

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY
1954-2021

Celebrating over 67 Years in Bromeliads

fwcbs.org



May 2021 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING—IN PERSON!

Date: Saturday, May 1st, 2021
Time: 2 to 4 pm
Location: Sandy Holloway's Garden
11590 74th Avenue
Seminole

PROGRAM

This month's meeting will be our first in-person gathering since March 2020. It will be held on a Saturday afternoon instead of our usual Tuesday evening and at member Sandy Holloway's garden instead of the meeting room at the church where we typically meet. These changes are temporary and were made to accommodate health safety precautions during the Covid-19 pandemic until we can once again meet on the first Tuesday of the month at the church.

There will be no formal program at this meeting, but rather an opportunity to gather among bromeliad friends while we tour Sandy's garden. There will also be no Show and Tell but there will be a Raffle Table and a Friendship (free plant) Table. We have all accumulated more bromeliads this past year with no outlet to distribute them and now we have the opportunity to share our overstock with others with both the Raffle and Friendship tables.

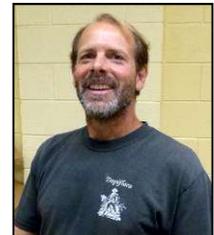
Details for the meeting, including a map to Sandy's house and health safety precautions, have been sent to members by email prior to this newsletter issue.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The meeting in April was conducted via Zoom on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, with members of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society (SBS) joining in with us once again as they did for the March meeting. Richard Poole (FWCBS) and Ray Lemieux (SBS) presented a program on the topic of the genus *Pitcairnia*. The slides they used were put together by Keith Smith as part of one of the programs in the Bromeliad Society International (BSI)



Richard Poole



Ray Lemieux

Media Library that is available to affiliated societies. These programs consist of 80 to 120 slides about various genera and other topics, along with presenter notes for the slides.

Richard and Ray showed slides of 50 *Pitcairnia* species (from *Pit. arcuata* to *Pit. xanthocalyx*) and three hybrids (*Pit. 'Flaming arrow'*, *Pit. 'Bud Curtis'*, and *Pit. 'Odd Fellow'*) and discussed *Pitcairnia* native habitats, growing conditions, care, and propagation. The following is a summary of the April presentation augmented with information from a program on *Pitcairnia* that Terrie Bert gave to our society in September 2019 and other sources.

OVERVIEW

- The genus *Pitcairnia* is in the plant family *Bromeliaceae*, subfamily *Pitcairnioideae*. It was named for Dr. William Pitcairn (1712-1791), a Scottish physician, botanist, and a Fellow of the British Royal Society.
- It is the second largest bromeliad genus with about 400 species, the largest being the genus *Tillandsia* with about 650 species (some sources report between 500 and 600).
- The BSI Bromeliad Cultivar Registry currently lists 28 *Pitcairnia* hybrids. Below are pictures of two unregistered hybrids, *Pit. 'Odd Fellow'* (*Pit. echinata* x *Pit. pseudoundulata*) on the left and *Pit. sanguinea* x *Pit. undulata* on the right. To date, there are no reported bigeneric crosses that include *Pitcairnia* as either the pollen or the seed parent.



Pitcairnia 'Odd Fellow'
(Richard Poole)



Pitcairnia sanguinea x *undulata*
(Linda Sheetz)



- In the 1970s, taxonomists assigned *Pitcairnia* and *Pepinia* as subgenera in the genus *Pitcairnia*, and in 1988 other taxonomists elevated both of these to genus level. The earlier classifications were based on morphological characteristics of seed structures. According to Eric Gouda, based on recent DNA sequencing and molecular data, most taxonomists have excluded *Pepinia* as a genus. On this basis, Gouda and others reassigned all *Pepinia* species to the genus *Pitcairnia*, except for one species that was assigned to the genus *Werauhia*. (Eric, along with Derek Butcher, maintains the BSI species taxon list, which you can see at this link-- <http://bromeliad.nl/taxonlist/>).
- The genus *Pitcairnia* is a 'primitive' bromeliad genus, that is, it is one of the earliest bromeliad genera to have evolved. It originated in the Guiana Shield in South America

and today is found in habitats from Northern Mexico throughout Central America, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America to Patagonia. It is most abundant in Colombia, Peru, and Brazil. One species, *Pitcairnia feliciana*, found in western Africa is believed to have originated there through seed dispersal by bird from the New World.

