

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY
1954-2019

Celebrating over 65 Years in Bromeliads

fwcbs.org



October 2019 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: Tuesday, October 1, 2019; 7:30 pm
Location: Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

PROGRAM

The October meeting is going to be a “hands on” workshop by members with hopefully everybody taking a little something home.

- Dick Dailey will show how to grow *Cryptanthus* in a new commercial product called ‘Grodan’ which is spun from lava rocks. He will discuss the benefits of this medium and how to get started.
- Franne Matwiczzyk will show how to weave Japanese-inspired kokedama balls (moss balls) for mounting bromeliads, which can be either hung or mounted.
- Richard Poole will show us techniques for mounting bromeliads on driftwood and other materials and some interesting things you can use for hanging and growing them.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

LAST MONTH’S PROGRAM

Terrie Bert’s presentation at our last meeting was titled *Pitcairnia and Puya—Two Interesting and Often Ignored Bromeliad Genera*. She talked about the diversity, natural distribution, habitats, ecological importance, and cultivation conditions for each of the two genera.

Pitcairnia and *Puya* are in the subfamily *Pitcairnioideae* and are common to arid and high-altitude regions. This subfamily is a primitive bromeliad, with the most ancient lineage, and is closely related to grassy relatives. Like most plants, and unlike most other bromeliads, the *Pitcairnioideae* have a developed root system to gather water and nutrients, and not all have a cup to catch water as other bromeliads do.

PITCAIRNIA

Pitcairnia is the second largest bromeliad genus with 408 species. (The largest is Tillandsia with about 650 species.) It was named for Dr. William Pitcairn, a Scottish physician and botanist, born in 1712 and died in 1791. He was elected a Fellow of the British Royal Society in 1770 for his work in botany and success in rearing 'scarce and foreign plants'.

Overview

- While almost all Pitcairnia are terrestrial or saxicolous, some can be found growing epiphytically in trees.
- They grow in high density on the Andean slopes and in Central America, the Caribbean, and in South America to Patagonia. They are most abundant in Colombia, Peru and Brazil.
- 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.
- They are very prolific; many bloom at Christmas time.
- They are grass-like and a pioneering species, found growing in colonies, commonly along roadsides in their native habitat.
- They have long, thin flowers and therefore require long-tongued pollinators such as hummingbirds, bats, and moths. They can also self pollinate.
- When they are young plants, they have thin, stiff, spiny leaves as a means to put off animals who might want to graze on them.
- Within this genus there is a wide variety in leaves, inflorescence, form and color.
- The most common flower color is red; white flowers are common at higher elevations.
- There are two main types of inflorescence: unbranched with upturned flowers and branched with flowers in various directions.

How to Grow

- Terrestrial: Use big pots, about 12 inches in diameter and larger. They are very prolific and need to be repotted as they increase in number.
- Soil: Use 60% soil with 40% perlite; optional materials to include are peat, wood chips, and volcanic rocks at the base of the pot. If grown in the ground, the soil should be well drained.
- Light: They are shade loving and prefer shade to filtered sun. They can tolerate oak leaves in them but not acorns.
- Moisture: They love moisture. Place them under sprinklers, an air conditioner drain, or on a saucer that holds water about ½ inch of water.
- Nutrients: Fertilize with slow, time-release pellets.
- Temperature: Most are cold tolerant, but do not like prolonged cold or frost.

PUYA

Puya is a large genus with 219 species but is not commonly grown in culture. The name is derived from the Mapuche Indian word meaning "point". Puya is considered to be the parent of all common epiphytic bromeliads in the highly diverse bromeliad *Bromelioideae* subfamily.

Overview

- Puya are heat-loving, drought-tolerant terrestrial plants native to the Andes Mountains of South America and southern Central America.
- Many of the species are monocarpic, meaning they produce only one bloom stalk and die after they flower and produce seeds.
- They grow very large but slowly and often take years, even decades, to produce flowers.
- They have long, thin flowers and require long-tongued pollinators such as hummingbirds, bats, and moths.
- They can experience rapid speciation where they grow in mountains and their seeds blow to the next valley. There they can be isolated and adapt to local conditions leading to diversification.
- While they typically have big, tough, spiny leaves in a stiff rosette, some can be small and soft, while others can be twisted and tangled.
- There are two common types of inflorescence, branched and sessile (with flowers directly attached to the stalk.)
- Leaf trichomes are present in the *Pitcairnioideae* but are not effective in gathering nutrients. However, they can be sufficiently thick to repel water and to provide a frost barrier essential to survival.
- The species *Puya raimondii* is notable as the largest species of bromeliad, reaching 10 feet in height in vegetative growth with a flower spike to 30 feet tall. Other species are also large, with the flower spikes mostly reaching 3 to 12 feet tall. *Puya raimondii* grows at 12,000 to 14,000 feet above sea level, and can grow to be 80 to 100 years old. A single plant can have 12,000 to 15,000 flowers on it.

How to Grow

- Terrestrial: Use big pots, about 10 to 12 inches in diameter.
- Soil: Use coarse, very well-drained soil.
- Light: They grow in full sun.
- Moisture: Water one to two times each week, letting the medium dry between waterings.
- Nutrients: Fertilize to promote blooms; use slow, time-release pellets.
- Temperature: Most are cold tolerant.

