

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, February 10th, 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

February, 2013

Winter is Still Here!

President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700

Vice President – Eretta Morris 386/677-9557

Secretary – Jillian Thurrott 386/801-2500

Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084

Don't hang up those gloves and scarf just yet and don't put away the frost cloth - the calendar says that we still have more Winter ahead of us and February has been known to produce some very cold weather in the past (February of 2012 gave us 2 consecutive days below freezing in my area). I'm cautiously optimistic though, that this is going to go down in the records as a very mild Florida winter despite earlier predictions that it would be a severe one...but don't look for any weather forecasters to admit this lack of accuracy in their long-range predictions. Instead we're likely to hear that this milder than usual winter means that we'll have a very hot summer and a terrifying hurricane season! Meanwhile, I've been surprised by more bromeliads coming into bloom than I can ever remember for a January. Many of my Vrieseas are developing bloom spikes – these take quite a while to fully develop, but include a very interesting *V. friburgensis* var. *tucumanensis* that came from Ron Schoenau as well as an enormous *V. ospinae* var. *gruberi* from Sunshine Ranch Bromeliads. I also noticed that a plant that came from Al Muzzel 8 years ago labeled *Aechmea pineliana* 'giant form' is putting up a tall bloom spike for the first time. *Tillandsia botteri* has been in my collection for 5 years and has not bloomed until this winter and my *Aechmea 'compacta'* is beginning its bloom

– it's been 5 years since I was given this plant and it has never bloomed in that time! What's going on? Is this sudden blooming activity because of the mild weather, has it taken this long for these plants to reach maturity or is it all just a coincidence?

For those of you who were unable to attend the Christmas party, it was really a very nice event. This year there was a contest for the best center piece – using bromeliads of course – and the winner was Audrey Hayes. Congratulations Audrey!



President Rick Ryals presenting Audrey Hayes with award for best centerpiece at the Christmas party

President's Message

Our First Lifetime Members

by Rick Ryals

The year 2013 marks and celebrates our 20th Anniversary as a Bromeliad Club, and from nearly the very formation of the club two wonderful individuals have played a huge roll. Jay and Calandra Thurrott were fittingly honored at our Christmas Party as our very first, 'Lifetime Members'.



While Jay & Calandra today serve as our editor and publisher of this great newsletter, in the past they have served in nearly every position within our club. They have in the past and continue to represent our club to the Council of Garden Clubs, the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies and the Bromeliad Society International. No other members have done more to advance our club and its endeavors than Jay and Calandra and they are without doubt most deserving of this honor. Jay and Calandra were presented a beautiful original framed bromeliad artwork by artist Pen Goff and I understand it already has a place of prominence in their home. I'm sure it's something they will cherish for years to come. I have recently joked that I hope they can get their 'Lifetime Membership', commuted to a couple of twenty year sentences. But the real truth is, they are valuable members of our club and serve in a invaluable advisory roll to myself and other club officers. We so much appreciate their continued involvement and support. Please join me in congratulating Jay and Calandra on this wonderful achievement!

In memoriam

We were very sorry to hear of the sudden passing of longtime FECBS member Julius Horvath. You may not have been aware of it, but Julius had been an orchid fancier before getting involved with bromeliads. Truly a Renaissance man, during his lifetime he served in the Navy, worked as an engineer for several large electronics companies, was a president of the International Order of Foresters, active member of the local Hungarian social club and an instructor of international folk dance. He was 83



Julius Horvath on our recent field trip to Michaels Bromeliads.

Ask Jay!

A new column for our newsletter where you get to ask Jay some questions that are relevant to growing bromeliads right here in the Halifax area. And remember, there's no dumb questions! We're all learning! Please send your questions to Jay at cajat@aol.com. Jay will do his very best to answer as many questions as possible each month, space permitting.

Q: With winter bearing down on us, should the cups of my bromeliads be filled with water or empty? While emptying the tanks/cups on my potted bromeliads will be easy, those planted in the ground would present a little challenge.