- *Pitcairnia* species are considered pioneering plants, meaning they are often among the first plants to colonize barren or disrupted environments.
- While almost all *Pitcairnia* are terrestrial or saxicolous, some can be found growing epiphytically in trees.
- Most species in this genus can be found in moist rainforests and are also found in tropical humid and semi-arid areas. Most require a lot of water and prefer to grow in moist areas such as near or under waterfalls, along streams, and occasionally in flood plains.
- Within this genus there is a wide variety in leaves, inflorescences, forms, and colors.
- Leaves
 - *Pitcairnia* is characterized by soft, drooping grass-like leaves, pictured in the two examples below on the left. Examples of exceptions to this leaf form are *Pit. tabuliformis* (pictured below on the right), *Pit. burle-marxii*, and *Pit. pseudoundulata*.



Pit. augustifolia
(Richard Poole)



Pit. cardenasis
(Richard Poole)



Pit. tabuliformis
(Marian Kennell)

- A few species have spines, while others are spineless. Some species have both types of leaves –spiny and spineless –on the same plant. Some even have spines at the bases of the leaf but none along the blades.
- When they are young plants, they can have thin, stiff, spiny leaves to put off animals that might want to graze on them.
- Some species, for example *Pit. Heterophylla*, become dormant annually and shed their leaves at the start of the dry season or autumn.
- Inflorescence
 - There are two main types of inflorescences: unbranched with upturned flowers and branched with flowers growing in various directions. These are typically brightly

colored in pinks, reds, oranges and occasionally yellows and whites. Many Pitcairnias are known for having a long-lasting inflorescence.

- Although the inflorescences tend to grow upright, some have a unique characteristic of growing horizontally or along the ground for long distances. Upright stalks can be short, near the base of the leaves, or tall and extend above the leaves.
- They usually bloom in early summer.
- Flowers
 - They have long, thin, tube-shaped flowers that require long-tongued pollinators such as hummingbirds, bats, and moths. They can also self-pollinate.
 - While the most common flower color is red, white flowers are more common at higher elevations. Other flower colors include yellow and pink.

CULTIVATION

- Soil: Soil medium should be well-drained, whether the plant is in a pot or in the ground. For pots, use 60% soil with 40% perlite; optional materials to include are peat and wood chips with volcanic rocks at the base of the pot.
- Pots: Pitcairnias typically like bigger pots than other bromeliads do, especially terrestrial species. Use big pots, about 10 to 12 inches in diameter or larger. Pitcairnias can be very prolific and will outgrow smaller pots as they increase in number.
- Light: They are shade loving and prefer shade to filtered sun. Avoid full afternoon sun. They can tolerate oak leaves in them but not acorns.
- Moisture: They love moisture and need supplemental water, especially in the dry season. Place them under sprinklers, an air conditioner drain, or on a saucer that holds about ½ inch of water.
- Nutrients: They like fertilizer; use a slow-release product.
- Temperature: While they prefer mild climates with moderate temperatures, some can tolerate cool but not cold temperatures.
- Pitcairnias can be used in the landscape and they also make excellent indoor plants.

PROPAGATION

- Pitcairnias propagate by means of seed, offshoots (pups), and/or sections of rhizomes. Some Pitcairnias form bulbous-like growths that can be broken apart to provide new plants.
- Seed: Like other bromeliads in the subfamily *Pitcairnioideae*, Pitcairnias have dry seed capsules that split and release light-weight seeds for distribution by wind or attaching to an unsuspecting passerby. They are easily propagated from seed.
- Pups: Pups can be removed and planted separately or allowed to grow in clumps attached to the mother plant.
- Rhizomes: For species with underground rhizomes, one can detach a piece of a rhizome, taking care to obtain a piece with roots attached, and plant it in a suitable mix.

Richard stated that BSI has a seed bank from which one can purchase seeds for three *Pitcairnia* species--*maidifolia*, *nigra*, and *staminea*. This seed bank is a way to obtain many uncommon or rare bromeliads that are not grown in cultivation. For more information go to this BSI link--<https://www.bsi.org/new/seed-fund/>.

