

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, June 8th, 2014 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

June 2014

Summertime is the Right Time...

President – Jay Thurrott 386/761-4804
Vice President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850
Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500
Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084

When is a good time to separate bromeliad pups? When should we repot existing bromeliads – either to a larger pot size or just to replace the “worn-out” potting mix? When are the oak tree leaves finally going to stop falling into my bromeliads so I can clean all of the fallen debris out of the leaf axils? That time is here! It’s summertime and if you plan your workdays in the garden so that you can avoid the mid-day heat of Florida’s summer, you can accomplish a lot in the garden. Summer in Northeast Florida is when our bromeliads are in their most active growth period and you can take advantage of that in many ways.

First, if you have always wanted to try your hand at mounting a bromeliad on a favorite piece of driftwood, this is the perfect time to do it. A well mounted plant now will set its roots into the wood much more quickly than at other times of the year and in a very short time you should have a beautiful epiphytic display that will appear to have been growing on that wood for most of its life. Just be sure to start out with a young plant – older, more mature bromeliads are less likely to produce new roots for attachment.

Last month’s meeting –

Last month we met at the clubhouse of the beautiful development where Tree and Bill Hazard live in Ormond Beach and then went on to view the landscape around the Hazards’ home. I don’t know how she found the time

to do it, but somehow Tree managed to prepare and orchestrate placement of many of the refreshments for the meeting while visiting with family for Mothers Day at the same time as the meeting. That’s an example of ‘multi-tasking’ at its best and our sincerest thanks go Tree and Bill for their hard work in hosting our May FECBS meeting! Everyone “ooh’d” and “aaaah’d” over the use of bromeliads in the landscaping and many went home with plants that Bill had so generously donated for the raffle.

This month’s meeting –

We look forward to seeing Tom Wolfe and hearing his program on “**unique ways to utilize bromeliads in the landscape**”. Tom has been involved with bromeliads both as a hobby and commercially since the 1960s - joining the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay in 1965. In the years to follow he has held many positions in the Guild including serving as President six times. Since its humble beginning, Tom has been a long-time supporter of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies and has served as Chairman to that organization three times. At the national level, he served on the Bromeliad Society International (BSI) Board of Directors for 14 years serving as Director, Secretary, 6 years as Vice President and 6 years as President. While Vice President, Tom was General Chairman of the successful 1992 World Bromeliad Conference,

“Bromeliad Safari”, hosted by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay.

Tom became an accredited BSI Bromeliad Judge in 1982. He has judged numerous bromeliad shows throughout the country and is now a Master Judge. Not content to be involved in just bromeliads, Tom has played an active role in garden clubs in the Tampa area and, most recently, in orchid societies.

Tom and his wife Carol grow tropical plants on their 2.5 acres of land and greenhouses in Lutz – in the Tampa area. In his years in the landscape business, he has become an expert on the best bromeliads to use in particular settings, small and large, sunny and shaded. He has designed and installed many residential and commercial landscapes featuring bromeliads. He is in demand as a speaker throughout Florida and the United States presenting programs on bromeliads to garden clubs, bromeliad clubs, and at the University of South Florida Botanical Gardens.

Tom will be bringing plants for sale as well, so don't forget your wallets, purses, checkbooks, and paper bags full of money. I don't think he barter for his plants, so please, leave your chickens and livestock at home.

Plant Profile – It's an Aechmea; no, it's a Billbergia...no, it's a *Quesnelia*!

Those of you who know me know that I go to great pains to keep the name tags on my plants correct. Heaven knows there's enough confusion over bromeliad nomenclature without me adding to it by losing my tags or matching the wrong name tag with the wrong plant and then perpetuating the error by passing along that incorrectly labelled plant to other unsuspecting bromeliad enthusiasts. Once one of those errors is made, it can be very difficult to correct. A specific sub-group of botanists (a botanist *cultivar*?), known as taxonomists has struggled for many years with plant name problems and we've noted

before in this column how bromeliad species names and even Genus names have been changed by taxonomists who continually add to their knowledge of plants and discover features that warrant changes to their classifications.



Large clump of *Quesnelia marmorata* at Michaels Bromeliads in Venice, FL.

One of the best known examples of this confusion over names related to bromeliads is the Genus we now call *Neoregelia*. If you had corrected a name tag each time this plant group's Genus name was revised, you would have a lot of 'strike-throughs' as you tried to keep up with the change from *Karatas* to *Regelia*, to *Aregelia*, and finally to *Neoregelia*.

