

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2016

*Celebrating 62 Years in Bromeliads*

*floridabromeliads.org*



## March 2016 Newsletter

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### NEXT MEETING

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**Date & Time:**

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

**Location:**

Good Samaritan Church

6085 Park Boulevard

Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

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### Program

**Dave Johnston** will share with us what he has learned in his many years of growing bromeliads in his program titled *This & That, Lessons Learned from 30 Years of Growing Bromeliads*. He will tell us which methods worked for him and which did not so that we might know which techniques to avoid and which to apply in our own horticultural efforts.

### Plant Sales

The speaker will be the sole plant vendor for this meeting and there will be no member plant sales.

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### LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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### Program

**Andy Siekkinen** from the San Diego Bromeliad Society gave a presentation titled *Hechtia: The Oft Ignored (and usually Cursed at) Genus of Mexican Bromeliads*. Andy has been traveling and studying *Hechtias* (and all bromeliads) in Mexico for six years. Using some of the newest genetic techniques, he has been studying their evolutionary relationships. He has also been working on descriptions of several new species and introducing new species into cultivation. His presentation summarized the studies and work he has been pursuing. Below are some highlights of his talk.



- *Hechtia* are among the genera of succulent bromeliads that also include *Dyckia*, *Encholirium*, and *Deuterocohnia*.
- *Hechtia* are terrestrial or lithophytic.
- There are about 80 species, 30 names of which have been developed over the last eight years. Many species have not yet been studied and/or their taxonomy needs to be updated.

- *Hechtia* are distributed primarily throughout Mexico, and are found also in Texas, with three species found in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. They evolved about 15 million years ago in northern South America and now all are found north of Panama.

- Their seeds have hooks on them that allow them to stick to animal fur and bird feathers to facilitate their distribution. Examples of these seeds are shown on the right. They are about 3/8-inch long.



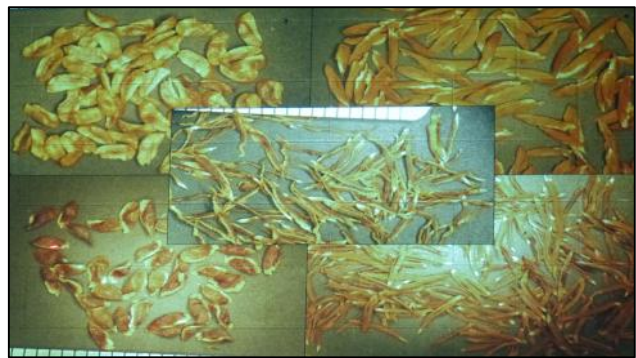
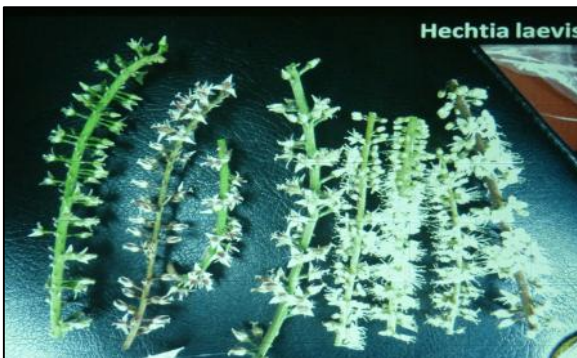
- Most have creamy-white or white flowers.

- While most have a terminal inflorescence (from the center of the plant), some species grow lateral inflorescences, i.e., from the side rather than the center of the plant. Pictures below show two species with lateral inflorescences.



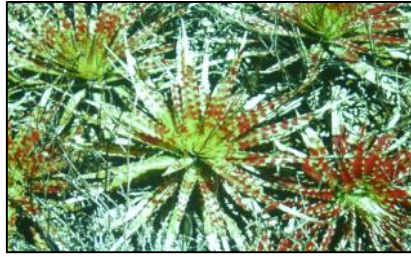
- *Hechtia* are pollinated primarily by bees.

- Almost all *Hechtia* are dioecious, that is, they are either male or female. They are also dimorphic, which means their features such as color, shape, size, and structure differ between males and females of the same species. Their flowers and branching structures of their inflorescences are also different. Below are pictures that illustrate the different bloom stalks (on the left) and (dried) flowers (on the right) from male and female plants of the same species.



- They grow primarily in limestone habitat with a calcareous (basic) soil and also in granitic habitats with siliceous (acidic) soil.

