



April 2006

**CALOOSAHATCHEE
BROMELIAD
SOCIETYs
CALOOSAHATCHEE
MERISTEM**

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North Fort Myers FL 33903
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Billbergia stenopetala

This photo taken by and submitted by Sue Gordon demonstrates the blooming of this 2005 CBS Show award winning plant. For more information see article inside this issue.

CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Dianne Molnar (capebrom@aol.com)
VICE-PRESIDENT Larry Giroux- (DrLarry@comcast.net)
SECRETARY Tom Foley- (tefoley24@earthlink.net);
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PAST-PRESIDENT Steve Hoppin (SLHAZ@juno.com)

STANDING COMMITTEES CHAIRPERSONS

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Larry Giroux- (DrLarry@comcast.net)
FALL SHOW CHAIR No Show in 2006
FALL SALES CHAIR Brian Weber (brianweber1b@aol.com)
FALL SALES Co-CHAIR David Prall (PalmTreeGardens@hotmail.com)
PROGRAM CHAIRPERSONS Debbie Booker/Tom Foley (tefoley24@earthlink.net)
WORKSHOP CHAIRPERSON Eleanor Kinzie
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FLORIDA COUNCIL CHAIRMAN Vicky Chirnside- (vickychirn@aol.com)
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Betsy Burdette (betsy@burdetteinc.com)
SPECIAL HOSPITALITY Greeter/Membership table volunteers - Luli Westra,
RAFFLE TICKETS Dolly Dalton, Eleanor Kinzie, etc.
Larry Giroux
RAFFLE COMMENTARY Betty Ann Prevatt, Dolly Dalton(dollyd@comcast.net),
GREETERS/ATTENDANCE Luli Westra
SHOW & TELL Dale Kammerlohr
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**THE
CALOOSAHATCHEE
BROMELIAD SOCIETY**

CBS's 26th Anniversary Party

Sunday April 23rd

(Due to Easter falling on the third Sunday of April our celebration has been moved to the fourth Sunday)

Place:

**Home of Betsy and Bill Burdette
4931 Shady River Lane
Buckingham, Ft. Myers 694-4738
(Map inside)**

What to bring: Food - Such things as salads, casseroles, finger sandwiches, relish trays, and although we will provide a birthday cake, your special deserts will not go uneaten.

Sitting - Folding tables and chairs. **Raffle items** - Nice clean plants or bromeliad related items for our raffle. Our Birthday and Christmas raffles are always an important part of our celebration so try to provide something for other members to enjoy. **Friendship Plants**. Cleaning up? Bring your extras to share. **Contest items** - See article inside.

Friends, neighbors and relatives are always welcome to our parties; so bring them along for a great time.

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society is an active Affililate of:



FM-LCGC



**Cryptanthus
Society**



**Bromeliad Society
International**



FCBS

SOCIETY NOTES

The 2006 Roster and Yearbook

The New 2006 Photographic Roster and Yearbook is available to paid-up members. Betty Ann will have a few with her at the Birthday Party if you haven't pick one up yet. As a courtesy to our members who cannot get to the meetings, the Treasurer (Betty Ann Prevatt) will mail the Roster and Yearbook to you for a \$1 fee. We would rather you attend a meeting to pick up this valuable document and enjoy our planned program and meeting. We will continue to have the Roster available at future meetings.

Events Close to Home

This is the time of the year, with the dry season and moderate temperatures, when we can enjoy the outdoors in Southwest Florida. Special Projects Chairs - Deb Booker and Tom Foley are working diligently to provide us with opportunities to enjoy our hobby.

Fakahatchee Preserve Walk

Again this year our society will have the opportunity to participate in a private tour of the Fakahatchee Preserve in Collier County. At last count we have space for friends, members of other societies and relatives. Tom Foley is now taking reservations for this tour. The cost is \$25 per attendee for this scenic walk into this protective area, home to native bromeliads, orchids and animals. This outing has been scheduled for **Monday, May 1st**. Please contact Tom Foley at tefoley24@earthlink.net or call him at 239-458-4656. For information on-line about this unique park off of Alligator Alley go to these sites -

<http://www.floridastateparks.org/fakahatcheestrand/default.cfm>

http://sofia.usgs.gov/virtual_tour/pgfakahatchee.html

<http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/fakahat.html>

<http://fcbs.org/articles/Fahkahatchee.htm> (article by L.Giroux)

The tour consists of a **one to one and a half mile walk** into the swamp and the return trip, which will take about 4 hours. **You be the judge, if this is the trip for you. The conditions are changeable. There could be areas where the water will be knee deep;** therefore, it is recommended that you bring a change of dry shoes and clothes

to change into afterwards. Wear long pants and tie shoes, which will not get sucked off your feet when they get submerged in mud and water. Mosquitoes may be a problem and repellents will be provided. Avoid dark or brightly colored clothes to avoid attracting mosquitoes. Bring snacks and beverages, but anything you take into the swamps you should carry in and carry out in a “fanny pack”, do not take coolers. These trips are always very good video and photographic opportunities; so bring your digital cameras or regular cameras with lots of film; however, depending upon the weather and depth of the water provide protection for your equipment. During a portion of the walk, you might be exposed to the sun. Consider bringing a hat or other protective cover.

