

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2014

Celebrating 60 Years of Bromeliads

floridabromeliads.org



September 2014 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:

Tuesday, September 2

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

Location:

Good Samaritan Church

6085 Park Boulevard

Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Program

Vice President/Program Chairman Franne Matwijczyk is putting together an evening of what she has titled *Bromeliad Speed Learning--Celebrating 60 Years of Bromeliad Experience in 30 Minutes*. (The 60 years of experience is a reference to our Society's 60th anniversary this year.) A team of our members will present an overview of eight common bromeliad genera--*Aechmea*, *Billbergia*, *Cryptanthus*, *Dyckias*, *Guzmania*, *Neoregelia*, *Tillandsia*, and *Vriesea*. Using examples of these genera, the overviews will show how to recognize bromeliads by foliage and inflorescence within each of the eight genera, and explain their cultivation, landscape placement, tolerance to sun, shade and cold, and so on. There will also be examples of soil mix types, mounting and potting materials, tools, fertilizers, and insect control products.

To help make this happen, members are asked to bring in one or two of their own bromeliads from one of the eight genera listed above and/or special tools, mounting materials, soil mixes, fertilizers, and/or insect control products they find particularly useful. Be sure to label your plants and tools clearly with both the plant and your name. Tables will be set up with signs to display each of the bromeliad genera and other materials.

Plant Sales

All members are welcome to sell bromeliads at the September meeting.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Speaker

Marty Baxley's presentation *Growing Bromeliads from Seeds and Hybridizing*, was thoughtful, well organized, and easy to understand for what can be difficult topics. As seen in the picture on the left, he was well prepared and had brought along tools and supplies for his seed potting demonstration and visual aids in the form of posters to explain the biology of hybridization.



Below is a summary of some of Marty's points. Interested growers can research the subjects further for more complete information.

Seeds

- To get seeds, one can either buy them or collect them directly from plants.
- There are three types of bromeliad seeds, each specific to one of the three bromeliads subfamilies.
 - Sub-family Bromelioideae, such as *Aechmea*, *Billbergia*, and *Neoregelia*, produce berry-like fruits in their blooms. These are typically dispersed by animals and birds that eat the berries. Bromeliads in this sub-family are the easiest to hybridize.
 - Sub-family Tillandsioideae, such as *Vriesea* and *Tillandsia*, have winged seeds with feathery plumes in a dry capsule. These are typically dispersed by breezes until they land on a suitable surface and take hold there. They are the shortest lived seeds, lasting at best six weeks.
 - Sub-family Pitcairnioideae, such as *Dyckia*, *Hechtia* and *Pitcairnia*, have small, wingless seeds, with a hook shape, in dry capsules that settle and grow on soil.



Bromelioideae:
berry-like seeds



Tillandsioideae:
winged seeds, feathery plumes
in dry capsules



Pitcairnioideae:
wingless seeds in
dry capsules

There are multiple methods used in the bromeliad world for growing from seed and Marty demonstrated the basics of his preferred method for growing fruit-like, berry seeds from plants in the Bromelioideae sub-family.

Planting and Growing Seeds

- When the seed pod (ovary) is ripe, squirt the seeds out of it and wash them. Then spread them onto paper, fold the paper to retain the seeds and let them dry there for a couple of days. Write the name of the plant from which you got the seeds on the paper, to record the source plant. If you are not going to plant the seeds right away, you can freeze them for up to six months and they will still be viable.
- Newly planted seeds need an environment with 100% humidity. Place a medium appropriate for growing seeds that will retain moisture into a small pot and then place seeds on top of the soil.
- Water the seeds with a spray bottle that also has some fungicide (picture on right).



