

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, February 8th, 2015 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

February, 2015

Never Mind the Groundhog...

President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850

Vice President – Linda Stagnol 386/212-8138

Secretary – Ed Meiser 386/785-4830

Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041

He may or may not predict an early Spring on Feb. 2nd, but keep in mind he's a northern critter that doesn't know much about our weather in Florida! No matter what he says, Winter is still here and many of our plants, if not exactly 'hibernating', are not going to put on much new growth for a while. Granted, it's been a pretty mild Winter so far(although I can show you some cold damage on plants in my yard!), but we shouldn't be in a hurry to resume our Spring and Summer gardening activities until later this month when the risk of a sudden cold spell or freeze is statistically very low. So, don't put away that frost cloth just yet – you may still need it before this season is over!



Roll of frost cloth being cut into pieces for our club members.

By the way, this is the first year that our club purchased an entire roll of frost cloth to be divided up among our members and that really worked out quite well. Many thanks to Bryan and Rick for cutting the cloth up into packages

for each one of those club members who expressed an interest in obtaining some to protect their bromeliads. Sorry, if you were late in getting your order in – we're sold out!

Dues are now due –

If you haven't already, please take a moment now to renew your FECBS membership. Dues are a mere \$15(single) or \$20(dual) That's less than the cost of a cup of coffee...well not really, unless you buy your coffee at a really pricey establishment, but you know what I mean...Be sure to touch base with our treasurer at this month's meeting.

Last month's meeting –

President Bill Hazard did a great job of leading a discussion on the Genus Tillandsia. We were able to put photos of some of the varieties you are liable to see on the screen so that everyone could see them – even the folks in the back. That led to some good discussion regarding culture techniques for growing these poor plants that have been saddled with the misnomer of "air plants". I think many of us could relate to Bryan Manion's comment about squirrels damaging or destroying Tillandsias placed in trees.

The Tillandsia discussion ended with *Bill's bromeliad challenge*: Start now by mounting your favorite bromeliad (it doesn't have to be a Tillandsia) on a novel material. Plan on bringing your project to our October meeting and we'll vote on the most unusual

mount and the most attractive mounted bromeliad. Let your imagination run wild!

This month's meeting –

“The Virtually Unlimited Variety of Vrieseas”...or... “Vriesea – the ‘other’ Tillandsioideae”. Last month the topic for discussion was that interesting group of so-called ‘air plants’, the Tillandsias. The Genus Tillandsia however is just one group of related plants that have been placed in that sub-family of bromeliads known as the Tillandsioideae. The most commonly seen Genera in this group, the Tillandsias, Guzmanias and Vrieseas share a number of common qualities, but probably the most defining of those is their spineless leaves. Sure, there are a few spineless Aechmeas, a few spineless Neoregelias, and even a spineless Dyckia (called appropriately enough – ‘Naked Lady’) but these are the exception rather than the norm. This month we’ll take a look at some examples of the Genus Vriesea and I think you’ll agree that every bromeliad collection needs to include a few plants from this group.

President's Message –

My Fellow Bromeliacs - We have the opportunity as a club to boost our finances while helping out a fellow member. A two for the price of one sort of deal! Mary McBride has a home in DeLand and since Billy McBride has been having health issues, he is currently not able to live there. They both have been active members for many years and have participated in countless ways through sharing their knowledge and artistic eye. Mary has asked us to help thin out their collection of bromeliads because she and Billy are unable to do so. The opportunity for the club to come to their rescue has arisen and I know we are up to the challenge.

Bryan Manion and I went on a recon mission to get an idea as to how big a project this would be. When we got to Mary's house, we realized the extent of this undertaking.... It's doable! Yes, there are a lot of plants but we're

talking an average sized lot. With the help of 10-15 people, we could separate, thin out, clean and re-situate all the plants in her yard. The plants that are removed will benefit FECBS by becoming inventory to sell at upcoming shows (Water-Wise March 7th and Master Gardeners April 11th) with the proceeds going to the club. So you see, this community project cleans up Mary's property while pumping new financial blood into the club - for just a few hours of "fun". We will talk about it more at our February meeting and as always, your input is greatly appreciated. Bill

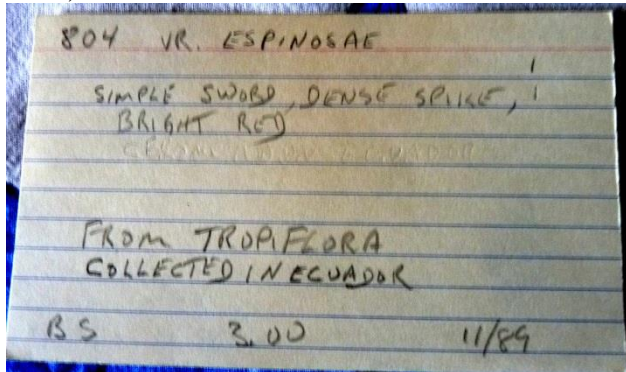
Plant Profile – ‘Paper or plastic?’

