

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2015

*Celebrating over 60 Years in Bromeliads*

*floridabromeliads.org*



## November 2015 Newsletter

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### NEXT MEETING

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**Date & Time:**

Tuesday, November 3, 2015  
Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

**Location:**

Good Samaritan Church  
6085 Park Boulevard  
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

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### Program

**Bruce Holst** from the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota will be the speaker. His presentation *Belize: Into the Deep* will take us on a trip to an unusual and remote cenote (i.e., sinkhole) in an area rich with bromeliads that is also one of the most floristically diverse locations in that country. Bruce is the Director of the Plant Collections and Research Library at Selby and has studied and collected plants of the American tropics for 30 years. He has participated on more than 20 international expeditions, most recently to Belize, Costa Rica, and Venezuela, to conduct botanical inventories. He currently edits Selby Gardens' research journal, *Selbyana*, and was previously an editor of the *Journal of the Bromeliad Society International*. He is also a senior editor and writer for the *Flora of the Venezuelan Guayana*, a 20-year-long project completed in 2005 to publish nine volumes treating the 10,000 plant species in Venezuela's Lost World region. Some of his work in the past decade has involved both basic floristic inventories in Southwest Florida and applied conservation work in Miami-Dade County and Everglades National Park.

### Plant Sales

All members are welcome to sell bromeliads at the meeting. Sellers are requested to donate at least one plant to the evening's raffle table.

### 2016 Officers and Trustee Election

At the November meeting members will vote on a slate of nominees for our 2016 officers and trustee, as follows:

President	Ashley Graham
Vice President	Larry Sousa
Secretary	John Edwards
Treasurer	Gary Lund
Trustee (three-year term)	Sal Vactor (to serve from 2016 through 2018)

Additional candidates may be added to the slate, with permission of the nominee, any time before the voting takes place. If you want to make a nomination or run for one of these offices, contact Susan Sousa, Nominating Committee Chairman, at [susansousa1@yahoo.com](mailto:susansousa1@yahoo.com). Nominees elected from the slate presented in November will serve on our 2016 Board of Directors along with four others: Barbara Stayer and Joe Ventimiglia (two other trustees currently serving overlapping three-year terms), Susan Sousa as Immediate Past President, and Linda Sheetz, Newsletter Editor.

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## LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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### Program

Reported by Dick Dailey

Photos by Abdul Vactor

**Ray Lemieux** from Tropiflora Nursery in Sarasota gave a presentation to the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society on growing bromeliads from seeds. Ray specializes in terrestrial bromeliads at Tropiflora and also is in charge of the succulent section. He is also the current president of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society.



Ray began his presentation by showing seed samples from the three subfamilies of the bromeliad family *Bromeliaceae* and explaining how to identify those seeds.

1. Subfamily *Bromelioideae* – to identify, focus on the jelly that surrounds the seed; (32 genera, 861 species)
2. Subfamily *Pitcairnioideae* - look for hard seeds than can be pulled from the inflorescence; (16 genera, 1030 species)
3. Subfamily *Tillandsioideae* – main feature to look for is a feathery attachment that floats off the plant; (9 genera, 1,277 species)

Ray demonstrated how to collect seeds from two of these, the *Bromelioideae* and the *Pitcairnioideae*. These are seeds that have been pollinated either by hand or by nature, e.g., insects or birds. By looking at the bracts within the inflorescence you can tell those that have been pollinated because they are larger and stand out.

Ray recommends selecting fresh seeds directly from the inflorescence because they germinate faster than seeds collected and then stored or frozen for later use. He learned this technique from renowned hybridizer Chester Skotak.

After collecting the seeds, he places them in a soft drink container filled with water to clean them. After shaking the seeds up in the water, he pours the water and seeds into a clamshell-shaped plastic sandwich container that has soil in it. He prefers to use water that he gets from a reverse osmosis system that has no nutrients and no chlorine. He also recommends placing newspaper over the closed clamshell container for the first month while the seeds germinate.

Ray showed three separate types of potting soil he uses at Tropiflora for maximum results. Sterilized potting soil is needed so extra plants do not grow along with the bromeliads. He suggested you do not pack the soil but rather let the seeds fall into a loose mix for maximum growth.

The *Tillandsioideae* subfamily ‘floating in the air’ type of seeds need to be placed on screen material or shade cloth and then carefully placed on benches or away from fans or too much heat and then sprayed with water frequently to keep moist to help germination. Ray showed very specific samples of this.

Ray’s Tropiflora greenhouse has a temperature of 85 degrees and includes a wet wall that keeps humidity high – and then uses a gentle mist spray to keep moisture high. Some seeds start to grow in days; with others it takes months depending on the species.

As the seedlings grow, they will need to be separated and placed individually into new pots for maximum growth. Ray showed samples of pots that included hundreds of small bromeliads that needed to be separated and put into separate pots. He selects the strongest and largest plants to repot first.

Ray pointed out that with these techniques, you can grow hundreds of new plants very easily, and because of genetic diversity you can get many new varieties, with practice and good luck. The seedlings, either in the clamshell container or on the shade cloth or screen material, need to be carefully labeled so that when they mature you know the parent plants and can identify the hybrid.

Following the talk, dozens of members (see picture on right) came up to talk with Ray and ask questions as he continued showing his seed growing techniques and answering many questions, indicating a lot of interest in growing bromeliads from seed.



**Show and Tell**

Reported by Helga Tarver  
Photos by Abdul Vactor

- John Edwards      *Tillandsia fasciculata* 'Magnificent' (picture below)
- Franne Matwijczyk      *Aechmea chantinii* (picture below)
- Nicole Matwijczyk      *Canistropsis seidelii* (with green bloom stalk; picture below)

Show and Tell plants



*Tillandsia fasciculata* 'Magnificent'



*Aechmea chantinii*



*Canistropsis seidelii*  
(with green bloom stalk)

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**BLOOMING THIS MONTH**

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*Tillandsia ionantha* 'Peaches'  
(submitted by Gary Lund)



*Aechmea*, spineless, unknown hybrid  
(submitted by Gary Lund)



*Aechmea* 'Echidna'  
(*Aec. recurvata* x *chantinii*)



*Portea* 'Candy' and similar *Porteas* such as *P. alatisepala*, have a bloom stalk that just keeps on giving, with floral brach colors that change over time. Above, left to right, are examples of *P.* 'Candy' colors: 1) floral brachs are light blue (with slight purple tinge), 2) dark blue flowers begin to emerge, and 3) floral brachs turn lavender after flowers have faded.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS, 2015

October 30-November 1, Sarasota Bromeliad Society Annual Show and Sale  
 Southgate Community Center, 3145 Southgate Circle, Sarasota (Theresa.Bert@MyFWC.com)

December 5-6, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Sale  
 Terry Park, 3451 Marion Street, Fort Myers (bprevattpcc@aol.com)

#### 2015 FWCBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Ashley Graham, adglaw@gmail.com
Vice President	Larry Sousa, lawrencesousa@yahoo.com
Secretary	Sal Vactor, salbiah93hafiz@gmail.com
Treasurer	Gary Lund, garybrom@yahoo.com
Immediate-Past President	Susan Sousa, susansousa1@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editor	Linda Sheetz, lsheetz@tampabay.rr.com
Trustees (3)	Judy Lund (2014-2015), glund@tampabay.rr.com
	Joe Ventimiglia (2015-2016), ventimij@gmail.com
	Barbara Stayer (2015-2017), bnice@tampabay.rr.com

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