Portea (possibly *alatisepala*)



Till. 'Veronica's Mariposa'



Aechmea nudicaulis

THIS AND THAT

Bromeliad Extravaganza 2013

Committees: President Susan Sousa is urging members to sign up for one or more of the various committees needed to make the Bromeliad Extravaganza we are hosting in September 2013 a success. She will have committee sign-up sheets at the next meeting, so look them over and decide which one(s) you will join.

Theme-Naming Contest: Every Extravaganza has a theme. For example, the 2011 Extravaganza's theme was "The Art of Bromeliads". The theme gives the event a personality and is displayed in advertising, on signs, in the program, and so on. To help us come up with a theme for our 2013 Extravaganza, members are invited to submit their idea(s) for a name. The Board will review submittals and decide which is the most appropriate for our venue. The winning theme will earn the author a free banquet meal at the Extravaganza. So, turn on your brain and sharpen your pencils.

2013 Dues

Members are reminded that their dues were payable through February. You may pay dues at the next meeting, or send a check, payable to FWCBS, to our treasurer Mary Sue Beeler at 2755 Feather Sound Drive, Clearwater FL 33762.

New Members

Please welcome the four new members who joined at the January meeting, Susan Haney, Laurie MacAdams, and Glennon and Cynthia Reidler, and two new members who joined at the February meeting, MariaElena Marcet and Maria Rodriguez. Also welcome back Carol Schultz who is a past president of our group and rejoined at the January meeting after a several year hiatus.

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2013

March 16-17, Leu Gardens Annual Plant Sale

Leu Gardens, Orlando, FL (leugardens.org)

March 23-24 GreenFest Plant Sale

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

April 5-7, Tropiflora Spring Festival

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

April 13-14, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale

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

April 20-21, Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society Sale

Sanford Garden Club, Sanford, FL (407-539-4314)

April 27-28, Green Thumb Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL

May 11-12, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Mother's Day Sale

Fashion Square Mall, Orlando, FL (mybscf.org)

August 10, Bromeliad Sale

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

September 21, Bromeliad Extravaganza® 2013

The Holiday Inn Harborside, Indian Rocks Beach, hosted by the FWCBS and sponsored by the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (contact Judy Lund at glund@tampabay.rr.com)

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