

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, September 9, 2018 1:30pm.  
Colony in the Wood – club house  
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

## Say “Farewell!” to Summer 2018

September, 2018

**President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700**

**Co-Vice Presidents – Jane Villa-Lobos and Hedy Quirk  
386/446-0341 and 386/427-2314**

**Secretary – Ruth Gessner 386/767-3499**

**Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041**

### **It’s all in how you look at it –**

Summer is over. That’s what the calendar says, although realistically we still have some warm weather ahead of us before we need to dig out the warm clothes from way back in the closet.

What kind of a summer has it been for you? From a bromeliad’s perspective, it’s been a great summer with long hot days and sky-high humidity ...and the bromeliads have been rewarding us with spectacular growth, many offsets to maintain the genetic line, and for those plants mounted on driftwood and other substrates – lots of new roots to firmly anchor the plant to its host. From a human being’s perspective...not so much. Those long hot days and near 100% humidity quickly deterred attempts to work out in the garden unless you got an early start, in which case, by lunch time you were as wilted as the week-old lettuce in pre-packaged salads at the local fast food mart.

Cheer up. Those days are rapidly drawing to a close – and so is your opportunity to get your collection ready for the upcoming cooler and dryer weather. What should you be doing this month? To start with, take a good hard look at each of

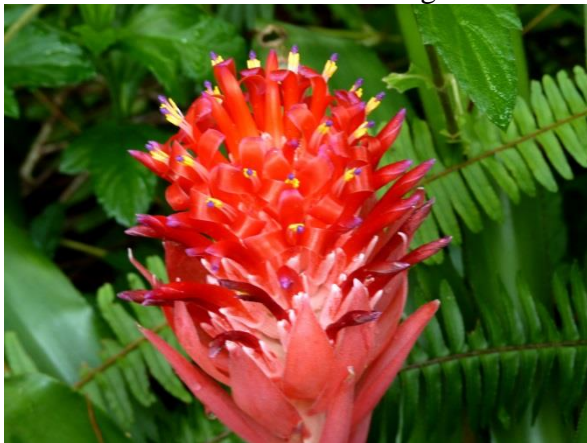
your bromeliads. Those frequent heavy rains may have splashed dirt and debris on the undersides of the leaves that could mask the beginning of an attack by scale insects. Clean off each plant with a spray of water and check to see if you need to treat with a systemic type insecticide to control scale before it gets out of hand. And while you are at it, take a good look at your potting mix around each plant. Has it been washed away by rain and needs to be “topped off” for the winter? Have your potted plants been knocked over by wind and rain and the plants in those pots now are beginning to grow at a 45 degree angle? Are your plants beginning to show the effects of too much or too little sun now that the sun’s angle is changing from where it has been? I find that some areas of my yard that had been getting too little light now seem to be receiving nearly full sun during the day. Between the frequent rain and general heavy cloud cover, that hasn’t been a problem yet. If I don’t move those plants to a new location though, it won’t be long before the leaves will start showing sun burn effects. Do you regularly fertilize your bromeliads? You might want to begin backing off on your frequency. In

another month or so, these same plants will begin entering a semi-dormant state as they prepare for winter and you don't want to encourage tender new growth during this time. Last month's newsletter mentioned that this is "prime-time" for removing and potting up *Neoregelia* pups. Continue doing this during September, but to quote Larry the Cable Guy - "git-er-done" before the middle of next month!

### **Billbergia** –

A few months ago, my intention was to highlight a particular bromeliad Genus each month and discuss its features.

Unfortunately, I got side-tracked and after the feature on *Aechmeas*, didn't continue the series. In an attempt to get back on track, this month we'll take a look at that group of bromeliads known as the Billbergias -



*Billbergia pyramidalis* inflorescence

For many of us, the first bromeliad that we became aware of was *Billbergia pyramidalis* and it's usually at this time of year that this plant puts on its brilliant, but short-lived show. In fact, if there could be a brief way to describe this Genus, it is that these plants typically have a beautiful inflorescence, that unfortunately is also very quick to fade after dazzling us with its beauty. The Genus was named in honor of the Swedish botanist Gustave Billberg. Most of these plants in the wild are found in eastern Brazil, but their range actually extends through Mexico and south to Argentina.



*Billbergia* 'Kyoto' used in the landscape – same outstanding bloom as *B. pyramidalis*, but with nice white margins on the edge of each leaf!

When not in bloom, Billbergias are often still easy to identify by their very upright, tubular rosette made up of only a few leaves.

Are Billbergias cold-hardy? Well, that depends. Some, like *B. pyramidalis* are very cold-hardy in our area, however a sub-group within this Genus called the helicoids can be very sensitive to temperature fluctuations. As a group, the helicoids are often quite tall, stately plants producing spectacular blooms. These originate in areas of South America that seldom see cold weather. Not surprisingly, these are often the first to develop severe damage after exposure to one of the fast moving cold fronts that we will soon be watching for. If you have a *Billbergia* from this group, you had better protect it when the temperature plummets!



Flower petals in Beadle's 'La Vie en Rose' curl tightly back on themselves like a watch spring – typical of the helicoid sub-group.

Billbergias were not a very popular group of bromeliads for many years since the

species plants are often quite drab in appearance until their blooms appear. Don Beadle changed all that by developing a series of Billbergia hybrids that emphasized leaf color and pattern – making the plants highly desirable, even when not in bloom! Billbergia Hallelujah is a great example of this. A cultivar of *B. vittata* crossed with *B. amoena* ‘Ed McWilliams’ the plant was registered by Beadle in 1988. For more about Don Beadle, refer to the August, 2018 issue of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies newsletter.