You may want to talk to other members and car pool for the trip down and back. The tours start at 10:00 a.m. departing from “the rock pit” so count on arriving before this time.

From Fort Myers Take I-75 SOUTH - go 56.9 mi

Take exit #80 (which is off of Alligator Alley) towards **EVER-GLADES CITY - go 0.5 mi**

Continue on **FL-29 (South) - go 14.2 mi**

Turn on **CR-837 - go .3 mi**

Turn on **WJ JANES MEMORIAL SCENIC DR - go 0.6 mi**

Turn right on **COAST LINE DR - go < 0.1 mi.**

Arrive at **137 COAST LINE DR, COPELAND,** on the left

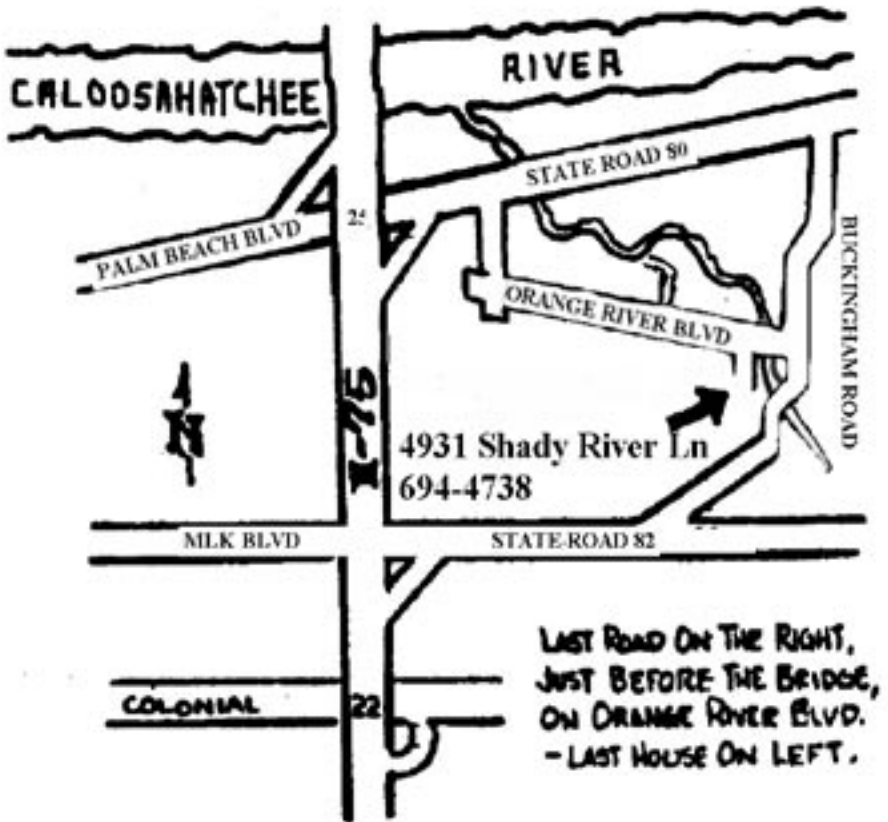
The Birthday Party Contest

At each of our parties we stage a contest of sorts. With Spring there are a lot of bromeliads in bloom in our gardens. This year we will be offering 4 prizes for -

1. Best Lady's Pin-on Corsage
2. Best Lady's Wrist Corsage
3. Best Man's Boutinere
4. Best Man's Belt Buckle

Although they do not have to be made exclusively out of bromeliads, each entry should feature bromeliad parts. More than one entry per person is permitted.

Map to Betsy and Bill Burdette's Home



Our Annual Auction

By Larry Giroux

At the Board of Directors' Meeting of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies on April 8th, Betty Ann Prevatt presented a check to the Chairman of the FCBS for over \$1900. More than \$100 greater than 2005. Our Society was thanked in kind at the meeting and additional recognition will be published in the upcoming FCBS Newsletter.

