

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2017

Celebrating over 63 Years in Bromeliads

fwcbs.org



August 2017 Newsletter

Helga Tarver, 1925-2017

Our friend and long-time member Helga Tarver passed away Friday, July 21, 2017. She was 92.

Helga was a bromeliad enthusiast for almost 40 years during which time her husband Tom who passed away in 2013, gave her his full support in all her bromeliad endeavors. She joined our society in 1980 and served almost continually thereafter as historian, librarian, and in-house bromeliad expert, positions well suited to her vise-like memory and laser-sharp mind. While most known for her love of and expertise in Tillandsias, she was also passionate about bromeliad taxonomy and hybrid registration, and she corresponded regularly on these subjects with world-renowned experts. This she did without benefit of a computer and the Internet, using instead a typewriter and the US Postal Service.



Helga and Tom Tarver

She was a valuable resource for bromeliad identification and horticultural information. A natural teacher by profession, she provided many educational moments to us with candid and succinct presentation methods during workshops and Show and Tell sessions. She empowered all who met her to know more, do more and be more effective in growing our bromeliad collections as hobbyists and identifying them by their correct names.

In 2012 she was awarded the FWCBS Membership Service Award for her significant contributions in advancing our society's goals of encouraging cultivation, identification, hybridization and preservation of bromeliads. She was also honored for her work with a plant named for her, *Portea* 'Helga Tarver' (picture on right). It was collected in 1996 in Brazil by Chester Skotak and registered in 2006 by Dennis Cathcart of Tropiflora Nursery. Dennis said he named it for Helga whom he called "the inquisitive cultonomist [e.g., taxonomist] from Clearwater Florida".



She ceaselessly encouraged hybridizers to register their new plants, and would often, with their permission, register their plants for them. In 1979 she purchased a *Neoregelia* hybrid (picture on left) that was a cross of *Neo. melanodonta* and *Neo. concentrica* by an unknown hybridizer. After Derek Butcher, former BSI Cultivar Registrar, long pestered her to

register it, she finally did so in 2003. She named it *Neoregelia* 'Helga's Joy' because, as she said, it had given her nothing but joy and lots of pups over the years.

Below are tributes from two of Helga's bromeliad colleagues with whom she corresponded over the years.

Herb Plever, New York Bromeliad Society Newsletter Editor

"While attending the World Bromeliad Conference in St. Petersburg in 2002, I made it a point to contact Helga Tarver who was a subscriber to our newsletter *Bromeliana*. I was privileged to spend several hours with Helga at her home and we discovered our common passion for Tillandsias. For more than two decades she was a subscriber to *Bromeliana* and soon became a far-away but close friend and frequent correspondent who commented on or questioned material in many of the articles I wrote. She was an editor's dream reader - a knowledgeable, experienced grower who took the trouble to respond to what I wrote with comments that were helpful and supportive. We kept in touch about our respective health issues and we valued our exchange of Christmas/New Year's cards. Sylvia and I extend our condolences to her bromeliad family - the members of the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society. Helga will be missed by all of us."

Derek Butcher, Bromeliad Society of South Australia; former BSI Cultivar Register

"Condolences from Down Under. In 1990 Harry Luther started his 'Binomial Lists' and we, in Australia, took a keen interest in them. Shortly after we found there was a certain Helga Tarver asking similar questions. These were not so much about the listings themselves but how some names disappeared and others just appeared! Inevitably we exchanged notes and collaborated, Helga with her prized ancient typewriter and me trying to convert her to emails. So we had a succession of Helga's friends who acted as proxy correspondents and who would read out the emails over the phone to Helga. Isn't it great to have friends like that."

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 1, 2017, 7:30 pm
Location: Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Program

Charlie Birdsong from the Bromeliad Society of Baton Rouge is the August meeting speaker. He has been growing bromeliads for about 50 years, has many thousands of bromeliads and is a Master Judge. His program, *The Nidularioid Complex*, is about the group of bromeliads that typically has an inflorescence nested low in the center of the plant, in the tank. Currently, it comprises six genera: *Canistrum*, *Canistropsis*, *Edmundoa*, *Neoregelia*, *Nidularium*, and *Wittrockia*. While most of these genera occur in eastern Brazil, the distribution of *Neoregelia* is marked by differences between the Atlantic Rainforest and Amazonia.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Program

Eileen Hart from the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay was the speaker last month with a presentation on *The ABCs of Growing the Six Most Common Bromeliad Genera*. She

explained the range of cultivation conditions – light, water, and soil – required for optimal growing conditions for specific bromeliads and gave us her formula for potting medium: two parts peat to one part perlite. She summarized the pros and cons of growing the six genera and had a pile of bromeliads (picture below) that she pulled from her yard as examples of those genera.



