



**FLORIDA COUNCIL
of
BROMELIAD SOCIETIES INC.
Newsletter**

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VOLUME XVIII - ISSUE I

FEBRUARY 1998

CATCHING UP - STAYING EVEN

Reclassification: In the past several years there have been numerous changes in the bromeliad genera. Some were welcome, some quite a shock. I have it on good authority that there is no need to rush and change all your plant tags, since it is perfectly legal to use the old nomenclature until the Monograph XIV, all 3 parts, is revised and reprinted. Provided, however, that you do not use any new species name in combination with an outdated genus name. The choice is yours.

Ella Kelley, Seminole Bromeliad Society member from Deland, will celebrate her 110th birthday on March 13. She loves to receive cards and her address is in the annual roster. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ELLA !**

Salt Tolerance: In the last issue of the Newsletter I asked for growing experience in regards to salt tolerance of bromeliads. The best response was from the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society, but there were several telephone calls, one of those saying that salt on the leaves might damage the plant, but it would survive, and that letting the roots remain in salt water conditions too long would kill the plant outright. Helga Tarver of Clearwater wrote me a more detailed account: "Tom & I live on a man-made island in the intracoastal waterway. We are surrounded by a salt-water canal. The air is full of salt as you can see by the salt deposits on our windows and sliding glass doors. This condition has never bothered my bromeliads who sit on a patio facing the canal. They have been growing there happily for 18 years !" She also wrote: "Ellen Peyton who lives on Treasure Island has never reported any damage resulting from salty air. Of course when, in 1983, a hurricane flooded her yard and soaked the bromeliads with salt water they rotted and died."

Let me tell you a true story. A few years ago I had a good customer in Bangkok, Thailand. He sent me big orders at least twice a year and was very enthusiastic about bromeliads, of which he was a dealer in Thailand. Then came a terrible drought in the country and water was very scarce. My friend was forced to buy water in tank truck loads to tend to his plants. All went well until a supplier, either unscrupulous or ignorant, delivered tank cars filled with salt water from the sea. Shortly thereafter, the plants began to rot in their centers and eventually die. That was when he discovered the error, but it was too late and his entire stock of bromeliads (and his business) was ruined. So, I say, no matter what the findings, try to avoid salt water on your bromeliads.

I have just received a nice letter from Jim Boynton, Editor of the Newsletter of Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society. Using the last FCBS Newsletter, he posed the question of salt tolerance on the WEB, and he sent me copies of interesting responses he received. It is too late and space does not permit using them in this issue, but I have asked Jim to write an article incorporating the responses, and it will be published in the next Newsletter. Look for it.



the town in Brazil near which he collected the plants.

A few years ago, the name *Neo. schultzi* was being applied to 'Fireball'. How this started I don't know. The name is not listed in Dr. Smith's monograph.

While I am still hopeful that *Neo. 'Fireball'* will someday be properly named, I have not pursued the matter. After 26* years, it would be difficult to refer to *Neo. 'Fireball'* by any other name.

*Ed. It is now 38 years and the mystery remains.

FLORIDA COUNCIL OF BROMELIAD SOCIETIES, INC.

Minutes of meeting on January 10, 1998

The FCBS meeting was held at Boggy Creek Bromeliads, hosted by the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida on 1/10/98.

The meeting was called to order by outgoing chair Larry Giroux and the new officers and representatives were introduced.

Previously revised by-laws were distributed to all members and minutes and financial report were discussed and approved as presented.

An accounting of our contribution to the SHARE program at the University of Florida for the study of M. callizona and the pursuit of a predator to control same.

Show dates were discussed and a conflict between the BSSF show and BG of Tampa Bay was addressed with no resolution to the conflict.

Carolyn Schoenau reported an increase of 290 to BSI membership rolls.

Karen Andreas reports the FCBS Web page has been up 495 days with a total of 1668 "hits". Karen solicited both new and updated information for posting to help keep information fresh. E-mail address Karen @digital.net.

Fla. East Coast Society reports tentative sites for Extravaganza '98 are being pursued and they expect to finalize plans in the near future.

Dr. J. Howard Frank reported on ongoing research on M. callizona. Due to the existence of a previously funded position by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida that has languished in the SHARE account Dr. Frank's SHARE account has been credited with \$2300.00 at the request of BSSF. Additionally, Dr. Frank will travel to Honduras to obtain a supply of parasitoid fly to return to Gainesville for rearing and subsequent testing.

A Venequelan researcher will also donate a year's sabbatical to this research gratis. The monies provided for the Ecuadorian student resulted in both his graduation and a thesis on predation of Metamasius which may prove invaluable.

There was a discussion of the merit of encouraging the individual members to petition their representatives to ask for support for the FCBS petition to the state Endangered Plant Advisory Council, the wording to be suggested by someone close to the research project.

Formal action was taken in the form of a mailing to reps to encourage individual members to petition their Fla. State Representatives to act in a positive manner towards our grant petition. Ellen Baskerville, Sarasota; second Polly Pascal, Broward.

Don Beadle solicited any hybrid not previously registered be reported to him, in addition to normal registration procedure, for inclusion in our hybrid registry to be available at the World Conference. Deadline is 6/1/98.

Next meeting postponed one week to 4/18/98 due to religious observances, and will be hosted by the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society.

Submitted: Geoffrey C. Johnson, Secretary.

