

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, October 11th<sup>th</sup>, 2015 1:30pm.

Colony in the Wood – club house

4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

October, 2015

## Getting to the Root of the Matter

**President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850**

**Vice President – Linda Stagnol 386/212-8138**

**Secretary – Ed Meiser 386/785-4830**

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

It seems like it was a long time ago when our president issued the challenge to attach a favorite bromeliad to your favorite mounting material so that in the Fall we would have a contest to see who created the most original and the most attractive mounted display. Well, time is almost up - next month we will have a chance to see how everyone's project turned out. What plant did you choose to work with? What did you decide to mount the plant on? I think this will be a really interesting session of "show and tell"! Here are a few suggestions and some pictures from around our yard in Port Orange.

What! You haven't started yet? That's ok - You still have time to participate in this contest, but don't put it off any longer! Fortunately, growing conditions in this area have been great for starting a mounted bromeliad display. I don't know if the national weather service's records will back me up on this or not, but it certainly seems to me that this has been a wetter than normal Spring and Summer and that combination of high humidity and warm temperatures has resulted in my bromeliads producing tremendous amounts of root growth. In some cases, plants that in the past had required many months to firmly attach themselves to pieces of driftwood, have accomplished this in a matter of just weeks. A case in point:

When we were fortunate enough to have the Cathcarts provide a program on bromeliad hunting in Brazil at our August meeting, I purchased a mature *Tillandsia caput-medusae* which I attached to a nice piece of driftwood. Usually, it is not a good idea to try to use a mature bromeliad for a mount since older plants often don't produce roots as readily as younger offsets. In this case however, in just one month there was more than enough root growth to keep it attached to the wood. All I need to do is remove the bell-wire that originally kept the plant attached to the wood, and it will appear that this plant has been growing on the wood for its entire lifetime! What is "bell-wire" and why would I use it? It's very thin (that makes it flexible) plastic coated copper wire that is used to carry low voltage electricity – like to a door bell. Hence, the name.



**Root growth on *T. caput-medusae*.** It was another of those frequent rains on the day this photo was taken and that has promoted this accelerated growth.

Even Tillandsias that I don't normally think of as developing much in the way of roots have surprised me by becoming attached to things in my yard. I've grown *Tillandsia schiedeana* (the so-called 'minor' form) for many years simply as a clump of multiple plants with their stems fastened together and then hung from a tree branch. I don't ever recall noting any roots developing on the plants and they've always seemed perfectly happy hanging together this way. This year some of the individual plants fell away from the clump and I used some more of my bell wire to fasten these to an interesting driftwood piece that I picked up from the local beach. Now, surprisingly I have discovered that they have become firmly attached to the wood. They've never done that before!



*Tillandsia schiedeana* growing on driftwood

Of course, many Tillandsias are especially good at attaching themselves to wood and make great subjects for this type of display. Some especially good choices from this Genus that you might want to consider for mounting and are usually available include *Tillandsia ionantha*, *T. brachycaulos*, *T. capitata*, *T. concolor*, or even our local natives *Tillandsia utriculata* and *Tillandsia bartramii*.

Another good choice for mounting would be any of the small to medium sized epiphytic Aechmeas. Any of the Aechmea

*orlandiana* complex seems especially good for this. In fact, if you have trouble growing *Ae. orlandiana* in a traditional potting mix, try removing it from the pot and attaching it to a piece of wood. You will be surprised at how quickly roots will develop and attach to the wood!



Here, an offset of Aechmea 'Gold Tone' was attached to a barbecue implement and 6 weeks later...voila – roots, and lots of them!



Roots from Aechmea 'Gold Tone' attached to discarded barbecue brush

Often, when we consider selecting a bromeliad to mount, we think of the members of the *Tillandsia* group or *Aechmea orlandiana*, but really any of the small to medium epiphytic bromeliads can be a good choice for this type of display. Many of the smaller *Neoregelias* can be successfully mounted on wood and seem perfectly happy to be freed from the constraints of their usual plastic or terracotta pots. In the following photos *Neoregelia pauciflora* x *olens* was attached to an interesting driftwood piece and



is now so firmly attached that it would be very difficult to remove the plant without damaging both the plant and the wood that it is attached to.



Neoregelia pauciflora x Neo. olens on driftwood piece



Close up of massive root growth from this same plant

Another Genus to consider when selecting plants to mount is the Catopsis group. Here Catopsis morreniana has completely enveloped a piece of driftwood to the point where the massive amount of stiff roots has actually begun pushing the plants away from the wood and the resulting mount has become unattractive.



Catopsis morreniana attached to driftwood

### President's message –



*Hey guys and gals - Being President of the club is fun, engaging and rewarding. Did I mention the perks.....limos, exotic travel, paparazzi, parties, staying in the Lincoln bedroom, courtside tickets, etc., etc., etc.*

*It can also be challenging at times - things don't always turn out as smoothly as I would hope. Buy hey, it's a plant club! The world is not going to spin wildly out of control and the sun will continue to rise in the morning if everything doesn't go silky smooth. You may have noticed (or not) one or two hiccups during the past year and that is what I want to address.*

*I want to thank all the volunteers who gave their time and efforts to helping at the meetings, the sales, the shows and Mary McBride's house. The club depends on this help. But I really need to thank three individuals for going above and beyond in their behind the scene efforts.*

*Jay Thurrott will always step in to lead or support whenever I asked. His vast knowledge and humble spirit are qualities rarely found together in one person. I like Jay's laid back style and incredibly friendly personality. He puts a great deal of effort into FECBS and most of us don't realize this.*

*Another person I would like to thank is Brian (I don't know why he likes to spell his name "Bryan") Manion. Bryan is always available for set up and clean up at meetings. He comes up with ideas to help handle events and situations. The door prize was his brain child. We have traveled to several shows and sales together. He's always prepared, on*

time and has a "can do" attitude. He mows and weeds my yard for free - can you believe it?? Well, he doesn't actually do that but he has come over to water some plants when I've been out of town. I consider him a good friend and am extremely grateful for all he does.

