

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, December 8th, 11:00am.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

December, 2013

Christmas Party!

President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700
Vice President – Eretta Morris 386/677-9557
Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500
Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084

This month there will be no meeting...
Instead – it's our annual Christmas party!
Please note that the party will begin at 11:00 instead of our usual 1:30pm.
Like last year, we will be having a centerpiece competition and, of course, it will be a Christmas theme but should emphasize bromeliads in the centerpiece. Give it a try, it's great fun, and who knows? You may just come up with the winning centerpiece!



One of the many beautiful centerpiece designs from last year
As in past years, we ask you to bring your favorite dish to share with the club and FECBS will provide the main course (although if someone wants to bring lobster tails, who are we to turn them down?), drinks and paper-goods. We know that there are some wonderful cooks out there since we've had requests for recipes for salads and desserts that were brought in years past.



Bill McBride puts the finishing touches on his centerpiece from last year's party

This year our 'celebrity judge' for the centerpiece competition will be Bud Martin from Blossom World Bromeliads in Sanford.

Birthdays for December:

I don't know what happened last month, but I not only overlooked some of our November babies, I also moved some of the October birthdays into November! My apologies and please, when you get the chance, wish Jean Hochdoerfer, Theresa Pavell, Susan Rowley, and Rob Sedelmyer a happy belated birthday.

This month's birthdays:

Joan Campbell
Christophe Cardot
Jack Dunlop

Jane Hill
Sudi Hipsley
Ed Meiser

Happy Birthday all!

Plant Profile: Aechmea recurvata

There are many reasons to enjoy this time of year. Yes, it's cooler and the humidity is lower than it was just a few months ago and, of course, school is back in session (let's not forget that!). It's the 'off-season' in east central Florida and we can once again get into our favorite restaurants without facing a 45 minute wait, but I also enjoy November and December because this is usually when the Aechmea recurvatas in my bromeliad collection bloom and just look their best. Whether it's the diminutive Aechmea recurvate var. benrathii (smallest of the 4 varieties listed in the Bromeliad Binomial) with its dark purple leaf bases and a center which turns an almost fluorescent color when in bloom or the



The combination of dark purple and bright center make Aechmea recurvate var. benrathii a nice addition to any collection.

cultivar 'Artichoke' that truly resembles an artichoke, all of the recurvata forms have almost an oriental look about them that pleases even when they're not in bloom.

Native to Brazil, the term 'recurvata' is a reference to its downward curved (recurved) leaf tips that lead to the easily recognized shape that all of the forms share. A member of the subgenus Ortgiesia, Aechmea recurvata has a number of features, particularly in its type of flowers, that it shares with Aechmea pimento-velosoi (also in bloom in my yard now) and other of the more compact Aechmeas.

All varieties seem to be quite cold-hardy with the benrathii variety usually acknowledged as being able to survive the coldest temperatures that we are likely to face in our area. In fact, for many years there was a mass planting of Ae. recurvata var. benrathii in downtown Deland, although I believe some well-intentioned landscaper has removed them since.



Aechmea recurvate 'Cardinalis' demonstrates the form typical of this group of plants.

Victoria Padilla's book titled simply 'Bromeliads' (one of the best ever in my opinion) notes that this small plant was described by Lyman Smith in 1932 as being found growing on rocks and trees in its native habitat and in lighting ranging from partial to full sun. In short, this plant is not particularly choosy about growing conditions – perfect for lazy growers such as myself!



Aechmea recurvata 'Kiwi Baker' just coming into bloom

If there is any shortcoming to Ae. recurvata, it's that the bloom is not particularly long-lived, unless of course you

compare it's blooming period to that of the Billbergias – in which case you could say that this bloom lasts for a remarkable period of time!

Many, many hybrids have been made using *Ae. recurvata* as both seed and parent plant and most of these are readily recognizable by that same rosette of thin, spiny leaves with recurved tips. One of the more attractive of these is *Ae. 'echidna'* – a cross of *Ae. recurvata* with *Ae. chantinii* resulting in an attractive banded foliage and a pink bloom.



Photo courtesy of fcbs.org

Weevil update:

Last month we reported that the Mexican weevil *metamasius calzone* has been found in Port Orange. Dr. Teresa Cooper, researcher with the University of Florida recently visited the site where the weevil cocoon was found and more evidence of the presence of this menace to bromeliads was noted. Although no actual weevils or cocoons were found during her visit, several fallen *Tillandsia utriculatas* exhibited the tell-tale signs of being attacked by the weevil. Most noticeably, the central leaves of some of the fallen plants could be pulled out when tugged on gently (sort of like the central leaves on a ripe pineapple). Those same leaves had raggedy bottom edges where they were

chewed on. Others had browned areas where they were chewed through and in some we found cocoons where the beetles had emerged.



Dr. Cooper examines a fallen *Tillandsia* while Calandra Thurrott looks on.



Tillandsia utriculata with base chewed off.

Teresa has agreed to be the speaker for our January meeting so we can all learn more about this invasive weevil, where it came from, what to look for if you suspect it has found its way into your collection and how to control it. I think you all will want to hear about Dr. Cooper's work and her findings, so plan on being there for the January 2014 meeting!



Cocoons removed from *T. utriculata*

now for what is sure to be an unforgettable event! Check the BSI website: go to www.bsi.org for the latest.

Looking ahead:

December 7-8, 2013

Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society show and sale at Terry Park. 3410 Palm Beach Blvd. in Ft. Myers, 9am-4pm Saturday, 10am-3pm Sunday.

February 28-March 2nd, 2014

Bromeliad Society of South Florida show and sale at Fairchild Botanical Gardens, Coral Gables.

March 22-23, 2014

Bromeliad Society of Broward County show and sale.

March 28-30, 2014

Everybody's Flower Show at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach.

April 5th, 2014

Volusia County Master Gardeners Spring sale at the Volusia County fairgrounds, Deland. ½ day sale that FECBS has participated in for many years!

April 26th, 2014

Council of Garden Clubs of the Halifax Area garage sale fundraiser. Finney memorial garden center at the corner of Jessamine and Oleander Avenues.

September 8-14, 2014 – BSI World

Conference. Ala Moana Hotel. 410 Atkinson Drive. Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. Register

