

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2014

*Celebrating 60 Years of Bromeliads*

*floridabromeliads.org*



## July 2014 Newsletter

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### NEXT MEETING

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**Date & Time:**

Tuesday, July 1

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

**Location:**

Good Samaritan Church

6085 Park Boulevard

Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

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### Program

**Dennis Cathcart's** presentation, *New Explorations and Discoveries in Brazil--Part I*, is based on the recent five-week trip he and his wife Linda took to Brazil that took them through four of Brazil's 26 states. Their objectives were to find Dyckias and other terrestrial bromeliads and visit some of the bromeliad colonies they had known from past visits to Brazil. Along the way they found the Dyckias and so much more—varied scenery, diverse biological zones and climates, wildlife, insects, and plants. Hopefully the 'Part I' in the title means we can look forward to additional chapters in their 2014 Brazil tour story.

Dennis and Linda have owned and operated Tropiflora Nursery in Sarasota, Florida, since 1976. The nursery specializes in rare and exotic plants, primarily bromeliads along with orchids, cycads, caudiciforms, succulents, ferns, palms and more. It is one of the largest collector-oriented exotic plant nurseries in the United States and has over 200,000 square feet of greenhouses. Many of the plants in their collection were collected by them as seeds and cuttings on their more than 100 collecting expeditions made in over 35 years and in 27 countries.

### Plant Sales

The speaker will be the sole plant vendor for this meeting and there will be no member plant sales.

### LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

#### Speaker

**Dr. Terrie Bert's** presentation, *The Q and R Bromeliads—Quiet Riots*, was the third in a series of talks she had given on various genera, this time *Quesnelia*, *Racinaea*, and *Ronnbergia*. She described how characteristics such as inflorescences and flowers evolved to allow them to adapt to their various habitats, and she showed pictures of all the plants she described. (The majority of her pictures were from the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies website and one can check them out at [fcbs.org](http://fcbs.org).) Plants in these three genera are not commonly grown in Florida and Terrie offered some tips for the hardy souls who might consider acquiring and trying to grow them. The following are some points from her talk.



#### Genus *Quesnelia*

- This is an old genus in terms of bromeliad evolution and has 23 species.
- The genus was named for M. Quesnel, a 19<sup>th</sup> century French consul in French Guinea.
- Their native habitats are in southeast Brazil, primarily along the coast.
- They are epiphytic or terrestrial.

- Some species have flower and plant shapes that are similar to *Aechmea* and *Billbergia* species and some species had previously been placed in one or both of those two genera.
- Most are pollinated by hummingbirds and have flowers shaped to receive their long beaks.
- There are two sub-genera, *Quesnelia* and *Billbergiopsis*, with the majority of the species in the latter.
- Subgenus Quesnelia:
  - Many grow in coastal areas.
  - Inflorescences (bloom stalks) range from long to short with long flowers.
  - Species in this subgenus include *tillandsioides*, *quesneliana*, *arvensis*, *testudo*, and *testudo albomarginata*.
- Subgenus Billbergiopsis:
  - Most of the species in the genus *Quesnelia* are in this subgenus.
  - The majority of the species in this subgenus emerged as a sister group to the genus *Billbergia*.
  - Most grow at high altitudes.
  - Inflorescences range from long stems with long floral bracts and long flowers to short stalks with big floral bracts and short flowers. [Bract: modified leaf, often a flower-like structure associated with the true flowers]
  - Species in this subgenus include *indecora*, *humilis*, *imbricata*, *complanata*, *strobilispica*, and *seideliana*.
- Many in this genus are hard to grow in Florida.
- Light: They prefer shade and can take full sun for part of the day.
- Moisture: They require areas of high moisture and good air movement around them.
- Medium: They will grow in a regular potting mix.
- Fertilizing: They like fertilizer and prefer slow, time-release pellets placed on and in the soil around them. One can also place two or three pellets at the base of outside leaves.
- Temperature: They are cold tolerant.

#### Genus Racinaea

- This is a newer (i.e., younger) genus and has 74 species, many of which were formerly in the genus *Tillandsia*.
- The genus was named for Racine Foster, who was the wife of bromeliad pioneer Mulford Foster and was often called the first lady of bromeliads.
- Their native habitats range from Mexico to Bolivia and northern Brazil to southeast Brazil.
- They grow as understory epiphytes, do not need soil, and some grow in water.
- They have evolved a genetic flexibility and adapted to a range of habitats, from warm lowlands to cool, moist high altitudes.
- Their bloom stalks range from simple to elaborate structures.
- Their leaves range from straight and stiff to flexible and wavy to help them take in water and food, and to provide protection from sun and wind and animals that might feed on them.
- Some examples of species in this genus:
  - *seemannii*, inflorescence similar to a typical *Pitcairnia* bloom stalk, pollinated by hummingbirds
  - *crispa*, curling and undulating leaf
  - *contorta*, wavy leaves
  - *fraiseri*, very complex inflorescent
- Other species of note are *contorta*, *parviflora*, *pugiformis*, *schumanniana*, *spiculosa*, the *tetrantha* varieties and *undulifolia*.
- This genus is hard to grow in Florida.
- Light: They prefer shade.
- Moisture: They like high humidity and should be kept moist.
- Fertilizing: Fertilize cautiously with a slow, time-release product.
- Temperature: These plants grow in warm to cool (not cold) temperatures.