Finally, Rick Ryals has stepped up to the plate this year in a BIG way. Not only did he set up the Bromeliad Bingo (and get Francisco to provide delicious food) for last month's meeting, he is going to present October's program AND his efforts secured the speakers/programs for the majority of our meetings this year. He's not on the board and didn't have to do this, but he knew I needed help and rose to the occasion. Rick is funny, very organized, well spoken, generous and creative to name just a few of his finer qualities.

So "THANK YOU" to all who help support FECBS throughout the year and a huge shout out to Jay, Bryan and Rick for doing so much for our club.

- Bill

#### **Last month's meeting –**

First of all, a great big 'thank you' to the United Brethren in Christ Church for putting up with us for last month's meeting and thank you Bill for making the arrangements so that we could have our September meeting while our usual meeting place was in use.



Rick Ryals was the MC for a session of "Bromeliad Bingo" and I think everyone had a good time as he called out the numbers for

each game with a nice bromeliad as the prize for each winner. And, as if that wasn't enough to make the meeting memorable – Francisco Cardoso prepared a monster lasagna that was absolutely delicious! It isn't every bromeliad society that has a world-class chef in its membership! Francisco's creations are always something special and I'm afraid that we all may need to loosen our belts a bit after these meetings.

#### **This month's meeting –**

Every other year the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies sponsors a state-wide 'Bromeliad Extravaganza'. This year's event was held recently in Miami, courtesy of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida and was a truly memorable event – the lectures, the tours, and of course the plants. Between what was offered at the day-long plant sale and then the rare plant auction at night...if you didn't bring home at least one new bromeliad, you must have slept through the weekend! We were extremely well represented at this event and in fact, there were so many FECBS members present that we took up several tables at the banquet. Fortunately, for those who didn't attend we have many beautiful photos to share with the group for this month's program: *Bromeliads in the Magic City*.



Here is Rick Ryals having a good time with Bromeliad Society of South Florida member Barbara Sparling at the banquet and rare plant auction on Saturday night while enjoying the last event of the 2015 Bromeliad Extravaganza in Miami. Rick didn't win the 50/50 but still had a great time.



**Birthdays for October:**

Happy Birthday to the following FECBS members:

Bill McBride	Brad Rauch
Betty Dollar	Ray Trzeciak
John Quirk	

**Out and about –**

*While making a visit to Winter Garden several weeks ago I found this beautiful display of *Billbergia pyramidalis* at a private residence. It created a great border to the yard!*



*Francisco also has this large Ananas (believed to be *bracteatus variegated*) which he found as a little decorative pineapple in the produce department of Fresh Market in Orlando. He's had it several years now, potted on his back patio in full sun. He doesn't move it much, as it's loaded with spines. This could be an excellent landscape plant, as it can grow to a good size and has an attractive colorful look. (Note: if you're looking for no spines, check out Ananas 'Ivory Coast'). Hopefully with a mild winter, he may get it to bloom and produce another decorative pineapple.*



*And a final note - Just before I left town to attend the Extravaganza in Miami, I noticed that one of my *Alcantareas* was leaning over in its pot. It's not unusual to have an *Alcantarea* lean (a little) in a pot, as they are frequently found hanging onto cliffs and rock embankments in the wild. You can also imagine that after maturing to a large size and containing an incredible amount of water, they become pretty heavy. I've had the plant for about three months and recently repotted it. And this was no leaning; it was completely rotted off at ground level. I easily grabbed it right off its base, and the smell was awesome (not). I carefully pulled it apart to see if I could find evidence of a bug or perhaps even some rodent having chewed on it, but I found neither. So the investigation began and after careful consideration I believe it was a combination of too much watering with a potting mix that didn't drain quickly enough. My prior experience with *Alcantareas* is that they like water. You'll notice that you don't see much sponge rock, perlite, tree bark or other components in the potting mix. I had recently purchased a different potting mix*

*from a local home improvement store and I suspect that the main ingredient may have been sphagnum moss. This was (past tense) an Alcantarea nahoumii and it may be a characteristic of this species bromeliad of not wanting to be too wet. In any case and not to fear, I'm even more determined to grow this bromeliad. With fall upon us and winter on its way, I'll try again in the spring.*

- Rick

**Editor's note – I've also noted that not all potting mixes are created equal. One that I purchased before the rains started is becoming a soggy mess, while the brand that I usually get has handled this extra moisture just fine!**



Send in your articles about bromeliad events, photos of plants and blooms in your garden, or newspaper and magazine articles that may be of interest to our members (pretty much everything about bromeliads is 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:**

**October 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Searle Brothers 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Plant Extravaganza.** Featuring cycads, crotons, palms cordylines, aroids, heliconias, gingers, orchids and...bromeliads!

6640 SW 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, SW Ranches 3331  
Call Jeff Searle (954) 434-7681

**April 16-17, 2016**

Bromeliad Society of South Florida annual show and sale at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden.

**June 13-19, 2016**

BSI World Bromeliad Conference at the beautiful Westin Galleria Houston Hotel. Check the website of [bsi.org](http://bsi.org) for updates.

