

Gainesville Bromeliad Society

August 2014

August 24th Meeting, Speaker and Events

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The Outstandingly **Ostentatious** and Particularly **Picturesque O & P** Bromeliad Genera, Part I

By Terrie Bert

"In this presentation, I talk about 5 of the 8 bromeliad genera beginning with the letters O or P (plus a bonus genus) and not commonly grown by hobbyists. For each genus, I review the natural distribution, habitats, and growing conditions. I show examples of species in the genus in cultivation and in nature; describe how (if) they can be cultivated; and include interesting facts and tidbits of fun information throughout the talk. As has become my custom, there is a surprise at the end of the talk." [\[aaah!\]](#)



We're on the Web!

www.GainesvilleBromeliadSociety.org

[She will be bringing plants to buy also.](#)

About our Speaker:

Dr. Terrie Bert is a longstanding member of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society (SBS) and the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society and has held multiple offices in the SBS. She also served the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (FCBS) as a representative and officer for eight years and has authored articles for the FCBS Newsletter. For the Bromeliad Society International, she has been a Florida Director, chaired several international committees, and contributed articles to the BSI Journal. Currently, she is Librarian, Curator of the Wally Berg Award of Excellence, and a Master Judge. Terrie has given over 100 presentations on bromeliads to numerous U.S. and international bromeliad societies and other groups. She cultivates more than 2,000 different bromeliads in 30 genera. She's won multiple top awards in local bromeliad shows and BSI world conferences. Terrie has a Ph.D. in marine biology and is a research scientist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

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Gainesville Bromeliad Society

Minutes: June 22, 2014

The meeting was called to order just after 2 PM on Sunday, June 22nd, by our president, Sandy Burnett.

Sandy introduced our speaker, **Dave Johnston**, from Pinellas Park, FL. Dave is the proprietor of "Bromeliads Galore", a large nursery started in 1990 and offering over 1500 Bromeliads. His talk focused on *Vriesea* sp. and hybrids made by crossing the various species. He showed many photographs of the plants he grows, and he brought a beautiful set of plants for sale.

Vriesea plants are generally desirable as foliage plants, and the foliage is often more interesting than the blooms. The bloom spikes are sometimes very tall, and can make the plant "top heavy".

Dave explained that 5 species of *Vriesea* have been crossed in various combinations to create a myriad of fascinating and colorful hybrids:

V.fenestrata - somewhat cold sensitive, native to SE Brazil.

V. "seidiana" is a varietal form of *V. fenestrata* from coastal forests and rocky slopes at around 1000 m elevation.

V.fosteriana – darker foliage, known as "Red Chestnut".

V.gigantea – can grow very large over time; blooms at night, which makes it quite difficult to obtain pollen for crosses.

V.hieroglyphica – generally very difficult to grow in Florida.

V.platynema –known to have lavender tips on the leaves; six varietal forms are "flava", "libonir", "rosea", "striata", and "variegata".

The names chosen by hybridizers can be very creative. Each of the plants shown were identified by name, like "Bellbrook Beauty", "White Lightning", "Artisan Tapestry", "Berry Burst", "Cracker Jack", "Cream de la cream" and "Tasman Candyman x Snowman". There is a V. "Fancy that", V. "Geisha", and a V. "Golden Legend". There is a V. "Queen of Hearts", V. "Raspberry Sundae", V. "Sons of Tiger Tim", and a V. "Vistarella".

Dave showed us a large number of slides, and associated plants with several hybridizers well known in the foliage *Vriesea* world. For example, David Feld, at Sunshine Nursery in Hilo, HI, created V. "Hawaiian Magic", and V. "Abigail Jean". David Shikekes has many crosses to offer, but photos of his work weren't that good. Andrew Maloy, from northern New Zealand, has many *Vrieseas* with "Kiwi" and "Tasman" in their names. Jack Koning, from Australia, has V. "Lake Innes Rose Pearl" and V. "King Shar-Ryar". Several hybrids from each of their nurseries were shown.

Foliage *Vrieseas* require good quality soil with plenty of nutrients. Dave uses a very loose potting mix, which is a mix of Fafard® #4 with 50% perlite. He stressed that it is important not to over-water them, and that low light is okay as long as it is a bright light. Dave includes a "time-release" fertilizer in each plant. Without sufficient nutrients, a "2-stage" growth can occur, where the leaf lengths vary according to when the fertilizer was added. He explained that a preventative fungicide like "Captan" can be helpful when sprayed as soon as there's a sign of fungus, or darkness, around the central growing area.

In general, the foliage *Vrieseas* can be very picky as to light and temperature requirements. Some are very slow growing also. For example, Dave cultivated one of them for 20 years without obtaining a flower or a "pup". Dave has 4 greenhouses full of bromeliads, and more in his Florida room. He invited us to visit him to see them all.

We paused for refreshments, which were delicious.

The meeting was called to order again after about 20 minutes. The FL council of Bromeliads meeting will be on

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July 12th, and Bob McGraw agreed to attend. Lorene Junkin presented the treasurer's report, and we currently have \$2900.00.

Sandy explained that the speaker we had scheduled for July had cancelled. The group discussed various options and alternatives for the meeting in July; however, we decided to cancel July's meeting. We'll get together again in August, when Terrie Burt will speak with us. In September, we'll have an "in-house" auction. In October, we're invited to Hjordis's house[??], and in November, we'll have our holiday party.

Dr. Howard Frank spoke with us about a new mosquito borne illness in town called "chikungunya", which causes a nasty fever, painful arthritis-like symptoms for 3-4 days, or similar symptoms that could last for years. He mentioned that "dengue fever" was once common, and was wiped out in the 1960s. Inspectors went from door-to-door to educate people about the importance of removing places for mosquitoes to lay eggs, like standing water. Eventually the dengue fever disease cycle was broken.

As bromeliad growers, we need to keep water in the plants' central tanks and we sometimes experience outbreaks of mosquitoes. To control this, our speaker, Dave Johnston, uses an 8-ounce, drug-store bottle of hydrogen peroxide mixed with 4 gallons of water. He then sprays to cover all the bromeliad tanks with some of this liquid. Another control method is to use briquettes with methoprene, manufactured by Bayer, dropped into the bromeliad tanks. Alternatively, *Bacillus thuringiensis* serovar israelensis (Bti) is a group of bacteria used as biological control agents for larvae stages of certain dipterans. Bti produces toxins which are effective in killing various species of mosquitoes, fungus gnats, and blackflies, while having almost no effect on other organisms. Howard later added more information about the "Asian Tiger mosquito" and its control to our "Gainesville Bromeliad Society" website, under "Affiliates".

For "Show and Tell", Ron Schoenau brought several interesting plants. *Tillandsia venusta* is a nice foliage plant from Central America. It will actually send forth a "pup" from its center. *Neoregalia rosea* x *N. pendulum* has a different kind of growth form, stoloniferous, with a flattened bottom.

Nancy Mason brought a *Vriesea* "Annie" with a huge orange and yellow bloom spike. Another *Vriesea* that she brought had a dark red spike coming up that will last a long time, perhaps 6 months. She also brought a beautiful native FL orchid, *Encyclia tampensis*, which was in bloom.

Two books were recommended for general interest. *Chasing the Rose: An adventure in the Venetian Countryside*, by Andrea di Robilant, is an excellent story accompanied by beautiful illustrations. *The Orchid Thief: A True Story of Beauty and Obsession* by Susan Orlean is also very good.

Tickets were drawn for door prizes, and many of the members went home with new plants.

Jean Thomas, Secretary