This month's plant profile is a similar case, except this time the Genus names don't change – it's the plant that keeps getting shuffled from one existing Genus to the next! First of all, here's a plant that appears to have been designed by a committee! Look at it - it just doesn't neatly fit into any of the established Genera. The plant itself is made up of only a few leaves arranged in an upright silhouette, so...it must be a *Billbergia*, right? But, its bloom has blue flowers that are not very *Billbergia*-like...so, it's probably an *Aechmea*, right? In fact, the plant was known as and marketed as an *Aechmea* for many years, but 'no'...it still doesn't fit. Finally in 1965, Robert Read with the concurrence of Lyman Smith and Carl Mez set the record straight by noting that although botanically, this plant was much

closer to the Genus *Billbergia* than *Aechmea*, it had features that really didn't match either of those categories very well. And so, he re-assigned that quirky-looking grayish green plant to the Genus *Quesnelia*. The species name refers to the darker mottling and spotting on both sides of each leaf – *marmorata* (I'm guessing this is Latin – never took that language in high school). One of the few bromeliads with a common name or nickname, you'll often see *Quesnelia marmorata* listed as the "Grecian Urn Plant" and it's easy to see with its symmetrically arranged leaves and outwardly flaring leaf tips, it has a decidedly classical appearance.

Many years later a very distinctive variety of *Q. marmorata* was found and given the cultivar name of 'Tim Plowman'.



This plant is noticeably different from *Quesnelia marmorata* by having tightly curled tips to the leaves (some bromeliad show entrants have even been accused of using hair curlers to enhance this feature) and a larger, more brightly colored inflorescence.

Even more recently, a variegated form of *Q. 'Tim Plowman'* has been found, introduced to cultivation and assigned the cultivar name of 'Raphael Oliveira' in honor of Brazil's Raphael Oliveira de Faria.



Quesnelia 'Raphael Oliveira'

All forms of this interesting plant are easily grown in our area. Being originally collected in Brazil, they adapt to our very similar climate quite well. And, being epiphytic, they also make good subjects for mounting on wood, rock, or other material. Give them good light for optimum color, keep them from freezing, and in a surprisingly short time you will have a very impressive clump of these very distinctive bromeliads!



Birthdays for June:

Happy Birthday this month to:

Ann Alberti	Joan Ortolani
Kathy Dunlop	Linda Stagnol
Mary Hills	Calandra Thurrott
Jay Thurrott	

FECBS members on the road...

We received word recently that past-president Rick Ryals was in Texas helping the Houston Bromeliad Society in judging their show. That's a great society and we look forward to having an opportunity to visit them in the future.

Bill and Tree Hazard were in Los Angeles and Bill noted the condition of the bromeliads that he saw in that area. They have very different growing conditions there than we do and the types of bromeliads grown and their appearances are often very different from ours.

Calandra and I didn't travel quite so far, but we visited our friends in the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society to hear an interesting program at their recent meeting by Dennis Cathcart on his very recent trip to Brazil in search of Dykcias in the wild. The photos he showed were hardly what I had envisioned of Brazil's wilderness (things looked dry, dry dry!), but they were fascinating and Dennis's commentary certainly reflected his love for the area.

To all our members: Have you recently travelled somewhere where you had an opportunity to see bromeliads or attended a meeting or seminar on bromeliads? Let's hear about it! Drop me a line describing what you saw and we'll put it in the next newsletter.

The Council of Garden Clubs of the Halifax Area...

...concluded their year with a business meeting and luncheon at the Pelican Bay Country Club restaurant. Steve Provost and I represented FECBS at the meeting where

each member garden club presented an annual report on their activities throughout the past year. Our club had the chore of providing the name tags for the ladies (why is it that Steve and I were the only guys there?) and thanks go to Calandra for preparing those very attractive name badges! That's all for this group until October when they begin having meetings at the Council of Garden Clubs building at the corner of Jessamine and Oleander Avenues in Daytona Beach.

Looking ahead:

There are not a lot of bromeliad-related events that take place in the Summer. Your time is probably best utilized by working with your own plants in the mornings, taking advantage of air-conditioning in the afternoons, and daydreaming of the approaching cooler Fall temperatures and that grand event in September, the BSI World Conference!

July 13, 2014

FECBS to host the quarterly meeting of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

September 8-14, 2014 – BSI World Conference. Ala Moana Hotel. 410 Atkinson Drive. Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. Go to www.bsi.org for the latest information.