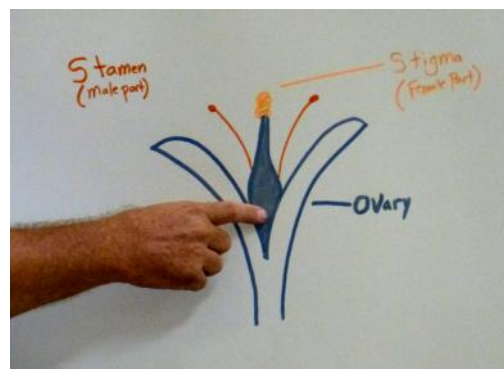
- Seal the pot in a bag (picture on right) and place the bag in an environment similar to the one in which you intend to grow the plants. Avoid direct sun; allow only indirect sun.
- Within approximately 30 days, seedlings with tender leaves will appear in the pot. The length of time for this to happen depends on the type of bromeliad being grown.



- Once the seedlings have sprouted you can remove the cover and check on them, but continue to keep them covered until the seedlings have 2 or 3 leaves. When you are confident the bromeliads are healthy and growing well, you can begin hardening off the seedlings, which is to say gradually exposing them to more open air and some direct light (picture on left).
- Methods for growing the three seed types are similar but vary slightly because each type needs different germination media to allow them to adapt to different environments. For example, *Dyckias* grow on top of soil in a pot or other container with or without a cover and will germinate quickly, within two to three weeks. *Tillandsia* seeds need constant moisture and are best begun in a misting house on a fine mesh, which is hard for most hobbyists to achieve,

Hybridizing

- All bromeliad flowers have three sepals, three petals, six pollen stamens (male parts) and one pistil and stigma (female part). The process of hybridization begins with removing pollen from a stamen in one plant and placing it on a stigma in another plant.
- One should determine the time of day when the flowers are fully open and at optimum stage for collecting and placing the pollen. Marty suggests that is typically before 11 am. If the two plants you want to cross bloom at different times, you can freeze the whole flower from the father (pollen) plant until the mother (seed) plant is ready to bloom and then defrost the seeds and proceed with the cross pollination.
- Using long tweezers, pinch pollen from a stamen on the father plant and place it onto the stigma of the mother plant. The ovary, i.e., seed pod, in the mother plant will swell overtime with seeds. You can then harvest the seeds from the seed pod.
- Not all bromeliad flowers are constructed in a manner that allows for easy hybridization. In some it will be more difficult to obtain pollen from a stamen and/or to place pollen on a stigma. In *Cryptanthus*, for example, the stigma is deep inside the flower and hard to reach and you will need to jam the pollen into the bloom.



Show and Tell

Reported by Helga Tarver

Franne Matwijczyk

Guzmania; unknown hybrid (picture below)

Nicole Matwijczyk

Cryptanthus 'Absolute Zero' (picture below)

Thomas Schwartz

Guz. 'Moonlight'; unregistered Grant Groves hybrid

Linda Sheetz

Tillandsia straminea 'Thin Leaf' (picture below)

Guz. 'Red Riding Hood'; unregistered Grant Groves hybrid (picture below)

Pictures of Show and Tell plants



Guzmania, unknown hybrid



Cryptanthus 'Absolute Zero'



Tillandsia straminea 'Thin Leaf'



Guz. 'Red Riding Hood'

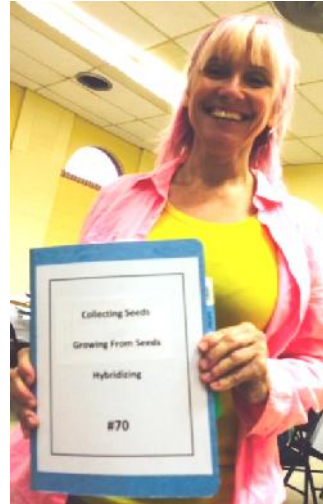
THIS AND THAT

Field Trip, October 4

On Saturday, October 4, our group will be taking a field trip, by bus, to Michael's Bromeliads nursery in Venice and Tropiflora nursery in Sarasota. The trip coincides with Tropiflora's Fall Festival and Plant Sale that in addition to bromeliads will include about 20 outside vendors selling other types of plants. Between the visits at the two nurseries there will be a lunch stop at a Cracker Barrel restaurant. The cost for the trip is \$20 per person (lunch not included) and members can reserve seats by cash or check to Judy Lund at the September meeting or by check mailed to Judy's home at 904 Oakwood Drive, Largo, Florida 33770. Checks should be made payable to **Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society**. Sign up soon to reserve your seat on the bus. For more information, contact Judy at 727-439-7782 or by email at garybrom@yahoo.com.

