

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2016

Celebrating over 62 Years in Bromeliads

floridabromeliads.org



October 2016 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:

Tuesday, October 4, 2016
Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

Location:

Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Program

Phil Elting, owner of Elting's Exotic Plants nursery in Riverview, Florida, will give a presentation titled *How to Reproduce Bromeliads from Tissue Culture, Seeds and Pups* about bromeliad reproduction including the how and why of commercial plant growing. Phil has almost 40 years of experience in growing tropical plants, the vast majority of which are bromeliads. He has 40,000 square feet of greenhouse and shade house operations, 90 per cent of which is used for growing bromeliads, primarily Vriesea, Guzmania and Tillandsia.

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

Dennis Cathcart was the evening's speaker, providing another of his informative and entertaining talks. Dennis has been a member of our society for 40 plus years and started, as he says, as a neophyte. From that modest beginning, he has built a career in bromeliads and along the way became a world-renowned expert on the subject. Dennis's talk, titled *Bromeliads in the Wilderness*, was part horticulture and part travel adventure. He started off with a description of native Florida bromeliads. He then launched into descriptions of seven natural bromeliad habitats and typical bromeliads found in them, many of which he encountered over the course of collecting trips he has made to South America and Central America. Throughout the evening, he injected stories of some of the uncomfortable or dangerous situations in which he and his companions found themselves on occasion.



What one can take away from his talk is that bromeliads have adapted to live and survive in a vast array of environmental conditions, often where resources such as water, light, and nutrients are scarce. They can be found at altitudes from sea level to 12,000 feet, from

rainforests to deserts, in rain and high cloud forests, on arid coastal deserts to the tops of mountains above the tree line. Below are the major habitats Dennis covered.

- Bromeliads of Florida consist of 24 bromeliad species and varieties. Typical habitats are cypress swamp hammocks, maritime hammocks, sloughs, coastal strands, exposed habitats, coastal pinelands, shell mounds, coastal berms, and tidal swamps. Most of the bromeliad population is *Tillandsia fasciculata*, which is monocarpic, the only one of this type of bromeliads among the Florida natives.
- Seaside habitats are typically hot environments with no soil, exposed to salt water and in full sun. One example is the Brazil restinga (dry, sandy, acidic, and nutrient-poor soils) at the sea edge. This is similar to habitats at Florida beaches, i.e., at the waters edge, dunes, and lagoons.
- Deserts and other arid habitats such as those found in southern Mexico and southern South America are dry with rare rainfall, an environment in which even cacti might not grow. Bromeliads in these habitats gather atmospheric water in the form of dew and fog. Ninety-eight percent of Hechtia species are from Mexico, while abundant.
- Cloud forests and other mountainous habitats are characterized as belts of cloud forests and always wet. Many of the bromeliads found in these areas are very rare and will only grow there and not in cultivation. Common ones are Mezobromelia, Tillandsia, Vriesea, and Pitcairnia.
- Tepuis of Venezuela, Guyana, and northern Brazil are unique table mountains that are flat-topped, steep and nearly vertical escarpments with vegetation distinct from the surrounding Amazonian humid forest vegetation. The genus Brocchinia is native to these tepuis, and the genus Navia is found exclusively among them.
- Brazil's Atlantic forest represents one of the most diverse and biologically rich forests in the world. It has a climate that ranges from tropical to subtropical and covers a wide range of latitudes and altitudes. This variability contributes to its vast array of different bromeliad genera and species, mostly non-Tillandsias.
- Southern Brazilian temperate forests are semi-deciduous forest areas with warm, moist summers and mild winters. There are not a lot of bromeliads found in these areas.
- Amazon and Orinoco river basins are characterized as flooded rain forests and vast grasslands (savannas) that support rich plant and animal life. The area is mesic or wet and receives the bulk of precipitation during the warm seasons of the year, with less moisture occurring in the cooler seasons of the year. Water-loving bromeliads such as Dyckias find their natural habitats here.

SHOW AND TELL

Reported by Helga Tarver

There was only one bromeliad for Show and Tell and that was a small cluster of *Tillandsia edithiea* Linda Sheetz had and then added to the Raffle Table. *Til. edithiea* is a silvery green, cliff-dwelling, xeric species native to Bolivia, and has no real root system. It has red (or coral) flowers when in bud (picture below on left), which is a rare color among

Tillandsias. It is easy to grow as a hanging plant, and prefers growing in a dry location with bright light and fresh air. It produces a lot of offsets/pups at its base and along the stem that form large, long cascading clusters, as shown in the picture below on the right. This cascading cluster of *Til. edithia* was grown by Eloise Beach and won a Best in Show award at a Bromeliad Society of Central Florida show a good number of years ago.



Tillandsia edithia

Cluster grown by Eloise Beach



Raffle Table Winners

At the meeting, one of the members donated a X *Vriecantarea* 'Inferno' (see picture in the 'Blooming this Month' section below) to the evening's Raffle Table, and the person who claimed it has a great plant. The bloom stalk can take a while to develop but it is well worth the wait and is long lasting. In 1991, this hybrid was registered as *Vriesea* 'Inferno', a John Arden hybrid, based on parentage originally reported as *Vriesea ensiformis* (seed parent) and *Vriesea regina* (pollen parent). But in 1995 the genus *Alcantarea* was established for large *Vrieseas* with certain characteristics, and *Vriesea regina* became an *Alcantarea* (*Alc. regina*). Hence, in 1998 the plant appeared in the Bromeliad Cultivar Register as X *Vriecantarea* 'Inferno'.

Another member donated two *Hohenbergia castellanosii* pups to the Raffle Table, and the person who claimed them also has a great plant. The picture on the right shows what it is expected to look like when grown and putting out an inflorescence. It has leathery stiff green leaves that turn red on the tips when grown in full sun and grows to about three feet tall or more.



BLOOMING THIS MONTH



X *Vriecantarea* 'Inferno'



Aechmea chantinii var. 'DeLeon'



Aechmea "Phantom", hybrid of *A. chantinii* x *A. phanerophlebia*), with a lizard perched on its bloom stalk. The bloom stalk lasts for several months, and the plant is a good tree climber.



Submitted by Barbara Gardner
Nidularium, possibly cultivar of *N. procerum*



Submitted by Peggy Goodale
Her yard with blooming
Billbergia pyramidalis

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2016

September 30, October 1-2, Tropiflora Fall Festival

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

October 8-9, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale

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

December 3-4, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Sale

Terry Park, 3451 Marion Street, Fort Myers (bprevattpcc@aol.com)

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