Contributors of auction items and the purchasers of these items desire our greatest thanks. In addition as Chairman of the event I wish to thank all of the runners, security, record keepers, cashiers, those who set up the tables, labeled the items, and all those who loaned a hand to make this such an organized and fun-filled event. The "CBS Team" really made a difference. Thank you!

Billbergias - Subgenus: Helicodea

Billbergias have been around a long time in cultivation. As a matter of fact there with First bromeliads to be introduced into cultivation in the United States. They're easy to grow and propagate rapidly. In the extreme southern United States, left to grow on their own accord, many of the species and cultivars can be found in large beds. Many of the 70 or so species and their varieties are tolerant of the wide variety of weather conditions they're exposed to here in the South

Named for the Swedish botanist, Gustave Billberg, many Billbergias are native to eastern Brazil, but many others, including most of the subgenus Helicodea, can be found in their natural habitat from Mexico, throughout the Caribbean and most of South America.

The majority of the billbergias is distinguishable by having fewer leaves than other bromeliads and are generally tall and tubular in shape. White or greyish scurf produces banding, patches or mottling on the underside or in the case of the Billbergias, the outer exposed portion of the leaf; while the upper portion of the leaf is void of scurf and is usually shiny.

Although the bloom is short lived, lasting only a few days, they have some of the showiest inflorescences of the bromeliad family. The inflorescences can be upright or pendulous as is more common with the subgenus Helicodea. A unique feature of the pendulous billbergia inflorescence is the way the large colorful bracts create an umbrella to cover the flowers composed of the stamens (the pollen bearing portion of the flower) and the pistil (the receptive portion of the flower). It can only be assumed that since the flowers of this genus are such short lived, this protective mechanism is provided to avoid the pollen from being washed off of the stamens before the pollinating agent such as an ant or other insect can carry it away to fertilize other flowers.

Another unique characteristic, especially of the subgenus Helicodea and that, which gives the subgenus its name, is the rolling back of the floral petals (see picture on back cover) at the time of

Billbergias of the subgenus Helicodea



Billbergia decora was first introduced into cultivation in 1831 from the rain forest of Peru, Bolivia and Brazil. It has green petals and peach colored bracts. Photo by Herb Plever.

This picture of Billbergia kuhlmannii demonstrates its white powdery colored stem and ovaries and dark pink bracts. Although discovered in 1924 in Brazil, this plant was not correctly described until 1950. Its description claims purple petals and ellipsoid ovary. Based on these characteristics, Derek Butcher suggests that the plant seen here with triangular ovaries and blue petals is really B. brasiliensis. Photo by Jun Matsuzono.



Billbergia kuhlmannii

photo by Jun Matsuzono



Billbergia pallidiflora was discovered growing epiphytically and on rocks in the mid 1800's. Native to Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua, it is one of the northern most naturally growing billbergias discovered. This picture does not do its beautiful pendulous inflorescence justice. The inflorescence is completely covered with white scales with coral-pink bracts and green tightly rolled up petals. Photo by Eric Gouda.

Billbergia tessmannii was collected from Peru in 1925 and named in honor of its discoverer, Gunter Tessmann. Two years earlier he had also discovered, also in Peru, *Billbergia stenopetala*, (pictured on the front cover). This very ornamental plant has a large “umbrella” of wide, rose colored bracts and lime green petals. The pistils and anthers are borne on long needle like projections. Like *B. stenopetala*, *B. tessmannii* is a large plant with 36 inch banded gray-green leaves. Photo by Dorothy Berg.



Billbergia zebrina was one of the earliest billbergias to be introduced into cultivation, from the rainforest of Brazil. Its range, however also includes arid and harsh environments, making this a very tolerant plant for most gardens. The 3 foot leaves turn a purplish-bronze color with heavy silver banding. The bracts are rosy with yellow-green petals. Photo by Reginaldo Baiao.

Billbergia eloiseae is not of the subgenus *Helicodea*, but rather *Billbergia*. It is unclear where it was first discovered, but probably Columbia. In 1983 it was described by Smith and Read and named in honor of Eloise Beach, a member of the Central Florida and the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Societies, who was first to distinguish it from other similar billbergias like *B. formosa* and *B. tessmannii*, which are of the subgenus *Helicodea*. Photo by Eloise Beach.



anthesis (the short duration of time when the pollen is most viable and the pistil is most receptive). Presumably this is another mechanism provided by evolution to promote fertilization.