The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

The Mulford B. Foster Bromeliad Identification Center

As many of you know, I have been trying, for several years to sort out the Neoregelia species in Florida horticulture. Some of the following information will appear in the Journal of the Bromeliad Society as "Neoregelia Notes", but here is a preview of some of my findings:

1. The plants commonly cultivated as N. johannis are not that species. What they are is unknown, but most likely are old undocumented hybrids.
2. The true N. johannis is cultivated, and usually misidentified as N. concentrica (Foster's Pink Tip or Red Tip) or N. cruenta (Fairchild).
3. Foster's True Marmorata is not that species. It appears to be a robust form of N. chlorosticta.
4. N. marmorata is in cultivation and is indistinguishable from N. Marcon.
5. The stiff, reddish, banded plant often identified as N. hatschbachii is not that species. It is a red form of N. cruenta.
6. The true N. hatschbachii is something else entirely.
7. Do not worry about which are N. pabstiana, diamantensis or intermedia.
8. There are several species related to N. bahiana in cultivation that do not as yet have names.

Harry Luther, Director,
Mulford B. Foster Bromeliad
Identification Center Jan., 1998

Ed. Note: Does this make hash of the BSI Hybrid Listing? Also, may I say N. Marcon is by far the superior clone of N. marmorata.

FLORIDA COUNCIL OF BROMELIAD SOCIETIES, INC.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Fourth Quarter 1997 at December 31

Beginning Balance, General Fund		\$ 4,887.40
Deposits:		
1996 WBC Repay Exp.	585.03	<u>585.03</u>
		\$ 5,472.43

Expense:

Offsite Mail Room,	144.98	
" " "	440.05 =	585.03
BIC	200.00	
Pac n Copy	8.88	
Pro Tech Printers	386.90	
First Cl. Postage	32.00	
Offsite Mail Room	118.60	
Delivery to Offsite	15.00	
BSI (return postage)(o.s.)	<u>17.25</u>	<u>1,363.66</u>

Balance, General Fun	\$ 4,108.7
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Weevil Fund:

Beginning Balance	8,152.32
Deposits	<u>470.00</u>
	8,622.32

Expense: J.H. Frank	156.26
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Ending Balance, Weevil Fund	<u>8,466.06</u>
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Combined Total	\$ <u>12,574.83</u>
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Donations to Weevil Fund

Caloosahatchee B. S.	70.00
Florida WestCoast B.S.	400.00

SOLVING THE FIREBALL MYSTERY

By: Nat DeLeon

(Reprinted from 1987 FCBS Newsletter)

In 1959 I wrote to a Mr. Walter Doering of Sao Vicente Brazil, in the state of Sao Paulo. Mr. Doering was primarily an orchid collector who had earlier written an article on the bromeliads of his area for The Bromeliad Society Bulletin, the forerunner of the Journal of the Bromelia Society.

During that time, I wrote to whoever I could in the hope of being able to purchase or trade for new bromeliads not already in cultivation. In this instance I was primarily interested in buying at least half-grown plants of *Vriesea gigantea* and *Vriesea hieroglyphica*. He had several other species I was interested in as well. Once Mr. Doering had confirmed that he would sell me the plants, I inquired about the possibility of buying other species as well, even if he had only a few plants of each. He replied that yes, he did have others but they were unidentified. I then suggested that all such unidentified plants be numbered so that we might have a common reference point to refer to on any specific plant in the future. I would grow the plants to flowering, have them identified and, should they prove ornamental enough, I would order additional plants by name and number. Mr. Doering was agreeable to this.

Correspondence was slow and Mr. Doering needed time to collect and prepare the plants for shipment. This was no small order. In March, 1960, almost a year after my initial inquiry, the plants arrived. There were more than 200 plants in the shipment. Losses were heavy, particularly of *Vr. hieroglyphica*. Only eight out of some fifty large plants survived. Losses of other species occurred also but were far less severe.

This shipment proved to be very important, for it represented the first bromeliad introduction into American horticulture of the following species: *Vr. bituminosa*, the large form of *Vr. incurvata* then *Vr. rostrum-aquilae*,

Vr. ensiformis, Vr. flammea, Vr. erythroductylon, Vr. phillipo-coburgii, Vr. scalaris, Vr. vagans, Nidularium rosulatum, Nid. rubens, Nid. rutilans, Neoregelia doeringiana, a new species to be named Neo. maculata and our mystery plant, Neo. 'Fireball'.

Only one of the four plants, later to be called Neo. 'Fireball' survived. As I remember it, the smallish plant was almost all green, with a faint hint of red, when received. Mr. Doering remarked about the plant in the brief note he sent with the unidentified plants. "Neoregelia or Aechmea, small plant, all mahogany colored. Flowers not yet seen." After the plant started to grow, exposed to the great Florida light, the mahogany color continued to intensify. Before long it sent out its first offset, revealing its stoloniferous habit.

The late Ralph Davis and I were rather close bromeliad buddies. As long as either of us had more than one of any given plant, his plants were my plants and vice versa. We lent one another plants for hybridizing or selfing. We also collaborated on several importation ventures. Ralph visited me one day and almost swallowed his cigar butt when he first saw my mystery plant. Of course Ralph had to have one and since by that time the plant already had two offsets, the first vegetative propagation took place. Since I was concerned about confusion in plant names even in those days I made Ralph promise he would not part with any plants until it flowered and I could have it identified.

Several years passed and our stocks of the mystery plant were getting quite large but there was still no sign of flowering. In the meantime, many people were starting to pester Ralph for a plant, which made it great "trade bait". I didn't have that problem since at that time I grew most of my bromeliads at the Parrot Jungle, away from public view. Ralph wanted to start letting some plants go and I agreed, provided we gave the plant a temporary name. Ralph told me that every time he referred to the plant he called Neo. 'Fireball' and I told him "That's a great name, let's call it that." The rest is history.