SHOW AND TELL

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Barb Gardner | <i>Nidularium angustifolium</i> (photo below) <i>Nidularium procerum</i> (photo below) <i>Nidularium species or hybrid</i> |
| Monika Hale | <i>Nidularium angustifolium</i> |
| Gary Lund | <i>Pitcairnia paniculata</i> (photo below) |
| Franne Matwijczyk | <i>Aechmea</i> "America" (photo below), variegated form of <i>Aec.</i> 'Blue Tango |
| Linda Sheetz | <i>Pitcairnia sanguinea</i> x <i>Pit. undulata</i> (photo below) |

SHOW AND TELL PLANTS



Nidularium angustifolium



Nidularium procerum



Pitcairnia paniculata



Aechmea 'America'



Pitcairnia sanguinea x Pit. undulata

THIS AND THAT

Bromeliad Extravaganza®

The bi-annual Bromeliad Extravaganza was held in Orlando this past September 20 and 21 with about 15 FWC members in attendance. It was hosted by the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida and sponsored by the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. There were about 20 vendors including FWC members Marty Baxley, Kathy Risley, Steve Littlefield, Michael Kiehl, and Dennis Cathcart who offered a range of choices. See pictures below of some of the sales plants. The sales were open Friday night for event registrants only and then open to the public on Saturday.



Saturday there were four speakers with these presentations.

Stephen Littlefield, FWCBS:

Bromeliad Images

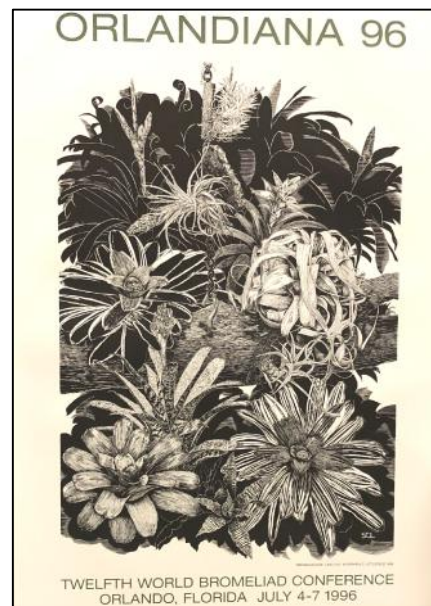
Steve talked about the aspects of bromeliads that led him to include them in his art of print making. After showing many examples of his bromeliad art, he then focused on the process for creating the poster for the 1996 BSI World Bromeliad Conference held in Orlando. He showed prints made in 10 stages of carving the block, from the first single bromeliad to the final composition. (See pictures below.)



Master, original carved block



Close up of a section of the block



Final print

Teresa Eddy:

The Backyard Florist—Bromeliad Arrangements for All Seasons

Teresa presented a demonstration of how to assemble floral arrangements using bromeliads and other plants to create artistic displays for each of the four seasons in the year.

Terrie Bert, Sarasota Bromeliad Society:

Bromeliad Ecology—Diversity in an Ecological Wonderland

In her talk, Terrie explored the reasons why some bromeliad genera contain only one or two species and grow in narrow ranges while others contain hundreds of species and have very broad ranges. She compared the relationships between the numbers of species within genera to the ages of the genera, the geographic ranges and habitats the genera occupy, and the forms the bromeliads have within the genera.

Bruce Holst, Mari Selby Botanical Gardens:

Bromeliads of the Maya-Olmec Region of Middle America

Bruce discussed the rich bromeliad region in Middle America, i.e., southern Mexico to Honduras, and shared stories of his recent exploration in the heart of that region, Belize, and the difficulty of accessing it. He also gave an update of the Marie Selby Gardens new Master Site Plan that will include new buildings and enlarged parking, which will secure and protect the gardens' plant collection.

Saturday night after the banquet was the usual rare plant auction, always entertaining. With an open bar during the auction, plants went for premium prices and bidders got some lovely plants. These were our members' donations to the auctions.

- Janet Stoffels: *Aechmea smithiorum*; a large piece of artistic driftwood on a stand
- Mary Sue Beeler: clumps of *Neoregelia punctatissima* rubra x *Neo*. 'Hannibal Lector' mounted on driftwood
- Richard Poole: a basket that held driftwood and a collection of small stoloniferous *Neoregelia*; a *Neoregelia* print by St. Petersburg artist Dwayne Shepard
- John Lopez: a cluster of *Neoregelia* 'Gazpacho'

On Sunday, there were tours of McCrory's Nursery and two private home gardens. Below are pictures from McCrory's Nursery from Judy and Gary Lund.



McCrory's Nursery

October Home Garden Tour

On Sunday, October 20, Susan and Larry Sousa will host a Garden Tour Social at their home, from 1pm to 4pm. Refreshments will be provided. This event is similar to the Home Garden Tour Social that member Sandy Holloway hosted at her home last March. The Sousas' address is 5400 Bates Street, Seminole, 33722. Contact Susan at susansousa1@yahoo.com for additional information.

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2019

October 12-13, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Festival

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

October 20, FWCBS Home Garden Tour, Larry and Susan Sousa's Home, 1-4 pm

5400 Bates Street, Seminole (susansousa1@yahoo.com)

October 25-27, Tropiflora Nursery Fall Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota (tropiflora.com/events)

November 13, Sarasota Bromeliad Society Annual Bromeliad Auction, 7 pm

Marie Selby Gardens Great Room, Sarasota, (Marian Kennel: mmkennel@verizon.net)

December 14-15, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Sale and Show

Araba Shrine Temple, 2010 Hanson Street, Fort Myers (bprevattpcc@aol.com; Larry Giroux, 239-850-4048)

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