

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2017

*Celebrating over 63 Years in Bromeliads*

*fwcbs.org*



## September 2017 Newsletter

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### NEXT MEETING

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**Date & Time:** Tuesday, September 5, 2017; 7:30 pm  
**Location:** Good Samaritan Church  
6085 Park Boulevard  
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

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### Program

**Dr. Terrie Bert** from the Sarasota Bromeliad Society has another of her information-packed presentations for us, this one titled *Understanding Bromeliad Ecology and Evolution Can Help You Grow Better Plants*. She will tell us how taxonomy studies based on genetic differences between species have shown the locations and habitats where bromeliad species existing today originated, how and where they spread in the Americas, and how they developed their diversity in form, physiology, and the habitats they occupy. Understanding the basics of bromeliad ecology and evolution can help determine the best conditions for cultivating bromeliads.

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### LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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#### PROGRAM

**Charlie Birdsong** from the Bromeliad Society of Baton Rouge presented a program titled *The Nidularioid Complex of the Atlantic Forest of Brazil*, about a group of five genera within the bromeliad plant family that typically has an inflorescence nested low in the center of the plant, in the tank. Charlie talked to us about the five genera – Canistrum, Canistropsis, Edmuntoa, Wittrockia, and Nidularium – and showed us photographs of the many bromeliads within these genera that he grows. Below is a summary of his talk.

- 'Nid' means 'nest', and refers to the nest-like form the inflorescences for these five genera typically display that sits within their water-impounding rosette.
- These genera typically have a concentric leaf form, prevalent long-lasting colorful bloom, dark-colored leaves, and grow on shady areas.
- Many of the plants now classified as Canistrum, Canistropsis, Edmuntoa, and Wittrockia were formerly classified as Nidulariums and were reclassified into their current genera based on results of recent DNA studies.
- Further DNA studies will most likely result in more bromeliads, including some Neoregelias and Aechmeas, being moved into the Nidularioid complex.

- They are generally truly epiphytic and grow at the base of trees and/or a short way up a tree trunk.
- Most occur in rain forests in eastern Brazil.
- Pupping on some can get crowded and result in loss of confirmation in leaf distribution. In any event, wait until the pups are one-quarter to one-third the size of the mother before removing them.
- Elton Leme has published three books on three genera in the Nidularioid complex:
  - *Canistropsis*, *Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest*, 1998
  - *Canistrum*, *Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest*, 1997
  - *Nidularium*, *Bromeliads of the Atlantic Forest*, 2000

Below is a summary of Charlie's descriptions of major characteristics of the five genera in the Nidularioid complex.

Canistropsis, 13 species, 11 hybrids

- Typically small to medium-size stoloniferous plants with colorful brachs
- Inflorescence is raised above the cup but some can stay low in the cup.
- Found in rainforests and prefer a shady habitat under the tree canopy
- Species *Canistropsis billbergioides* is unusual in that its cultivars come in at least nine different color forms. Rather than using Latinized color names, they are identified using fruit names that roughly suggest the color of the primary brachs, for example, *Canistropsis* 'Apricot'. Other fruit names used are Blood Orange, Citron, Guava, Lemon, Mandarin, Mulberry, Persimmon, Plum, Sugar Fig, Tamarillo, and Tutti Frutti. When one of these cultivars has a primary bract color different from the leaf color, the leaf color is described by another fruit name.

Canistrum, 11 species, 19 hybrids

- Small to medium-size plants, slightly stoloniferous and with colorful brachs
- There are two subgenera, *Cucullatanthus*, an upright form, and *Canistrum*, a flat form.
- Species examples are *elata* and *sedeliana*.

Edmundoa, three species, two registered hybrids

- These often have a gelatinous, wooly covering on blooms.
- There can be great variety within the same species, for example *Edmundoa lendenii* and its varieties *lendenii* albomarginated, *lendenii* var *rosea*, and *lendenii* var *rosea* variegated.

Nidularium, 47 species, 58 hybrids

- Typically have an open rosette form with inflorescence slightly raised above the cup and with colorful brachs
- They bloom in the cup center and grow pups out of the brachs.
- Typically found in rain forests where they prefer to grow on the floor or low in the canopy.
- Species examples are *procerum*, *innocentii*, and *rutilans*.

Wittrockia, seven species, four registered hybrids

- Medium-size to large plants
- Species include *cyathiformis*, *gigantea*, *superba*, and cultivar *gigantea* 'Leopardinum'

### 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: What should I do with the rotting center of a bromeliad?

Answer: Feel free to remove it, especially if it smells. Removal will not hurt the plant.

Question: When checking a bromeliad for mosquito larvae, I found instead some small black wormlike critters. What are they?

Answer: No one had a specific answer but the general feeling was they would not be harmful to the plant.

Question: If you find a dead weevil in a bromeliad, what is the likelihood its young have spread to other bromeliads in my yard?

Answer: That is hard to say. To be on the conservative side, spray your plants with an appropriate pesticide.