- Different habitat locations result in different colors of the same species, for example, *H. sphaeroblata* pictured on the right.



- Difficulties that arise in describing and identifying *Hechtia* species include the following:
  - Features within a species are almost always variable depending on their sex and/or habitat.
  - Colors can change with season, such as dry and wet periods.
  - Plant specimens preserved for study are incomplete or have been destroyed.
  - Plant collection data such as the name of the town or city where a species was collected have been forgotten, lost, or no longer exist.
  - Some plants are large and hard to collect.

NOTE: Andy owns Eagle Eye Adventures, a company that offers cultural and botanical tours to Mexico. His next Mexican tour is May 29 through June 12, 2016. He is also trying to put together a tour to Cuba for May 7 through 17, 2016.

### Show and Tell

Only one person had plants for Show and Tell and that was Alton Lee who showed two unnamed *Vriesea* hybrids (pictures below) that he recently acquired from Herb Hill's Raingreen Tropical nursery in Lithia. We thought the plants were quite lovely but according to Alton they have features that are not desirable to the European market to which Herb primarily sells his hybrids. According to Herb, that market does not like *Vrieseas* with a lot of branches on the bloom stalks such as those in the pictures, and they consider the yellow color of the second plant pictured to be too pale. In 1988 Herb began using tissue culture to reproduce his hybrids and now has varieties being produced in tissue culture laboratories in the U.S., Belgium, and China.

### Show and Tell Plants



Unnamed *Vriesea* hybrid





Unnamed *Vriesea* hybrid

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### THIS AND THAT

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#### **New Member**

At the meeting last month Eva Collins (picture on right) joined our bromeliad society. We welcome her to the group and hope she finds our meetings informative and friendly.



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### BLOOMING THIS MONTH

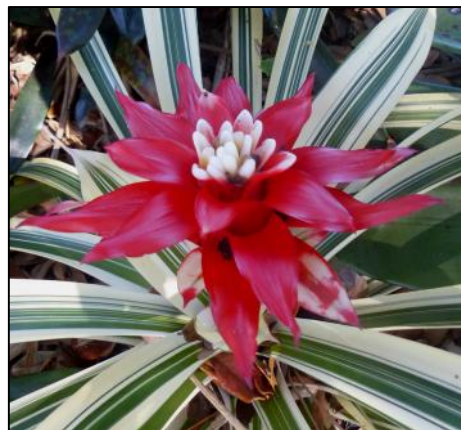
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*Hechtia* or *Dyckia* or...? These pictures were submitted by Gary Lund who writes the plant looks to him more like a *Hechtia* than a *Dyckia* because, based on his experience, *Hechtia* flowers are for the most part white and sometimes purple while this plant has green flowers and the flowers are large for a typical *Hechtia*. At the same time, he says he has never seen a *Dyckia* with green flowers. Suggestions, anyone?



Submitted by Gary Lund, this is *Androlepis skinneri*, which Gary is growing in full sun and is blooming later than those he grows in more shade. Note the bee on the bloom stalk.



*Guzmania* 'Splash'



*Aechmea* 'Pali Ridge' (*A. correia-araujoi* x 'Bert' by Lisa Vinzant)

## UPCOMING EVENTS, 2016

### March 12-13, Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale

Harry P. Leu Gardens, Orlando, FL (<http://www.leugardens.org>)

### March 12, 14th Annual Spring Obsession Garden & Art Event

Munn Park, Lakeland (<http://springobsession.org/>)

### April 1-3, Tropiflora's Spring Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267 ([tropiflora.com](http://tropiflora.com))

### April 2-3, GreenFest Plant Sale

University of Tampa, Tampa, FL ([friendsofplantpark.com/greenfest](http://friendsofplantpark.com/greenfest))

### April 9-10, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL ([cas.usf.edu/garden](http://cas.usf.edu/garden))

### April 16-17, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale

The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL (*Ben Klugh at [Klughka@yahoo.com](mailto:Klughka@yahoo.com)*)

### April 23-24, Green Thumb Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL ([stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb](http://stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb))

### June 13-19, 22<sup>nd</sup> World Bromeliad Conference, Houston, Texas

(<http://www.bsi.org/new/conference-corner/>)

### June 25-26, USF Botanical Gardens Summer Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL ([cas.usf.edu/garden](http://cas.usf.edu/garden))

### August 20-21, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale

The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL (*Ben Klugh at [Klughka@yahoo.com](mailto:Klughka@yahoo.com)*)

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