A: I have seen this debated many times in newsletters and heard some heated discussions about this in workshops so, as you might expect, the answer isn't necessarily clear-cut. That's probably because bromeliads simply can't tolerate prolonged temperatures below freezing – there's a reason that there are no native bromeliads in Alaska! If we experience one of those devastating “killer freezes”, where temperatures are below freezing for several days in a row, your outdoors plants will suffer whether you fill the center cups or empty them. For a more typical cold spell however there are some measures you can take to protect your bromeliads and if cold weather is forecast for your area, and one of them is to water your plants well. Dry soils (and dry potting mixes) lose any residual ground heat quicker than moist soil and your objective is to retain any residual warmth in the ground until the cold spell passes and warmer temperatures return. If the weather man says that its “really going to get cold”, water in the cups of bromeliads, particularly those larger varieties that can hold significant amounts of water, can help protect the plant in several ways. First, the water itself will provide some insulation value by not changing temperature as quickly as the outside air. Why is this important? Often, the lowest temperatures of the evening (or morning) persist over a relatively short period of time before the thermometer starts to climb again and the water in the cup of a bromeliad provides a bit of a buffer during this period. Secondly, if temperatures dip below freezing, during the process of changing from liquid (water) to solid (ice) a small amount of heat is released. It's a very small amount, but can make the difference between major or minor damage to your plant. Commercial nurseries and citrus groves make use of this by continuously watering during a cold snap. Finally, if we experience a “hard freeze”, the formation of ice on the surface of the water in the cup of a bromeliad means that temperatures

surrounding the ice will not fall below the freezing point of 32 degrees F (0 degrees C) and, and will probably be higher than that in the base of the cup if ice only forms on the surface of the water. That ice can actually provide a bit of protection to the delicate meristematic tissue of the plant so that once temperatures return to levels above freezing, the bromeliad can resume providing new growth. There may be damage, even severe damage to the leaves, but the plant will survive and maybe even reward your efforts with a beautiful bloom!

Name that plant...

This month's photos are as follows:

#1 Does this one look familiar? It should – you saw it recently at a club meeting's Show and Tell feature. Despite its name, this plant benefits greatly from a little bit of care. Treat it right and each year you can enjoy these pretty little flowers.



#2 This next plant has soft leaves, a beautiful (as you can see) inflorescence and as a bonus – no spines on the leaves. In fact no members of this Genus have spines! Maybe you can't put a name to this particular cultivar, but can you name the Genus?



#3 This final mystery plant does have spines...oooh boy, does it have spines! Just coming into bloom in our area, this is a very cold hardy addition to the landscape.



Last month's "Name that plant" photos were:

1. *Billbergia sanderiana* – This is really a terrific plant that produces an over-sized bloom with beautiful pink bracts.
2. *Aechmea fasciata* – often the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions the word 'bromeliad', these plants have been available commercially probably longer than any other bromeliad. They look great and the inflorescence holds its color for a very long time.
3. *Neoregelia 'fireball'* is a carefree (aren't they all?) plant that everyone loves with its fiery red leaves and tendency to form very

attractive clumps. This plant has never been formally described and so, even though it first turned up in 1960 and may be a true species, it is listed in the Cultivar Registry as a cultivar of an unknown species.

Looking ahead...

March 23-24

Broward County Bromeliad Society show and sale. "Gone Wild with Bromeliads!"

April 13-14

Bromeliad Society of South Florida show and sale at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables (Miami)

April 20, 21 2013 – Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society sale

April 27-28

Mounts Spring sale at Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach

May 11-12, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Mother's Day Sale

Fashion Square Mall, Orlando, FL
(mybscf.org)

August 17-18

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society sale

September 7, 8 2013 – SW Bromeliad Guild show and sale in Dallas, Tx

September 21st, 2013

Bromeliad Extravaganza – Hosted by the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society Indian Rocks Beach, Clearwater at the Holiday Inn Harborside. Free parking!

For more information, contact Judy Lund at 727/439-7782 glund@Tampabay.rr.com

December 6-8, 2013

Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society show and sale (date is tentative – more news when it's available)

2014 – BSI World Conference...Hawaii!!!