#### Genus Ronnbergia

- This is an older genus and has 14 species.
- The genus was named for Auguste Ronnberg, a 19th century Belgian horticulturist.

- Their native habitats are split into two areas: 1) Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, and Central America, and 2) southeast Brazil.
- They are terrestrial and epiphytic and grow in wet cloud forests.
- They are pollinated by moths and other insects.
- They produce brightly colored seed pods, which attract birds that eat the seeds and then disperse them.
- Most are sessile, that is, have no stalk, with simple flowers that rest directly on a stem. Some species like *silvana* and *carvalhoi* have a slightly extended stalk that rises just above the plant center, and a few like *brasiliensis* have a longer, pendent stalk.
- This genus is hard to grow in Florida.
- Light: They prefer protected, shady places.
- Moisture: They like to be kept moist.
- Medium: They prefer a loose, well-drained mix.
- Fertilizing: Fertilize cautiously, with low amounts of a slow, time-release product.
- Temperature: They are cold sensitive.

### Show and Tell

Reported by Helga Tarver

Bruce Garley *Tillandsia concolor*; *Til. streptophylla*, *Til.* 'Redy' (*T. streptophylla* x *T. concolor*);  
*Til. caput-medusae*

Franne Matwijczyk *Billbergia brasiliensis*; *Neoregelia* 'Pittsburgh Style'; *Neo. carolinae* hybrid  
Nicole Matwijczyk Photos of *Aechmea mariae-reginae* and *Aec.* 'Patricia' (see below);  
*Guzmania* 'Tutti Frutti'

Kathy Risley *Neo.* 'Red Dot'; *Neo.* 'Inca' x 'Fireball'; *Neo. wilsoniana*; *Bil.* 'Kyoto'  
(These were offspring from plants Kathy had won from past raffle tables and she was honoring the policy of donating back to the raffle table.)

Helga Tarver *Til. didistica*; *Til. pseudobaileyi*

Below are pictures of Show and Tell plants.



*Neoregelia* 'Pittsburgh Style'



*Guzmania* 'Tutti Frutti'



*Aechmea* 'Patricia'

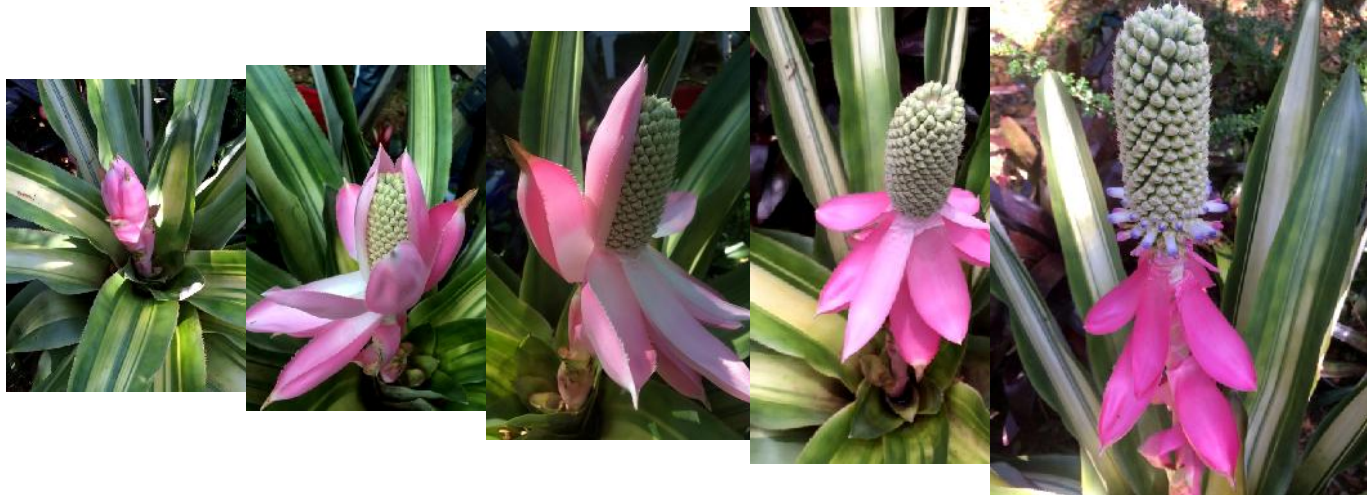


*Tillandsia concolor*



*Til. didistica*

Below are Nicole Matwijczyk's pictures of her *Aechmea mariae-regina* taken during a 21-day period (May 7 through May 28) showing the bloom stalk as it matures. She noted that this bromeliad is one of the few that is dioecious, which means they have their male and female reproductive structures on separate plants and the flowers indicate which gender. (Most bromeliads are monoecious, that is, have separate male and female flowers on the same plant.)



**Plants in Bloom this Month**



*Quesnelia marmorata* with close up of a bloom stalk



*Neoregelia 'Petra'*

### UPCOMING EVENTS, 2014

June 27 & 28, Tropiflora Summer Plant Sale

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

August 9, USF Bromeliad Sale

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

August 16-17, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale

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

September 8-14, 21<sup>st</sup> World Bromeliad Conference, *Bromeliads in Paradise*

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA (www.bsi.org/new/wbc-2014-registration-and-info)

October 3-4, Tropiflora Fall Festival

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

October 11-12, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale

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

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