

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2018

Celebrating over 64 Years in Bromeliads

fwcbs.org



April 2018 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: Tuesday, April 3, 2018; 7:30 pm
Location: Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

PROGRAM

Dr. Teresa Cooper will talk to us about the Save Florida's Bromeliads Conservation Project (SFBCP) she established in 2015 in the on-going effort to control the invasive bromeliad-eating weevil *Metamasius callizona* that is decimating Florida bromeliads. Prior to 2015, Teresa and her colleagues tried classical biological control to stop the weevil but this was ultimately unsuccessful. The SFBCP goals are to promote intensive conservation and research to preserve Florida's bromeliads. Teresa will talk about the history of bromeliads and the weevil in Florida, alternative methods for controlling the weevil, and conservation efforts that are being put into action to save Florida's bromeliads.



Teresa is an entomologist and conservationist from the University of Florida, first as a graduate student then as a Research Scientist. She is also an artist and will have some of her bromeliad-related art pieces for sale at the meeting.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM

Tom Wolfe presented a program titled *Aechmeas, Where the Growing is Easy* in which he shared general cultural and horticultural information about Aechmeas. He showed us pictures of dozens of common and some not-so-common Aechmeas as examples of the points he made. The photographs were taken by his wife Carol who is known for her photographic talents, especially with bromeliads. Carol is also the editor of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies newsletter. Here are some of the main points of Tom's talk.



Tom and Carol Wolfe

General Information

- Popular among bromeliad growers, *Aechmea* is a large genus with about 255 species and thousands of hybrids.
- *Aechmea fasciata* was brought to Europe in 1826. By comparison, the first bromeliad of any genus introduced to Europe was the pineapple (genus *Ananas*) in 1493.
- The name 'Aechmea' is from a Greek word meaning "spear tip", to reflect stiff points found on sepals.
- They come in a great variety of sizes, colors, and foliage types.
- They range in size from 1 to 2 inches tall (Ex: *Aec. recurvata var benrathii*) to 10 feet tall (Ex: *Aec. conifera*).
- They can be found in a variety of growing conditions from sea level to mountain terrain, and their geographic range includes Central Mexico and from the West Indies south to Argentina.
- With very few exceptions, they are monocarpic, meaning they flower only once and slowly die while producing offsets.
- Their foliage grows without a stem.

Horticultural Information

- Aechmeas are typically easy to grow and great for beginners.
- Their leaves grow together forming an overlapping rosette in a vase shape with a central portion referred to as a 'tank' that can store up to a gallon of water.
- They prefer to grow in a location that has good air circulation and do not need to grow in soil. When grown in soil, the soil mix should have good drainage and should be allowed to become moderately dry before watering.
- Many are great in the landscape and grow in clumps in the ground, on rocks, in trees and mounted on wood or cork.
- Examples of Aechmeas used in landscape are *blanchetiana*, 'Blue Moon', *bracteata*, *calyculata*, *bromeliifolia*, *gamosepala*, *ampla*, *aquilega*, and *disticantha*.
- Examples of Aechmeas used for making hanging baskets and for mounting are *correia-araujoii*, *chantinii*, *nudicaulis*, *orlandiana*, 'Foster's Favorite', *warasii*, and *weilbachii*.
- They like moderate to bright light, and some will grow in full sun.
- Some achieve great color in full sun such as orange (*Aec. blanchetiana*) and dark red (*Aec. 'Pinot Noir'*), and some have banded foliage in shades of green to deep purple to almost black.
- Their inflorescence has a flower spike that can last up to six months or more.
- If grown as houseplants in low light conditions, they should be grown in windows or under florescent lighting.

SHOW AND TELL

John Edwards

Aechmea 'Mend' cv. of *lueddemanniana*; The name 'Mend' is an acronym for the first letters of the names of Merkle, Ensign, Nally, and Davis, the four pioneer Florida growers who helped develop this variegated sport in the 1960s.