Aechmea

Pros: Lovely and long-lasting bloom stalks; colorful, variegated and/or mottled foliage; some now bred to be spineless; many growing in full sun

Cons: Can grow quite large; some are cold sensitive; most have spines

Billbergia

Pros: Lovely bloom stalks; colorful foliage; small size; spineless; good puppers

Cons: Short-lived bloom stalk lasting only days; cold sensitive

Guzmania

Pros: Long-lasting, colorful bloom stalks; spineless; good puppers

Cons: No colorful foliage, only green; cold sensitive

Neoregelia

Pros: Colorful, variegated and/or mottled foliage; a wide range of sizes, small to large; fairly cold tolerant

Cons: Minimal blooms that grow low and in center of the tank; spines

Tillandsia

Pros: Grow without soil (true epiphyte); attractive blooms, some with fragrance; spineless; easy to care for; fairly cold tolerant; a range of sizes

Cons: No colorful foliage, only green to gray-green

Vriesea

Pros: Long-lasting bloom stalks; spineless; colorful, variegated and/or mottled foliage; fairly cold tolerant

Cons: Bloom stalks not showy

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: We live in a community with a common irrigation system so we have no option but to have our plants watered with hard water. That causes white sediment lines on the leaves. Is there anything we can use to get off the white? Would something like vinegar on a Q-tip hurt the plants?

Answer: The white residue on the leaves is due to deposits of calcium and magnesium in the water. It can be removed using white vinegar and a toothbrush.

Question: What does it mean when your Neoregelia oozes clear gelatinous gunk at its base? And what do you do with or to the gunk and for your plants?

Answer: No one had a precise answer as to the cause but suggestions were damage to the plant by fruit rats, a deposit of frog eggs, or an extrusion by the plant to prevent being gnawed by animals.

SHOW AND TELL

There was no Show and Tell session this meeting. Members must be saving up their plants for next month.

THIS AND THAT

New Members

We have two new members who joined at the July meeting, Dan Sakuta and Nancy Schmidt. Be sure to seek them out and make them feel welcome.

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies Meeting

The FCBS holds business meetings three times a year at locations hosted in rotation by each of the nine member societies. It is typically a lunch and tour of the hosts' gardens followed by a business meeting. The most recent meeting held Saturday, June 24, was hosted by our society at the home of Larry and Susan Sousa. It was brave of the Sousas to offer their house because Susan (one of our two representatives to the FCBS) was out of the country but Larry was up to the task and proved a great host. Ashley Graham, the second of our two representatives, made the luncheon food, and Sal Vactor and Larry assisted Ashley in setting it all up and then cleaning up afterward.

The main topics of discussion were the upcoming Bromeliad Extravaganza being hosted by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, a report on the progress of the bromeliad weevil work being conducted by Teresa Cooper and her organization, and a proposed new structure for calculating dues the member societies pay to FCBS. A complete copy of this meeting's minutes, and previous meetings, can be found on the FCBS website fcbs.org, under the link 'About FCBS'. Below are pictures of bromeliads and orchids the attendees wandered through in the Sousas' yard and the FCBS representatives at work around the long table in the dining room.



BLOOMING THIS MONTH



Hohenbergia pennae



Neoregelia wilsoniana

Submitted by Barb Gardner:



Aechmea 'Friederike'



Aechmea 'Romero'

Submitted by Nicole Matwijczyk:



Canistrum aurantiacum



Canistrum alagoanum

Submitted by Peggy Goodale:



Aechmea fulgens x ramosa



Neoregelia 'Lila'

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2017

August 4-6, 2017, Bromeliad Extravaganza[®], Bromeliads by the Bay
Clarion Hotel, 4710, 2701 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL; Hosted by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Tampa, FL (bromeliadguildoftampabay.org/news)

August 19-20, Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society Sale
Sanford Garden Club, Sanford, FL (407-539-4314)

August 26, USF Botanical Gardens Bromeliad Bash Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

October 6-8, Tropiflora Nursery Fall Festival
Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota (tropiflora.com/events.cfm)

October 14-15, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

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