

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2018

Celebrating over 65 Years in Bromeliads

fwcbs.org



June 2019 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: Tuesday, June 4, 2019; 7:30 pm
Location: Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

PROGRAM

Jay Thurrott will talk to our group about *Growing Bromeliads from Seed*. Jay has been growing bromeliads since the 1970s and has over 700 varieties at his home in Port Orange, Florida. He is a lifetime member of the Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society. He has served as president, director and vice-president of the Bromeliad Society International (BSI) and is a BSI accredited master judge.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM

Our May meeting was, as usual, our Annual Bromeliad Auction, and, thanks to all who helped organize it and donated items for the auction and food for the refreshment table, it was a great event. Our go-to Event Chairperson Susan Sousa and her volunteers kept it running efficiently and smoothly.

Cashiers Phil Monnig, Brian Corey, and Gary Lund (pictured on the right) registered bidders and kept track of the finances. Judy Lund and Larry Sousa tended to the raffle tickets sale for the two \$25 gift certificates (generously donated by Mary Sue Beeler), and Susan Sousa conducted the silent auction with help from Beverly Jennings and Leo Sandmann.



We continued our tradition of three auctioneering teams worked in pairs, with one person describing the plants (Alton Lee, Dave Johnston, and Michael Kiehl) and the other person (Ashley Graham, Susan Sousa, and Kathy Risley, respectively) working the audience for the best bids for plants.

Runners who paraded the plants among bidders for the Live Auction were Mary Sue Beeler, Gary Gardner, Suzanne Bogacki, and Mike Petryszak. Kay Petryszak set up the refreshment tables, Richard Poole provided drinks and ice, and Karen Mills made an emergency run for toilet paper after it was discovered it was missing from the restrooms. A complete list of who donated auction items and/or food is not available (some made donations anonymously) but you are all most appreciated for your generosity.

Here are pictures of some bidders in action.



And below are pictures of some of the outstanding bromeliads and other auction items.





Neoregelia 'Grace Darling' x
'Princess Grace'



Neoregelia 'First Prize'



Aechmea zebrina
variegated



x*Wallfussia* 'Antonio'



Neoregelia 'Morocco'



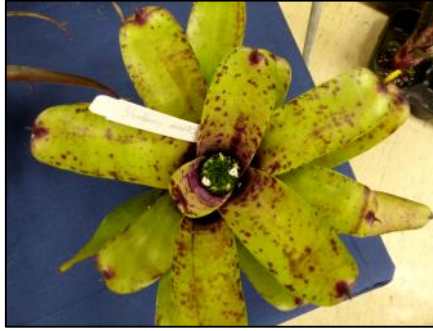
Vriesea hybrid



Billbergia 'Queen of Tears'



Portea alatisepala

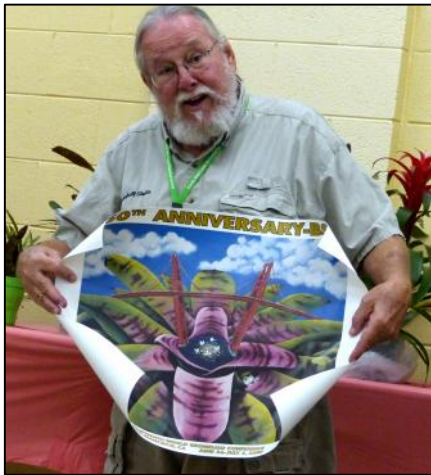


Neoregelia 'Blueberry Muffin'



Neoregelia 'Pink Magic'

Steve Littlefield donated three of his art pieces to the auction. Two were posters he had designed for two different BSI World Bromeliad Conferences, one of which is pictured below, and the third was a small mezzotint of a bromeliad in a pot, also pictured below.



Steve with one of the two posters he donated



Steve explaining the mezzotint process

One couple, guests at the auction, outdid all other bidders with successful bids on at least 26 plants (pictured below). The husband explained that they had come to the auction as an anniversary 'date night' because they both love tropical plants, they had a good time and great food, and it was less expensive than the jewelry he might otherwise have bought his wife as a gift. (Query: Jewelry vs. bromeliads? Answer: Depends on the jewelry!)