FWC Library

This is a reminder to check out our great library. For information about what is available see Librarians Pat Frey and Maria Fernandez at the next meeting. Below you can see members J.C. Campbell (on the left) and Nicole Matwiczkyk (on the right) who last month checked out information of interest to them. Nicole's choice, *Collecting Seeds, Growing from Seeds, and Hybridizing*, was timely and no doubt inspired by Marty Baxley's presentation that evening on hybridization. (Photos courtesy of Pat Frey)



What's in a (Bigeneric) Name?

(Source: information gathered from Derek Butcher through printed material and personal communication)

Continuing on the subject of hybridization, this process can occur not only within a genus but also between genera. When two genera are cross pollinated to produce another plant, the new plant is called a bigeneric, intergeneric or nothogenus plant. The name given to the new plant will reflect each of the parents' names preceded by a small "x" to signify it is a bigeneric name. One rule of thumb used to name a bigeneric is to take the first part of the name from the "seed parent" and the second part from the "pollen parent". Examples of bigeneric names are *xBillmea* (*Billbergia* X *Aechmea*), *xNeotanthus* (*Neoregelia* X *Cryptanthus*), and *xDyckcohnia* (*Dyckia* X *Deuterocohnia*). In the event a bigeneric cross happens in the wild, this naming 'rule of thumb' would be difficult to apply because one would not know the pollen parent vs. the seed parent.

To be officially recognized, a bigeneric name must be properly published and that is usually in the Journal of the Bromeliad Society International. According to the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, which is the set of official rules for naming plants, the first validly published new bigeneric genus is the name that becomes the accepted one. The application of this rule has resulted in an official change in some bigeneric names. One example of such a change is the name *xCryptbergia* (for the cross between *Cryptanthus* and *Billbergia*) that has been replaced by the name *xBiltanthus*. This is based on detective work by Derek Butcher (Australia) who found that the name *xBiltanthus* was first used in print in 1947, prior to the use of *xCryptbergia*, so *xBiltanthus*, has priority. I guess that means I will be relabeling my *xCryptbergia* 'Red Burst' as *xBiltanthus* 'Red Burst'.

While there are abundant examples of bigeneric crosses within each of the three (soon to be eight) bromeliad subfamilies, I was not familiar with crosses between the subfamilies. When I asked Derek if such crosses might occur, he responded "You would think that with the different seed shapes of the old three subfamilies they would not successfully mate. But alas, anything seems possible in nature. There is in the pipeline a *Puya* [Pitcairnioideae] crossed with a Bromelioideae!" It will be interesting to see what new bigeneric hybrids are developed in the future.

Member Service Recognition Award

Once a year members are asked to nominate a member, past or present, who they believe should be honored for their service to our Society. If you would like to nominate someone for our 2014 Member Service Recognition Award, submit your nomination, in writing, to Secretary John Edwards on or before

the October meeting date. The Board of Directors will review the nominations at the October quarterly Board meeting and will announce the result at the December monthly meeting.

2015 Officers and Trustees

At the October meeting, a Nominating Committee will present a slate of nominees for our 2015 officers and trustees. Members will then vote on the slate at the November meeting. Additional candidates may be added to the slate any time before the voting takes place. Please note that any nominations must have the consent of the intended nominee. Contact Carol Schultz if you are interested in serving in one of the Board positions.

New Member

We welcome new member Salbiah (Sal) Vactor who joined at the August meeting. Be sure to seek her out and make her feel welcome.

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2014

September 8-14, 21st World Bromeliad Conference, *Bromeliads in Paradise*

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA (www.bsi.org/new/wbc-2014-registration-and-info)

October 3-5, Tropiflora Fall Festival and Plant Sale

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

October 11-12, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale

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

December 6-7, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Show

Terry Park, 3451 Marion Street, Fort Myers (bprevattpcc@aol.com)

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