### SHOW AND TELL

Dick Dailey	<i>Aechmea chantinii</i> 'Samurai'
Barb Gardner	<i>Ananas comosus</i> var. <i>bracteatus</i> tri-color; inflorescence head with multiple pups (photo below)
Franne Matwijczyk	<i>Ananas lucida</i> <i>Billbergia pyramidalis</i> <i>Billbergia pyramidalis</i> cv. 'Kyoto' (photo below)
Nicole Matwijczyk	<i>Tillandsia xerographica</i>
Linda Sheetz	<i>Aechmea</i> 'Star of Linda' ( <i>Aec. mariae-reginae</i> x <i>Aec. fasciata</i> ; photo below)

### Pictures of Show and Tell Plants



*Ananas comosus* var. *bracteatus*



*Billbergia* cv. 'Kyoto'



*Aechmea* 'Star of Linda'

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## THIS AND THAT

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### **Bromeliad Extravaganza®**, August 4-6, 2017

In odd-numbered years the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (FCBS) sponsors the Bromeliad Extravaganza, and one of the nine Florida bromeliad societies affiliated with the FCBS hosts the event. This year the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay (BGTB) hosted it at a hotel in Tampa. Our society was well-represented at the Extravaganza and all seemed to have a great time.

The first night, Friday, was an ice breaker and celebration of the FCBS' 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a cake and a buffet dinner. On Saturday the sales area received a crowd of eager buyers who swept into the room and gleefully took advantage of the great offerings. Member from our club who were sellers were Marty Baxley, Dennis and Linda Cathcart, Michael Kiehl, and Steve Littlefield and Kathy Risley. Also on Saturday were seminars by noted bromeliad growers as follows.

- Pam Koide Hyatt of Bird Rock Tropicals in California was the keynote speaker with a presentation about her eco-tour of the Oaxaca and Chiapas areas of Mexico. She also introduced us to an app she created called Air Plant Tilli-Cards for smart phones. It is a reference guide to the identification and cultivation of Tillandsias and can be easily updated, as needed, to include most species and many common hybrids.
- Dr. Larry Giroux of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society and editor of The Cryptanthus Society Journal gave a presentation titled *Cryptanthus...Why That Name?* He talked about how names for some Cryptanthus hybrids, cultivars and species were created by their describers and creators.
- Bruce Holst, taxonomist, scientist and Director of Botany at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, presented *Three Years of Bromeliad Hunting in Belize* about his recent work inventorying epiphytic plants, particularly bromeliads, in Belize. The work identified many new species in Belize, including some species previously unknown to science.
- Kenneth Stokes talked about the basics of bromeliad hybridizing with an emphasis on bi-generic crosses. He showed dozens of live plants as examples of how crosses typically yield offspring with forms similar to those of the parents while others result in unexpected forms.

Saturday night was a banquet followed by a Rare Plant Auction and a silent auction. Members who donated bromeliad and bromeliad-related items to the Rare Plant Auction on behalf of our society were Marty Baxley, Dennis and Linda Cathcart, Michael and Donna Kiehl, and Linda Sheetz. Our society also donated a plant from Helga Tarver's bromeliad collection to be auctioned in her honor, *Tillandsia ionantha* var *maxima* (picture on right), also called by some *Til. Huamelula*.





Kathy and Gary check out the list of auction plants.



Nancy and Dick give their bidding card a rest.

It is standard for bromeliad conference attendees to sport colorful, bromeliad- and tropical-themed shirts. Here is a photo essay of some of those types of shirts seen at the banquet.



On Sunday there were tours of the three private gardens listed below that belong to members of the BGTB.

Eileen & Robert Hart have two acres in Odessa, Florida, where they grow a wide variety of bromeliads, camellias, trees and other plants. Ellen is a Master Gardener and grows her bromeliads in a natural form: on the ground, on trees, and on driftwood. She prefers to allow nature to take its course, and mulches with natural material such as wood chips, leaves and pine needles.



Paula Benway's home in Temple Terrace is situated along the banks of the Hillsborough River with three decks that go down to the river, and a waterfall that flows into the river. These features are surrounded by beautiful bromeliads and other plants and yard art.



Verna & Robert Dickey's home in Brandon is on five acres of abundant oak trees that are surrounded by bromeliads. Natural pathways wind beneath the trees, and bromeliads are found growing in a variety of containers such as hanging baskets and pots, all accented by yard art.



### **UPCOMING EVENTS, 2017**

September 9-11, Sarasota Bromeliad Society Show and Sales, Bewitched Bromeliads  
(sarasotabromeliadsociety.org; 941-567-4176)

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

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

November 3-4, 2017, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Booth  
Mead Gardens Fall Plant Sale, 500 S Denning Dr, Winter Park (Sales: Mike Saunders, RivkaSap@aol.com)

December 2-3, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Sale  
Terry Park, 3451 Marion Street, Fort Myers ([bprevattpcc@aol.com](mailto:bprevattpcc@aol.com))

### **2017 FWCBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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