

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, January 10th 1:30p.m.
Wm. A. Finney Memorial Garden Center
837 N. Oleander Ave., Daytona Beach 32118

January, 2010

Happy New Year 2010!

President – Jay Thurrott – 386/761-4804

Vice President – Jerry O’Keefe – 407/767-2442

Secretary – Audrey Hayes – 407/421-4026

Treasurer – Eve Krauth – 386/763-2084

How long is it going to take to get familiar with writing “2010” rather than “2009”? Often I find that I make the change to the new year fairly easily, but then start backsliding after a few months and resort to writing the old year again. There is probably some deep-seated psychological reason for this and somewhere there is probably a doctoral candidate waiting to do his thesis on just such peculiar behavior.

This month’s meeting...

Our own Bradley Rauch is going to give us some pointers on mounting bromeliads on wood – and what better person to conduct this program? Brad is a past-president of FECBS and at our usual “show and tell” feature has shown us some very nice mountings of Tillandsias, Neoregelias, and other bromeliads that he has done. Brad has also donated a number of his creations for our raffles. Many of us have examples of Brad’s handiwork and you may want to bring them for this month’s “show and tell” to let us see how they’re doing!

Last month’s meeting...

as expected, was a really nice time. The garden center building was freshly decorated with Christmas arrangements donated to the Council of Garden Clubs by Rick Ryals.



Calandra (back on her feet after recent foot surgery) unwraps one of Brad Taylor’s intriguing mounts.

The food was excellent (Billy’s cheesecake drew a 5 star review – who knew low calorie food could taste so good?), the plants exchanged – exceptional, and the fellowship and good cheer – exquisite! Lots of “ooohs and aaahs were heard as each gaily wrapped plant was uncovered and held up for all to see.

This was Joan Campbells’s last meeting to chair and her leadership during her presidency was recognized with the presentation of a blooming Aechmea ‘romero’ – variegated. Thank you Joan!



Alan Bennet uncovers a Neo. 'Linda Cathcart' while Treasurer Eve Krauth and President Joan Campbell look on.

Winter is officially here now...

...and there's usually not a lot to do in tending your bromeliads during the Winter. This is more a time to relax and think about what you would like to do with your plants in the Spring when the weather turns a little warmer and your bromeliads begin waking up again and putting on some fresh growth. This could be a good time to think about building a shade house to better protect the plants from too much sun and falling leaves and other debris. If you have the room, there are some very inexpensive and easy to construct options to consider and even if you don't have the room, I've seen some very innovative uses of shade cloth to provide protection to small areas of yards where bromeliad beds can be built. The end result – nicer looking plants. Take a look around your yard and give some thought to where you would like to place some of your plants and what you may need to provide in the way of protection.

Winter is also a good time to observe what's going on with your bromeliads. Are they turning a bit pale and taking on a bleached-out look? They're probably receiving too much sun. You should probably move them to a less brightly lit area. It's difficult to strike that perfect balance between enough sun to develop optimum leaf color, yet not so much light that the vivid

colors that you are trying to develop become more a palette of pastel shades. Then there's the other extreme where all of your once-colorful bromeliads change to a uniform, dark green color – now they're not receiving enough light! Try moving them to a brighter location and you will be amazed at the difference in leaf colors as a result.

As you look over your collection you should also note which plants seem to be looking especially nice. These are probably from the group that respond best to the growing conditions you are currently providing. Consider acquiring more bromeliads from this group during the upcoming year. Do you find that Vrieseas don't do well in your collection, but your Neos. look great? Unless you are looking for the challenge and are willing to put more effort into growing bromeliads, you probably should focus on building up your Neoregelia collection. Neos. don't do so well for you, but your Aechmeas look really nice? Unless you plan on changing your growing conditions and methods, why not expand on the successes that you are currently seeing?

Could it be...the weevil?

Last May after we had that rather surprising downpour of 20+ inches of rain over a short period of time I noticed that the center leaves of a *Tillandsia utriculata* that I had mounted on some driftwood came loose when I tugged at them.



Tillandsia utriculata in Canaveral Seashore Park

At the time I just thought that this was a problem with the leaves rotting off after a prolonged soaking and expected the plant to die soon after, but it didn't so I didn't give it any further thought until last month when I noticed that those same central leaves hadn't really rotted off at all – they were cleanly clipped off and now have grown out enough so that I can clearly see the squared off tips. Something (animal? insect? fungus?) had damaged them in May and the central leaves looked as if someone had taken a pair of scissors and trimmed the tips off each one. Those central leaves have continued to grow out and the plant otherwise looks very healthy and I expect that it should bloom within the next year.