Ruth Gessner must have had inside information about this article in the newsletter – she sent in this lovely picture of a pot of Billbergia Hallelujah in bloom in her yard. Thank you Ruth!

### **This month’s meeting –**

So, you acquire one bromeliad at a club meeting and it blooms and produces several pups...and before you know it, those pups have had pups and you are now the proud owner of more bromeliads than you expected. Never fear! This month we will have a “**member plant sale**” – an opportunity for you to bring in some of those excess pups for sale to your fellow FECBS members. The rules are simple (and the same that we follow for all of our plant sales): plants should be clean, free of pests (no scale, please!), identified with a label (to the best of your ability – maybe just to the correct Genus), and a second tag showing the price that you wish to sell the plant for. That’s all there is to it! Bring one or bring 50 – but be prepared to bring those that don’t

sell back home with you. This will be fun and an opportunity for you to pick up some terrific plants at low, low prices!

### **Last month’s meeting – Bingo!**



We all had fun last month with “Bromeliad Bingo”! Thank you Rick for obtaining those beautiful prize plants.



As usual, we had good attendance for the August meeting.



Someone went home with this beautiful Guzmania at our last meeting.

In addition to the wonderful prizes for our lucky Bingo winners, we had a very nice group of raffle plants that found new homes at the end of the day, as well as a terrific table of treats - including one of Francisco's fabulous desserts. Thank you everyone who brought food for our August snacks!



Rose Vincel helped in set up the table of goodies.



Not everything on the raffle table was a bromeliad – note the ponytail palm on the far right above.



Pam Newman was one of the big winners that day. Each of the additional cards that she bought for Bingo had a winning series of numbers!



At times, it was so quiet that you could hear a pin drop as members concentrated on their Bingo cards.

A special thanks also to Ann Alberti for her generous donation of potted Cryptanthus. They were free on a “first come, first serve” basis and by the time I got around to taking a photo of them...they were already gone! Fortunately, Calandra was a little quicker than me and managed to take this photo of Ann with her Cryptanthus.



Two minutes later - it was just Ann and no Cryptanthus. Thank you Ann!

**Birthdays for September:**

Happy Birthday to the following FECBS members:

George Aldrich            Donald Irvin  
Mary McBride            Rick Ryals  
Sherrie Thompson

**Don't forget 'Show and Tell' this month!**

Each month we try to set aside time for club members to show off their plants at Show and Tell. This is always an interesting feature because it's an opportunity for new members to learn how to best grow their bromeliads as well as a chance to see what types of bromeliads members are currently growing. Keep in mind though that it's just as important to share your knowledge of what doesn't work in growing these plants. So, if you have a pampered plant that you have been fussing over and now looks especially nice, bring it to the meeting so that we can see how nice it looks. And if you have a bromeliad that just doesn't seem to be doing well, bring it for us to see too – maybe someone in the group can offer a suggestion on how to improve conditions for it. Keep in mind that not all bromeliads like growing in Central Florida, so if you have one of these – bring it in and maybe we can help...even if that involves the last rites.

**Out and about –**

I am continually amazed and impressed by the artistic skills of our members. Judith Davies sent us this photo of her new dog:



I am told that he is house-broken, eats very little and never barks at strangers. All kidding aside, this is a great way to make use of that native Florida bromeliad that is often overlooked in displays: *Tillandsia usneoides* - better known as Spanish Moss.

Send in your photos and articles about bromeliad events, blooms in your garden, or newspaper and magazine articles that may be of interest to our members. Email to [cajat@aol.com](mailto:cajat@aol.com) or mail to Jay Thurrott, 713 Breckenridge Dr., Port Orange Fl. 32127

**Looking ahead:**

**June 30- September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018**

Leu Gardens – Enchanted Fairy Doors throughout the gardens

Open daily 9-5

\$10 admission adults

\$5 admission children

**September 14-16, 2018**

SW Bromeliad Guild annual show/sale.

9940 Airline Highway, Baton Rouge, La.70816

Call 225/753-8414 for more info.

**October 13-14, 2018**

USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale  
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL  
(cas.usf.edu/garden)

**October 26-28, 2018**

Tropiflora Nursery Fall Festival  
3530 Tallavast Road  
Sarasota, FL

**November 2–3, 2018**

Mead Botanical Garden GROWvember  
Fall Plant Sale 1300 S. Denning Avenue,  
Winter Park, FL 32789

**November 9-11, 2018**

Fairchild Botanic Garden -10901 Old Cutler  
Road Coral Gables, FL 33156  
Fall Garden Festival, featuring the 77th  
Annual Ramble. Plants, food, music,  
cooking, antiques, arts, crafts, books

**November 12, 2018**

Sarasota Bromeliad Society sale and auction.  
Selby Gardens, 811 S. Palm, Sarasota  
6-9pm in the Great Room

**March 23, 24, 2019**

Kanapaha Gardens Spring Garden Festival  
Gainesville, Fl

Remote Parking with shuttle service  
available at:

Celebration Pointe & Bass Pro Area:  
4526 SW Archer Rd. Gainesville, FL 32608  
9am – 5pm each day \$8 admission adults \$5  
admission children under 13. 150 booths  
offering plants, landscape displays, garden  
accessories, arts and crafts, educational  
exhibits and foods