The blooming specimen pictured on the front cover is Billbergia stenopetala. This photo by Sue Gordon demonstrates the beautiful 25 inch long inflorescence in full bloom with another spike emerging from a second plant. Sue noted that this second bloom subsequently unfolded as nice as the first. Sue acquired the plant at the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Show in October 2005. Visitors to the Show might recall this head table plant owed by Magali Groves won Best Overall Species and Best Multiple Non-blooming Horticultural awards.

This billbergia, which was first described by Harms in 1927 following its collection in Peru by Tessmann in 1923, shows the characteristics of the billbergias of the subgenus Helicodea. Besides its pendulous inflorescence with its wide bright red array of bracts, its spiraled petals, the bars of gray scurf on its leaves and its tall rosette composed of only a few leaves, there are small red bracts at the base of each flower somewhat unique to this species.

On the following pages is a photographic essay of some of the billbergias of the subgenus Helicodea. I'm indebted to the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies Website for permission to use these photographs. I encourage anyone that has access to the Internet, to log on to www.fcbs.org and explore the thousands of other pictures and information available to you.

Bibliography

Bromeliads by Victoria Padilla. Crown Publishers, Inc., 1973, New York, New York.

Bromeliads by Francisco Oliva-Esteve. Armitano Editores, C.A., 2000, Caracas, Venezuela.

Bromeliads for the Contemporary Garden by Andrew Steens. Timber Press, 2003, Portland, Oregon.

Bromeliaceae of Ecuador: Part I by Jose M. Manzanares. Imprenta Mariscal, 2002, Quito, Ecuador.

(Editor's Note: I was recently provided the article reprinted below by Tom Foley. The author was Tom's uncle and one of the charter members of the Broward County Bromeliad Society nearly 4 decades ago. Mr. Seuss writes about the disregard of the environment by county workers. Some may think this is a rare occurrence; however, I have heard many similar stories, some from our own society members. The lesson from this event over 35 years ago should keep us on our toes about the affects of any products or chemicals we use around our precious plants.)

THE DEATH OF A GARDEN

By THOMAS E. SEUSS

(Originally printed in Journal of the Bromeliad Society, 1970.)

Thirteen long years ago my wife and I sold our house and extra large garden, so that we could develop a new kind of garden. The size of our new property would be small and our plants would go up instead of out. It would be easier to care for; we both worked, and with this type of planting we would have more time for our respective employers.

The lot was selected on a canal for maximum humidity, and the house and garden began. Forty different varieties of palms were selected—then the trees that had the least foliage. Bromeliads and orchids were added, not in pots, but fastened directly on to the trunks of the palms and trees. As the trees grew, so did the bromeliad collection. They spread over the ground, up the trunks, and

out to the tips of the branches. Mulford Foster said last year I had more bromeliads per square foot than in any garden he had ever visited. Some 955 stepping stones formed patios hidden among plantings, while



An example of how epiphytic plants such as bromeliads and orchids can be grown vertically. The bromeliads on this tree in CBS member Lyle Bowen's yard in South Fort Myers were saved from damage when a pest control company inadvertently sprayed his yard rather than a neighbor's. Many of the bromeliads in the ground were not as fortunate and suffered extensive damage. Photo by Larry Giroux

overhead there were branches covered so thickly with bromeliads you could see no bark. Garden clubs and societies occasionally held their meetings here because of the atmosphere that the planting offered. The plants themselves became their programs.

As Fort Lauderdale expanded, our garden and waterway became a part of the growing city. My yard became more important to me, as the city moved far beyond us. It was a touch of the South American jungle surrounded by traffic and stone. The canal was polluted, like most American streams, and clogged with debris and water hyacinths.

On December 13 I watched a city spray boat turn from the river and head in toward the canal. My hideaway garden at the far end would be their final destination. Two occupants sprayed the hyacinths as the boat moved slowly in my direction. As I turned away to go across town to my place of business, I thought of the book *Silent Spring*. At the time I read it, I thought it was simply a far-fetched fantasy.

The next day I noticed that all my bromeliads were covered with small black dots, the size of scale. In the evening each dot was encircled with a large yellow ring the size of a dime. The next day the ring was the size of a quarter. I called the Division of Plant Industry, a part of Florida's Department of Agriculture. They confirmed my suspicion that my whole garden had been covered with hyacinth spray, a weed killer that could not be neutralized. The following day all the Nidulariums were dead. Vrieseas, Guzmanias, Tillandsias, Aechmeas, Pitcairnia, Neoregelias, Hechtias in that order followed in the next few days. Bromelias and the others followed after that. In all, the total casualties will amount to about 2500 bromeliads, 1200 orchids, and all the supporting foliage. I expect in a few more days the 955 stepping stones will be the sole survivors.

