

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2017

*Celebrating over 63 Years in Bromeliads*

*fwcbs.org*



## October 2017 Newsletter

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### NEXT MEETING

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**Date & Time:** Tuesday, October 3, 2017; 7:30 pm  
**Location:** Good Samaritan Church  
6085 Park Boulevard  
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

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### Program

**Jay Thurrott** from the Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society (FECBS) has a presentation titled *Judging Bromeliads – What It's All About* that he approaches from the perspective of both a judge and an exhibitor. His experiences as a Bromeliad Society International (BSI) accredited master judge make him well-qualified to present this topic. He has judged bromeliad shows both within and out of the USA and had been an exhibitor in numerous bromeliad shows. He also serves as one of the organizers and teachers in the series of BSI judges schools offered to those who want to become bromeliad judges. He and his wife Calandra, who is also a BSI-accredited judge, have over 700 varieties at their home in Port Orange, Florida. A lifetime member of the FECBS, Jay is the FECBS newsletter editor and has served as secretary, vice president and president of that organization. Jay has also served as president, vice president, and director of the BSI.

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### LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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#### PROGRAM

**Dr. Terrie Bert's** presentation was titled *Bromeliad Ecology Evolution, and Cultivation*, with the alternate title *Understanding Bromeliad Ecology and Evolution Can Help You Grow Better Plants*. She talked about recent studies in DNA sequencing that have improved our understanding about how genetic differences in bromeliads tell us when, where and how they originated, where they exist today, and how and where they spread within the Americas.

Evolutionary biology, or adaptive radiation, is the process in which organisms diversify rapidly from an ancestral species into a multitude of new forms, particularly when a change in the environment makes new resources available, creates new challenges, or opens new environmental niches. The more than 3,000 bromeliad species known today have evolved to fill numerous niches, with an incredible diversity of adaptations in form (morphology), life style (physiology), and habitat (ecology).

The Bromeliaceae plant family was traditionally divided into three subfamilies: Pitcairnioideae, Tillandsioideae, and Bromelioideae. Results of recent DNA studies have confirmed an eight-subfamily classification that splits the subfamily Pitcairnioideae into five additional subfamilies: Brocchinioideae, Lindmanioideae, Hechtioideae, Puyoideae, and Navioideae.

Bromeliads arose in the Guayana Shield roughly 100 million years ago (Mya) and began to diverge and spread to other parts of tropical and subtropical America about 15 Mya. Records for their evolution are missing for the period from 80 to about 20 Mya. There were three major radiations, or biological evolutionary paths, within the Bromeliaceae plant family.

1) 15.5 to 13.5 Mya: Ancestor bromeliads to the subfamilies Tillandsioideae, Hechtioideae, Navioideae, and Pitcairnioideae emerged within the Guayana Shield. These early bromeliads were terrestrial, were similar to sedges and grasses, and grew mostly at high altitude, on the Guayana Shield tepuis which are flat-topped plateaus in the clouds. These isolated habitats preserved ancient lineages that were the origins of all other bromeliads.

2) 5.5 Mya: Ancestor bromeliads for the Tillandsioideae – Tillandsia, Vriesea, Racinaea, Mezobromelia – emerged in the Brazilian Shield area and Mata Atlantica. Some then spread into the Andes and Chile, and others onto the Guayana Shield and into the Caribbean and Central America. These, especially the genus Tillandsia, showed an explosive diversification with a wide geographic and habitat range that includes forests, mountains, deserts, rocks, and trees.

3) 5 Mya and forward: A Puya-like plant emerged throughout the Brazilian Shield and from the Andes to Chile as ancestor to the 32 genera in the subfamily Bromelioideae. This subfamily consists of over half of all bromeliad genera, which are highly diversified in habitat and form. It is the most recently evolved subfamily and is still diversifying

Terrie concluded with the statement that taxonomic changes will keep coming and bromeliads will keep on evolving. Some aspects of the complex evolutionary history of the bromeliad family are still unclear, indicating the need for further molecular studies, in combination with paleontological data, to explain the evolutionary gaps in the wide diversity of bromeliad forms and adaptations.

### **MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW ...**

This section presents questions regarding bromeliads members brought up at the meeting. Questions are followed by answers or comments from the group.

Question: Does any one have tips on how to protect our bromeliads from hurricane Irma that is on a path to hit our area next weekend?

Answer: Take the plants that are dearest to you into a protected area. Put plants that are in pots in a secure area so they do not become projectiles in the strong winds. If salt water surges onto your lawn and/or sprays onto your plants, and IF you have water after the storm, then saturate the lawn with fresh water to dilute the salt which can kill the lawn, and rinse the plants off to remove salt. Then cross your fingers, expect the worst and hope for the best!

## SHOW AND TELL

- Barb Gardner      *Orthophytum gurkenii* (picture below)
- Franne Matwijczyk      *Neoregelia* 'Shelldance' cv of 'Fairy Paint' (picture below)  
*Neoregelia tristis* Oppenheimer
- Nicole Matwijczyk      *Catopsis berteroniana*



*Orthophytum gurkenii*



*Neoregelia* "Shelldance"

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## THIS AND THAT

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### Salvador Dalí Museum Living Wall Update

Member Nicole Matwijczyk is the horticulturist at the Dalí museum who maintains the Living Wall at the museum. She did the original design of the wall, using almost entirely bromeliads. A few months ago, she reported the museum staff ordered most of the bromeliads in the wall be replaced with other plants, mainly begonias. She warned them the begonias would not live and she was right. Result: she has now been able to add back a significant number of bromeliads that she placed in a swirl design to mimic a Dali design. See photo below.



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BLOOMING THIS MONTH

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*Aechmea nidularioides*



*Ananas lucida* variegated cv 'Lava Flow'



*Neoregelia* 'Magali' with a weird-shaped center



*Aechmea* 'Blue Moon'



*Aechmea* 'Pinot Noir'

## COMING EVENTS, 2017

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

October 27-29, Tropiflora Nursery Fall Festival  
Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota ([tropiflora.com/events.cfm](http://tropiflora.com/events.cfm))

November 3-4, 2017, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Booth  
Mead Gardens Fall Plant Sale, 500 S Denning Dr, Winter Park, Mike Saunders,  
[presbyter64@gmail.com](mailto:presbyter64@gmail.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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