"Anniversary" bromeliads

New Member

Sylvia MacKinnon joined our society at the May auction. It is my understanding that she divides her time between Largo, Florida and Canada, and we hope she enjoys the occasions she can attend our meetings.

Bromeliads and the Northern Andes

The Smithsonian Channel recently rebroadcast its 2018 series *The Wild Andes*, and the episode titled *Life in the Cloud Forests* showed the unique flora and fauna of the Tropical Andes, the northern-most portion of the Andes mountain range. This show talked about the rich biodiversity of the area and included a description of the role bromeliads play in the lives of three animal species found there plus the blooming behavior of the world's largest bromeliad also found there.

The great height of the Tropical Andes forces moisture-laden air coming in from the east to rise and cool abruptly, causing rainfall on the eastern side of the mountains and leaving only dry winds to reach the western side where water is in short supply. This climate pattern has produced a number of wildly diverse habitats up and down the mountains, from high altitude montane forests to cloud forest of dense vegetation to dry forests in the foothills. Isolation due to the wide ranges of temperature, altitude, and rainfall, and deeply incised valleys has resulted in evolution of plant and animal species found here and nowhere else. Here are the four examples of bromeliads and interaction with animals found in the Tropical Andes highlighted in the Smithsonian episode.

1. One of rarest monkeys in world, the yellow tailed wooly monkey, lives in the high montane forest in the Peruvian Andes, about 9,000 feet above sea level. It seldom comes to the ground and lives primarily in the trees among bromeliads found on branches as high as 65 feet in the air. As part of their diet, these monkeys eat the tender, fleshy, succulent base of bromeliad leaves, which they consider a delicacy.
2. The spectacled bear lives exclusively in the Northern Andes and is found primarily in the páramo, a zone of tropical, montane vegetation between the continuous timberline and the permanent snowline. The bears have a primarily vegetarian diet and one of their favorite foods is bromeliads, especially *Puya*, *Tillandsia*, and *Guzmania*.
3. The rare Marañon poison frog, a species of poison dart frog, lives in the montane forest in an area of sheer limestone cliffs that are covered with bromeliads. The female frog lays her eggs inside dark, moist leaf-litter such as that found in bromeliad tanks. As the eggs mature and tadpoles emerge from them, the male frog transports each one to a water-filled bromeliad tank or a small stream or pool where it can feed on algae and mosquito larvae without competition from siblings. To make the journey, the tadpoles wriggle up the hind limbs of the male and onto its back where its moist skin keeps them alive during the trip.
4. The bromeliad species *Puya raimondii* in the northern Andes grows above the tree line in alpine moors, near icy glaciers, at over 13,000 feet high. It is the largest bromeliad and has a flower stalk that rises 20 feet above the already tall plant (picture below, on left). All *Puya* in the group will flower at the same time (picture below, on right) to attract as many pollinators as they can, and will ultimately produce millions of seeds. Pollinators include hummingbirds, finches and other birds.



Puya raimondii (Source: FCBS.org)



Puya raimondii flowers (Source: FCBS.org)

IN THE GARDEN THIS MONTH



Vriesea hybrid with inflorescence and night-blooming flower



Tillandsia 'Curly Slim'



Tillandsia streptophylla

Submitted by Gary Lund:



Aechmea 'Del Mar'

Submitted by Alton Lee:



Aechmea zebrina

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2019

June 22-23, USF Botanical Gardens Summer Plant Sale

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

June 28-29, Tropiflora Nursery Annual Summer Sale

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

August 17-18, Seminole Bromeliad Society and Tropical Plant Society Annual Fall Sale

The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL (www.sanfordgardenclub.com/sbtps)

September 20-21, Bromeliad Extravaganza®

Orlando, FL, Hosted by Bromeliad Society of Central Florida (www.BromeliadX.com)

October 12-13, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Festival

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

October 25-27, Tropiflora Nursery Fall Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota (tropiflora.com/events)

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