SHOW AND TELL

- Jerry Cowley (SBS) *Aechmea* 'Loie's Pride', a Bullis hybrid (picture below)
Aechmea 'Patricia's Secret' (picture below); a Bullis hybrid (*Aec. eurcarymbus* x (*Aec. chantinii* x *Aec. tessmannii*))
Alcantarea 'Aurora' (picture below); cultivar of *Alcan. glaziouana* X *Androlaechmea* 'Dean' (*Androlepis skinneri* x *Aechmea mariae-reginae*)
Billbergia 'La Vie en Rose', a Don Beadle/Michael Kiehl hybrid (*Bil.* 'Hallelujah' x *Bil. kuhlmannii*)
- Kim Foust *Neoregelia* 'Fireball', in a birdbath
- Barb Gardner *Dyckia* 'Cherry Coke' (*D. platyphylla* x *D.* 'Carlsbad') (picture below)
Neoregelia johannis (picture below)
Neoregelia macwilliamsii
- Monika Hale *Guzmania monostachia*
Hohenbergia stellata
Vriesea species or hybrid
- Marian Kennell (SBS) *Billbergia viridiflora* (picture below)
Cryptanthus 'Jane Nicole' (picture below); cultivar of *Crypt.* 'Glad'
Forzzaea leopoldo-horstii (picture below)
Pitcairnia tabuliformis (picture above in the 'Program' section)
- Kris Perry (SBS) *Orthophytum gurkenii* (picture below)
- Richard Poole *Aechmea distichantha* var. *distichantha* (formerly *brasiliensis*)
Neoregelia 'DeRolf' (picture below); cultivar of *Neo. johannis*
Pitcairnia augustifolia (picture above in Program section)
Pitcairnia cardenasis (picture above in Program section)
Pitcairnia 'Odd Fellow' (picture above in Program section)
- Linda Sheetz *Canistrum triangulare* (picture below)
Neoregelia 'Royal Beauty' (picture below); (*Neo. carolinae* variegated x *carolinae* "pink") x *Neo.* 'Royal Cordovan')
Pitcairnia sanguinea x *undulata* (picture above in Program section)
Tillandsia 'Juncifolia' (pictures below); cultivar of *Til. juncea*

SHOW AND TELL PLANTS

Jerry Cowley (SBS)



Aechmea 'Loie's Pride'



Aechmea 'Patricia's Secret'



Alcantarea 'Aurora'

Barb Gardner (FWCBS)



Neoregelia johannis



Dyckia 'Cherry
Coke'

Marian Kennell (SBS)



Billbergia viridiflora



Cryptanthus 'Jane Nicole'



Forzzaea leopoldo-horstii

Kris Perry (SBS)



Orthophytum gurkenii

Richard Poole (FWCBS)



Neoregelia 'DeRolf', 3 feet wide

Linda Sheetz (FWCBS)



Canistrum triangulare



Neoregelia 'Royal Beauty'



Tillandsia 'Juncifolia', showing (left to right) the plant, bloom stalk, flowers and seeds

THIS AND THAT

***Tillandsia* Gone Missing**

In 2010, at the World Bromeliad Conference in New Orleans, we acquired a *Tillandsia intermedia* from Paul Isley. The plant produced offsets from the tip of the bloom spike and at the base of the mother plant. Over time it grew into a cluster of hanging, intertwined plants about 3 feet long (picture on the right). It hung from a trunk of one of the paurotis palms near the front door among other *Tillandsia* that hang there.

A few months ago, the plant was no longer in its usual spot and was nowhere to be found. It was not on the ground or anywhere else nearby. It was too securely attached to have fallen from the palm or have blown away by a strong wind. Squirrels, the usual suspects I go to for mischievous acts in the yard, would have to have been very clever to go about unhooking it from the palm trunk. I can only hope it is thriving wherever it is.



Tillandsia intermedia

BROMELIAD AND OTHER PLANT EVENTS, 2021

May 7-9, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida 46th Annual Mother's Day Show and Sale
Fashion Square Mall, 3201 E Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL 32803
(<https://www.bromeliadorslando.com/activities>)

May 15, Garden Club of St. Petersburg Plant Sale and Show
8:30 am to 2 pm, 500 Sunset Drive, St. Petersburg,
(<http://www.gardenclubstpetersburg.org/>)

June 19-20, USF Botanical Gardens Summer Plant Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (<https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/botanical-gardens/>)

October 9-10, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (<https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/botanical-gardens/>)

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