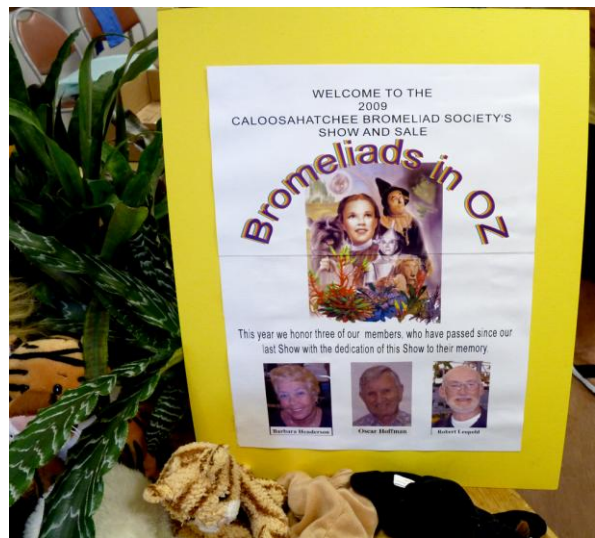
Clipped central leaves of *T. utriculata*

Meanwhile, I'm continuing to observe this and other Tillandsias in my collection for any sign of the Mexican weevil (aka the "Evil Weevil"). After all, the weevil has been found in Volusia County so it's logical to expect that it will spread into Port Orange some day...but I don't think that day is today. I've not seen similar damage to any other plants in my yard and I seem to remember hearing that there are other insects in the Central Florida environment that are not beyond making an occasional snack out of a tender bromeliad leaf. It's possible that all that rain which fell in May following a very dry period spurred the growth of new

leaves in the *T. utriculata* and that this tender new growth was clipped by a passing insect. On the other hand, there is always that nagging fear that this may have been the result of the first of a ravaging hoard of weevils that is descending on Port Orange and that far worse is just around the corner! We all need to be vigilant in monitoring our collections for any sign of this or other invaders.

For more information regarding the history of the Mexican weevil and the threat that it poses to Florida's native bromeliads, visit: www.fcb.org

We continue to publicize upcoming bromeliad shows and sales as we become aware of them. Some of these events are very far from East Central Florida, but well worth the drive. Recently Jerry O'Keefe volunteered to serve as a clerk for the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society show in Ft. Myers. Although 'the weather outside was frightful', inside it was truly delightful and the show theme of "Bromeliads in Oz" was carried out with some really interesting displays ranging from the wicked witch's flying monkeys to an emerald city – featuring appropriately colored *Cryptanthus*'s skillfully arranged at the end of a 'yellow brick road'.





Great show! If you have the opportunity, visit some of the upcoming shows in 2010.

Ellen and the bromeliads –

I'm not a regular viewer of the 'Ellen' show, but when I happened on an episode over the holidays I noticed an impressive array of bromeliads in the background where she makes her entrance. Could it be that we have a celebrity bromeliad enthusiast in Ellen DeGeneres?

Upcoming Events:

January 9th, 2010

Quarterly Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies meeting – hosted by the South Florida Bromeliad Society at Fairchild Tropical Gardens in Coral Gables

January 23rd, 2010

Halifax Council of Garden Clubs annual garage sale fund raiser at the Wm Finney

Garden Center – corner of Jessamine and Oleander Avenues.

February 8th, 2010

FECBS to host the monthly Halifax Council of Garden Clubs meeting. We'll need to provide coffee and some tasty snacks.

April 17th, 2010 8:30am to 12:00noon only!

The Volusia County Master Gardeners Eleventh Annual Plant Faire (someday someone will learn how to spell *Fair* correctly).

April 17-18, 2010

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay Show and Sale.

May 17th, 2010

Annual Halifax Council of Garden Clubs luncheon/business meeting. This year we will be hosting this event at Knicker's restaurant at the LPGA golf course.

July 28th – Aug. 10th, 2010

“Bromeliads in the Big Easy”

BSI World Conference in New Orleans. Not registered yet? What are you waiting for? This promises to be a party like no other! For more information, check the following web site:

http://www.gnobromeliads.com/GNOBS_WBC2010.htm

