

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2020

Celebrating over 66 Years in Bromeliads

fwcbs.org



December 2020 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday, ~~December 1, 2020~~ CANCELLED

Our monthly meeting has been cancelled again due to the ongoing health concerns associated with the COVID-19 epidemic and the continued closure of the church campus where we meet. We all miss being among and sharing with our bromeliad community and look forward to the time in 2021 when we can meet once again.

HIGHLIGHTS

This month's feature article was inspired by a program Tom Wolfe (Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay) gave to our society in June 2010. Titled *An Expedition through Longwood Gardens Foliage*, it was about Longwood Gardens in southern Pennsylvania that he and his wife Carol had visited. This article expands on and ties together the relationship among the three main topics Tom talked about, Longwood Gardens, one of its indoor, tropical plant gardens, and the man who designed the indoor garden, and how they relate to bromeliads.



Tom Wolfe

Longwood Gardens

Longwood Gardens is located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, covers over 1,000 acres of gardens, woodlands, and meadows, and is considered to be one of the premier botanical gardens in the United States. The gardens were formerly the private estate of Pierre du Pont. In 1937, he founded the Longwood Foundation, which was subsequently chartered with running the gardens for the general education and enjoyment of the public. The location of the gardens might lead one to believe they have only temperate zone plants. However, in addition to their 20 outdoor gardens, they have 22 indoor gardens, one of which, the Cascade Garden, houses tropical plants.

Cascade Garden

The Cascade Garden of tropical plants was designed in 1992 by the famed Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, and is his only permanent U.S. landscape project among the many he designed worldwide. Its construction included 3,000 feet of heating cable that supply the warm temperatures needed to sustain the varieties of tropical plants growing there. It also included 35 tons of rock that were used to create Burle Marx's signature landscape features such as the cascading waterfalls, clear pools, and living walls, around and within which he incorporated bromeliads, palms, cycads, aroids, and more.

Bromeliads are featured prominently throughout the garden, growing on walls and covering the ground along curved, patterned pathways, which are another of Brule Marx's signature designs.

To see a full list of the bromeliads and other plants in this garden, use this link--<https://longwoodgardens.org/gardens/cascade-garden>—to the Longwood Gardens website and scroll down and click on 'Plant Explorer'.

Below are Tom's pictures of some of the bromeliads and water features in the garden.



Bromeliads and water falls in the Cascade Garden at Longwood Gardens

Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994)

Roberto Burle Marx was one of the most important landscape architects of the 20th century. He was a nature artist and public urban space designer and is credited with introducing modernist landscape architecture, primarily in Brazil. He designed gardens and landscapes around the world, creating expansive landscapes typically highlighting native plants of Brazil. He is credited with over 3,000 landscape projects over his 60-year career.



Roberto Burle Marx

He was an avid environmental activist in the cause of preserving Brazil's native ecosystems where deforestation was rampant. Prior to his death, he donated his estate in Rio de Janeiro for preservation and public use. It is now a national landmark and tourist attraction with more than 3,500 plant species.

In addition to his design work, Burle Marx was as much a botanist as a landscape architect, though largely self-taught. He discovered many plants in the Brazilian jungles and was one of the world's leading experts on bromeliads. Ten bromeliad species are named for him, for example, species in the genera *Alcantarea*, *Dyckia*, *Hohenbergia*, *Neoregelia*, and *Sincoraea*, to name a few. He has been credited with introducing more than 20 bromeliad species to horticulture, such as *Alcantarea burle-marxii*.

Burle Marx could be considered a true Renaissance man. In addition to his work as a landscape architect, he was also an accomplished artist, working in paint, print making, and textiles. He said he was inspired by the culture and nature of Brazil in his art and the forms

and shapes of his gardens. He considered gardens as works of art, too, just in a different medium.

He believed landscaping was more than knowing how to construct space; it was the relationship of different sizes and the harmony of colors. He advised gardeners to think about volume, rhythm, texture, and time in their garden design. The fourth dimension, time, he considered a large component of a garden's plan, to look into the future to visualize how the garden would grow and evolve.