Alton Lee Two Vriesea, unnamed hybrids by Herb Hill (pictures below)

Franne Matwijczyk *Neoregelia compacta* (pictures below)
Neoregelia macwilliamsii
Neoregelia macwilliamsii, an unknown cross

Janet Stoffels *Aechmea serrata* (pictures below)
Orthophytum 'Starlights' (*Ortho. gurkenii* x *sucrei*; pictures below)

SHOW AND TELL PLANTS



Unnamed *Vriesea* hybrids



Neoregelia compacta



Aechmea serrata



Orthophytum 'Starlights'

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW ...

This section presents questions regarding bromeliad cultivation that members submitted in writing to the Program Chairman to be read at the meeting. The questions are followed by answers or comments from the group at the meeting.

Question: Blemishes! How to prevent cracks in leaves and all kinds of scars that take away from the plant's beauty? ... I want to grow perfect plants like the ones I see at the meetings-how do I do is? Sometimes the top of the plant looks good but the bottom leaves are brown.

Answer: Something in the environment is hitting the plants, such as squirrels or wind. One can use neem oil to enhance foliage appearance. Oldest leaves at the base on the plant will die over time and turn brown and can be removed to enhance the look of the plant.

Question: What is the ideal soil for bromeliads? Cactus soil, violet mix, oak leaves? I have several bromeliad beds under oak trees.

Answer: Use a well-drained mix of good quality bark, soil, perlite and peat moss. One popular product is Fafard 3B, one of the blends manufactured by SunGro Horticulture. It can be purchased from Southern Agriculture in Rubonia, near Palmetto, and Shelly's Feed and Garden Supply in Tampa. Contact Dave Johnston for other sources.

Question: What is an ideal fertilizer and how often do I apply it? I have some Orchid-Bromeliad granules that are supposed to be sprinkled around the plant but not too close but am afraid to use it. Should liquid fertilizer be used in the cup of the bromeliad?

Answer: Use time-release Nutricote 360. It comes in pellet form, is long lasting, and need be applied only once in the plant's life, when it is a pup. Sprinkle it around the base of the pup and not on top of the soil mix. Never place dry fertilizers directly into the bromeliad cup or tank. Liquid fertilizer can be applied to the entire plant.

Question: My bronze-leaved Neoregelias are turning green. Are they getting too much or too little light?

Answer: The plant needs more light.

THIS AND THAT

Quesnelia Name Correction

The *Quesnelia* pictured in the 'Blooming This Month' section in the March newsletter (photo on right) was misidentified. According to Derek Butcher, former BSI bromeliad registrar, the correct name is *Quesnelia* 'Rafael Oliveira'. It is a variegated form of *Quesnelia marmorata* that was found by Rafael Oliveira de Faria in Bananeiras, near Silva Jardim, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1995. Thanks for the information, Derek.



Bill. "Rafael Oliveira"

Bromeliad Name Changes

Regarding bromeliad names changes based on recent bromeliad DNA studies, Derek Butcher also notes that the dropping of hyphens in a name was mainly one of expediency and use of hyphens in names is optional. He added that sometimes it is difficult to search for names with hyphens when on the internet so it can be better not to use them at all then.

BLOOMING THIS MONTH



Cryptanthus 'Absolute Zero'
(*Crypt.* 'Sweet Tooth' x *Crypt.* 'Ice Age')



Vriesea hybrid



Billbergia 'Louise' (a sport of *distachia* var. *maculata*, in albomarginated form)



Guzmania 'Splash'



Ananas comosus var. *bracteatus* (formerly *bracteatus*), albomarginated

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2018

April 6-8, Tropiflora's Spring Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267 (tropiflora.com)

April 14-15, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

April 28 and 29, Green Thumb Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL (stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb)

May 1st, FWCBS Annual Bromeliad Auction

Good Samaritan Church, 6085 Park Boulevard, Pinellas Park FL, 7:30 pm

June 23-24, USF Botanical Gardens Summer Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

May 29-June 3, 23rd World Bromeliad Conference, San Diego, CA

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

October 13-14, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

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