

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2018

Celebrating over 64 Years in Bromeliads

fwcbs.org



August 2018 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

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

PROGRAM

The speaker for the August meeting is Ben Sill, a bromeliad grower in South Carolina who over the years has hybridized and registered about 25 bromeliads, both Billbergias and bi-generic Billbergia-Neoregelia crosses. His talk titled *A Blue Collar Bromeliad Love Story* is about his history with bromeliads and his hybridization work.

At our August 2013 meeting, our members were beneficiaries of Ben's generosity when he donated about 50 of his plants to the evening's raffle table. At that time, Ben had been in our area visiting his friend (and FWC member) Dave Johnston and gave Dave the plants to deliver to the meeting. His generosity was spurred by his desire to get his hybrids out to the public, especially to bromeliad lovers who could care for, grow, and, ultimately, share them with others. Ben is repeating his generosity again this year and will be bringing more of his hybrids to distribute to our members at the August meeting.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM

Marty Folk's presentation *Bromeliads in the Landscape* showed us how and where to use bromeliads in the landscape. Marty posed the question 'Why use bromeliads in the landscape?' His answer was they are low maintenance, they help conserve water because they do not require a lot of it, they need little if any chemical treatment unlike a grass lawn, and they are wildlife friendly and attract frogs, lizards and the like. Further, because there are a large variety of them in shape, size, color and habitats, one is sure to find many they would want to collect and can grow in their landscape in a range of growing conditions.

Marty showed us photos of how bromeliads are displayed in some commercial and residential landscapes and botanical gardens. He suggested interesting ways to arrangement bromeliads such as in layers, that is, larger ones placed behind shorter ones or vertically on hangers or a metal structure or in trees and other design options.

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: I found mealy bugs on the roots and base of my *Vriesea* 'Red Chestnut'. What product do you recommend using to get rid of this problem? And what are some cultural tips I can use that discourage mealy bugs from attacking bromeliads?

Answer: Use a soapy water spray to suffocate the bugs and kill them. You may also use a systemic insecticide spray. Be sure to repeat the treatment several times to ensure you have impacted the full life cycle of the bug.

Question: What is the effect of using water from a softener? What is the effect of using 'reclaimed water' as provided by various towns for lawn sprinkler systems?

Answer: Do not use water that has been treated with a water softener because this water has salts in it that can damage plants. Reclaimed water is wastewater that has been partially treated and often contains nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, on which most plants thrive. Note that it is not suitable for personal use, such as drinking or bathing and should not be directly applied to vegetables or other edible crops unless those will be peeled or cooked before eating.

Question: What is the best procedure and chemical to get rid of scale? Is there a preventive spray that can best keep this from happening again?

Answer: There is no prevention for scale infestation as such, but crowded plants with reduced air circulation can be more prone to developing it. Here are some suggested controls.

- Rub or pick it off by hand.
- Dab each with an alcohol-soaked cotton swab or neem oil.
- Use natural predators such as ladybugs and lacewings.
- Use an organic pesticide, such as insecticidal soap and d-Limonene to kill the larvae.
- Use a natural, fast-acting botanical insecticide, which breaks down quickly in the environment.
- As a last resort, one can use a synthetic insecticide such as one used to control the Mexican bromeliad weevil (see below).

SHOW AND TELL

Pat Frey Pat showed us a *Neoregelia* and an adult Mexican bromeliad weevil that she had discovered on it. An insecticide with the active ingredient imidacloprid is useful in controlling this invasive insect. Imidacloprid is in the family of neonicotinoid insecticides that have some breakdown products that can be toxic to other insects including especially honey-bees.

Franne Matwijczyk

Aechmea hybrid unknown
Aechmea fulgens discolor (photo on right).



Aechmea fulgens discolor

This second plant is almost identical to *Aec. miniata* discolor and the two can be distinguished (aside from their respective DNA sequences) based on the structure of their inflorescence. Herb Plever, editor of the New York Bromeliad Society newsletter, described the differences in the May article of that newsletter as follows. The inflorescence for *miniata* (see picture on the right from the newsletter article) is wholly bipinnate (i.e., has clusters of flowers attached directly to the inflorescence stem) and the inflorescence for *fulgens* is bipinnate only at the base and simple (i.e., has only one flower attached directly to the stem) from the middle to the top of the inflorescence, as seen in the picture above of Franne's plant.



Aechmea miniata discolor

BLOOMING THIS MONTH



Nidularium 'Leprosa'



Neoregelia rosea



Neoregelia 'Painted Delight'



Tillandsia harrisii
Submitted by Gary Lund



Aechmea 'America'



Neoregelia 'Raspberry Ripple'



Tillandsia mallemonitii

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2018

August 4, USF Botanical Gardens Bromeliad Bash Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

August 18-19, Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society Sale
Sanford Garden Club, Sanford, FL (407-539-4314)

October 12-14, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Festival
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

October 26-28, Tropiflora Nursery Fall Festival
Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota (tropiflora.com/events)

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