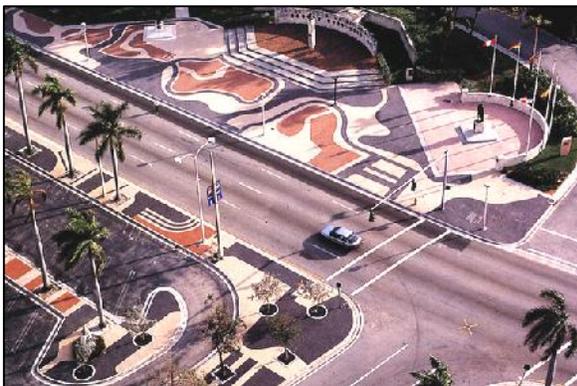
His talents for his landscaping designs and other arts have been recognized at various venues. In June 2019, the New York Botanical Garden installed an exhibit titled *Brazilian Modern: The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx* with many of Burle Marx's signature features: native plants of Brazil, curved, patterned pathways, a sculptural water feature, and a living wall. Some of his paintings, tapestries, and textiles have been displayed in art museums that include the New York Museum of Modern Art and the Chicago Institute of Art.

One Burle Marx hallmark in his gardens is the use of mosaic tiles, which are typical and traditional in Brazil. The Naples Botanical Garden in Naples, Florida, has what is reported to be the only original Burle Marx ceramic mosaic (pictured on the right) in the United States.



Burle Marx ceramic mural, Naples Botanical Garden, Naples, Florida

In the late 1980s, Burle Marx designed the colorful, geometric sidewalk and park that run along Biscayne Boulevard in downtown Miami (picture below on left), which was completed about 2010. In the 1970s, he designed the abstract pattern for the iconic 2.5-mile long Copacabana Beach Promenade in Rio de Janeiro (picture below on right).



Sidewalk and park, Miami, Florida, designed by Roberto Burle Marx



Copacabana Beach Promenade, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, designed by Roberto Burle Marx

THIS AND THAT

Bromeliads and Christmas Trees

This year, once again, people have been creative in making Christmas trees using bromeliads. Below are three examples of these. The pictures are from the December issue of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida newsletter, courtesy of its editor Robert Meyer.



Bromeliad Christmas Trees

One Man's Treasure, Another Man's Junk

One of the bromeliad world's commonly grown plants, *Ananas comosus*, has become established on inselbergs and rocky outcrops in West Africa where it is now considered an invasive 'toxic' weed and a danger to indigenous vegetation due to its rapid spread. (See last month's newsletter for a discussion of inselbergs in Brazil as a habitat for the genus *Alcantarea*.) On the right is a picture of a cluster of *Ananas comosus* on an inselberg in Côte d'Ivoire. This is a plant many of us enjoy in one form or another but sometimes, it appears, too much of a good thing can be undesirable.



Ananas comosus growing on West African inselberg. Source: *Inselbergs: Biotic Diversity of Isolated Rock Outcrops in Tropical and Temperate Regions*; photograph by N. Biedinger

Displaying Bromeliads

FWCBS member Richard Poole displays some of his smaller bromeliads in small, round clay pots that he hangs on a trellis on the patio. His husband Paul makes the clay pots.



Creative ways to display bromeliads

IN THE GARDEN THIS MONTH



Vriesea 'Pink Sensation'



Vriesea fosteriana 'Best Clone',
unregistered



Aechmea phanerophlebia



Aechmea Romero, submitted
by Richard Poole



Pitcairnia smithiorum, submitted by both Richard Poole and Barb Gardner



Aechmea gamosepala, submitted by Barb Gardner

BROMELIAD AND OTHER PLANT EVENTS, 2020--2021

The dates of the events listed below are subject to change, depending, in part, on health warnings related to the coronavirus.

2020

December 5 (9 am to 5 pm) & 6 (9 am to 4 pm), Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Sale
Edison and Ford Estates, 2350 McGregor Boulevard, Fort Myers
(Larry Giroux, 239-850-4048)

December 11 & 12 (8 am to 3 pm), Tropiflora Nursery Winter Plant Sale
Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota (<https://tropiflora.com/pages/events>)

December 12 (10 am to 4 pm), Florida Botanical Gardens Plant & Gift Sale
11211 Walsingham Road, Largo, FL (www.flbgfoundation.org/GPSale2020)

2021

March 26, 27 & 28, Tropiflora's 21st Annual Spring Festival
Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267
(<https://tropiflora.com/pages/events>)

April 10 & 11, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (<https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/botanical-gardens/>)

June 8 thru 12, 2021, 24th World Bromeliad Conference, *The Big Show*
Celebrate BSI's 70th anniversary, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Sarasota
(<https://www.bsi.org/new/conference-corner>)

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