

Gainesville Bromeliad Society Meeting Minutes September 22, 2024

Meeting began at 2:10pm, however delayed with computer and projector misconnection. Library assisted with exchange of projector. During this interlude, Sandy Burnett handed out the 14 remaining FCBS 2023 Directories to members present. She advised the 2024 Directory is in production and forthcoming soon.

President Bob Stevens welcomed & introduced first timers—there were at least 4 in attendance. Then he introduced Dave Johnston of Bromeliads Galore in Pinellas Park. His topic was “My Favorite Neo’s”. He explained that he would discuss the species and then the science of growing Neo’s in his talk. First off how to say “Neoregelia”—it is a Russian name for Von Regel who was Director of the St. Petersburg Botanical Gardens in Russia (1875-1892). Is it correctly pronounced (NEE-O-REE-JEEL’YA) or should it be (NEE-O-REE-GHEEL-YA)? The first name of the bromeliad is the Genus & it always begins with a capital letter. The second name is the species (describes who you are in that family). Chester Skotak used *Neoregelia carolinae variegata* as his seed plant for many of his hybrids.

Dave then went on to discuss the impact of sunlight on bromeliads. Consider 4 aspects: what is sun?, what are you OK with your plant looking like? What is the time of year? And where do you live? The month of May has the most intense sun exposure and December the least amount. A red Neo. Is more sun tolerant and they prefer a 5.5pH. The mix of pine bark mixed in potting soil contributes to an acidic environment favorable for Neo’s. He uses Nutrocote 18-6-8 (18% Nitrogen-6% Phosphorus-8% Potassium) which is a balanced fertilizer designed to promote healthy plant growth and blooming. Use fertilizer in moderation to optimize bromeliad.

Another product he uses is Pro-Line which is a hydra-fiber material that promotes water retention and air porosity. It aids in encouraging proper drainage and adequate airspace of potting soil. Also important to know the acid level of the water you are using. Rain water-7ph, tap water-8ph (be aware of additives used to purify the water) and its best to use good water.

When to remove pups? Dave uses 1/2 the size of the parent plant. That way the pup is well into a growth pattern whereas a pup 1/3 the size of the parent can often slowly die, mutate and or take forever to grow. Next he described how to know a stable variegated plant: look the plant over from bottom to top and if the variegation is the same at all levels then it is a stable variegation. If you see the letters “novar” that is a term used to describe a plant produced from a variegated parent plant but does not have the variegation.

Dave shared Southern Ag Products as a good line of products for growing plants located in Palmetto, FL and BWI in Apopka has good nursery supplies (pots & more). Ron Schoenau & Bob Stevens spoke up about Gainesville Good Grow and Hydroponics Supply, 4460 SW 35th Terrace, (352-301-5383) as a good source for clay pellets and coconut husks and more.

You can find Dave’s website on Facebook at Bromeliads Galore, he will ship and help with your wish list. Otherwise his contact info is (727) 481-5962 and or johnstondj281958@mail.com

After a short break, Nancy Mason did a show and tell about her pineapple plant and that there were several pups available on the raffle table.

The treasurer report was given: checking: \$1,075.03 & savings: \$2,634.91.

Bob Stevens reminded us about the Fall Horticulture Expo and Plant Sale, Saturday Oct 19 from 9am-4pm at the the Equestrian Center 23100 W. Newberry Rd; features Doug Tallamy as the keynote speaker. GBS will be selling plants. Who wants to help with plant sales??

Led by Larry Hice the raffle table of plants moved quickly. Dave kindly donated a plant to the raffle table.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45pm.

Respectfully scribed by Sandy Burnett/GBS Treasurer