Florida's elements are demanding. The garden that had survived torrential rains, droughts, chilly winters, and many hurricanes is dead because of the work of two careless men armed with a solution powerful enough to cause a real disaster in a matter of hours. In less than two hours, a garden that took 13 years to build was destroyed.

I am writing this hoping all growers will give some thought to the spray programs going on in their communities and perhaps ponder for just a minute at what a personal "Silent Spring" could mean to them. —*Fort Lauderdale, Florida.*



Although the water hyacinth is a beautiful, exotic plant, it is a major problem for the canals and waterways in Florida.



**BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF THE
CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY.**

DATE: March 19, 2006

LOCATION: St. John the Apostle Metropolitan Community Church,
Ft. Myers, FL

ATTENDANCE: 50 and guests (3) David Long, Vic & Diane
Beautz

WORKSHOP: None this month due to the Auction

CALL TO ORDER: By President Dianne Molnar

MINUTES: Larry Giroux approved, Seconded by Vicky Chirnside.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Larry Giroux stated that copies of the 2006 Rooster
are now available, with also plenty of older ones available.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: none

FCBS REP: Vicki Chirnside- Evil Weevil Report: none

Lee County Ft. Myers Garden Council Delegate: New Delegate will
be Mary McKenzie.

MERISTEM: Larry Giroux- always looking for articles and don't be
shy to send them in.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: March 25, 2006 Plant sale at Echo Park in
Cape Coral.

Annual CBS Birthday party fourth Sunday, April 23, 2006 due to
EASTER Sunday being the third Sunday.

Sign up for the Fakahatchee Walk, which we will hold on May 1,
2006.

DOOR PRIZE: Donated by- Dianne Molnar. Won by- Robert Fasq.

SHOW & TELL: Conducted by- Dale Kammerlohr. Dale provided
a selection of beautiful blooms of quesnelias.

BREAK: 25 minutes to eat & visit.

REFRESHMENTS SET-UP: Thank you to Mary McKenzie & Sue
Gordon.

PROGRAM: Annual Auction. Auctioneer – Larry Giroux.
Approximate \$1,900.00 was raised from our Annual auction for the
eradication of the Evil Weevil and support of the FCBS Website.

RAFFLE: There was no raffle this month due to the Annual
Auction.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at – 4:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Foley, Secretary

A Day at Michael's (Bromeliads)

As usual, our hosts, Donna and Michael Kiehl, made the day touring Michael's Bromeliads Nursery in Venice an educational and entertaining experience. There was a nice turnout from both the Caloosahatchee and the Sarasota Bromeliad Societies for this scheduled open house. There were lots of pictures taken. Below are some by Tom Foley.

Many thanks to Donna and Michael for the food, beverages and hospitality. For those of you who couldn't make it, call Michael and I'm sure he will give you a time to tour their great facility,

One of the several "Neo" shadehouses found at Michael's Bromeliads.



Michael acquired the remainder of Don Beadle's billbergia collection when he purchased the nursery and property from Don several years ago. Michael's Bromeliads is now the largest source of these outstanding cultivars.

Michael's Bromeliads has also become a major source of patterned vrieseas on the East Coast of the US, including many of David Shigii's hybrids from Hawaii.



Photos by Tom Foley

EVENTS CALENDER

June 6th - 11th, 2006

Bromeliads on the Border, 17th World Bromeliad Conference.
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center 500
Hotel Circle North, San Diego, California 92108, <http://www.towncountry.com>. You can register on the website
www.BSI.org

April 22-23, 2006

Bromeliad Society of South Florida Annual Show and Sale
Fairchild Gardens, Miami

September 30, 2006

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies' Bromeliad
Extravaganza
Presented by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida
Miccosukee Resort and Convention Center, Miami

Got something of interest?

If any of you have special events other members
would be interested in, please submit them to your
editor. Please provide by the 1st of the month,
prior to publication.

To All Our Members: Enjoy your hobby more

Join the Bromeliad Society International

for less than \$0.60 per week

Join the Cryptanthus Society

for less than \$0.40 per week

and as a first time subscriber the CBS will pay for
1/2 of the first year. So for \$0.50 per week you can get 2 great colorful

Journals and be part of the bigger picture.

See Betty Ann Prevatt for more information.

CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY
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NORTH FORT MYERS, FL 33903



Photo by Larry Giroux

A billbergia flower demonstrating the spirally rolled petal typical of bromeliads of the subgenus Helicodea. See article within.

CBS Birthday Party April 23rd
See a full color version of the newsletter at www.fcbs.org