This phrase is repeated endlessly at the checkout sections of grocery stores everywhere each day and, although by far the most common response is “plastic”, there are still the occasional requests for “paper”. Very persuasive arguments can be made to justify either of these two choices – both political and environmental, but quite honestly I suspect that the net effect on the world is the same regardless of your selection(if you’ve ever seen the chemicals used and the pollutants discharged to the environment during the process of papermaking and its recycling, you might rethink your answer of “*paper please*”).

What does this have to do with bromeliads? Whether you prefer to keep records on paper or have converted to ‘plastic’ (and by that I mean plastic CDs, DVDs, flashdrives or some other means of digital recording), keeping good records of your bromeliad collection can greatly enhance your enjoyment of this hobby (or illness – depending on how severely you have been bitten by the ‘bromeliad bug’). I have found that the past history of each bromeliad in my collection can be fascinating and try to maintain that history by keeping an up-to-date record of each plant beginning with the date that it was first acquired along with as many particulars as I can learn from the previous owner. From that point, I add observations such as the date when a bloom first

appears, the plant's response to light conditions, apparent hardiness to low temperatures and anything else that I feel may be of interest when I review that record in the future. I'm also happy to pass a copy along when an offset is removed and distributed to a new owner. Often that new owner has no interest in this information at the time, but years later may begin to wish that records had been maintained.

There is no 'best' way to record and maintain information on your plants. It's more a case of 'what works best for you'. One of our long-term members maintained an extensive 3by5 file card system which suited him very well and when he passed away, his wife asked if I would like to have it (I eagerly accepted her offer).



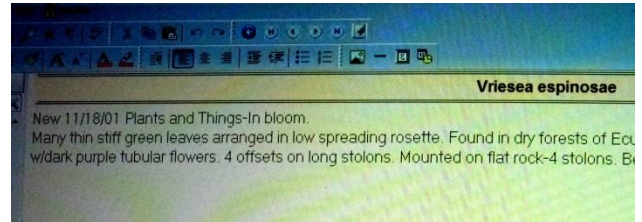
3 x 5 file card. One was kept for each of Frank Cowan's plants.

I've also seen such records kept on Roladex files (if you don't know what that is, ask any office worker who looks to be over 50), composition books, even three ring binders – they all work just fine. The main objective here is to have this information (data) kept in an organized and easily accessible form so that you can review it and add to it in the future.

That is exactly what computers excel at, so it's only natural that many bromeliad growers have moved from 'paper' to 'plastic' for electronic record keeping as their means of keeping track of their collections. Again, what works best for you is what you should pursue.

For those who are somewhat intimidated by computers, a free shareware program called AZZcardfile may be just the thing. This has the appearance of a 3by5 file card and a separate

card can be kept for each plant. When the file is opened it's a simple matter to scroll through the alphabetical list (new entries are automatically filed alphabetically for your convenience) to either review or add to the information on each "card".



Example of AZZ Cardfile record of *V. espinosae*

Others may like the straight forwardness of a "Word" program. This is basically a blank sheet of electronic paper that you can begin typing on, save and easily retrieve by file name. You are virtually unlimited in what you can type on your blank sheet and you may choose to have one file as a record for all of your plants or you can have a separate one with the bromeliad's name for each entry.

Still others like the orderly record keeping features that are characteristic of "Excel" files. This program allows you to have a single file where you can list the names of each of your plants as well as when the plant was acquired, when it bloomed and any other features of interest. You can then alphabetize the plant names and search for entries by any of the features that you have recorded. This may be a little trickier and is recommended generally for the more computer savvy, since the way your file is set up initially may determine the ease with which you can search and manipulate the data later on. A single file can be set up to hold multiple entries for each plant in your collection.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Name			Date Acquired			Source	
2								
3	Aechmea orlandiana			2/15/2015			FECBS meeting	
4								
5	Aechmea purpurea-rosea			4/22/2009			Tropiflora	
6								

Excel file example.

For those with truly huge collections of plants, "Access" may be the most useful program. This is a data base program that can store enormous amounts of data and then retrieve it with a few key strokes...providing you are familiar with the program. Bromeliad enthusiasts who are accountants or bookkeepers are probably already familiar with this program and using it may be second-nature to them.

Not comfortable with any of these computer programs? There's nothing wrong with file cards and hand written notes for each plant on a separate card. It really doesn't matter how you go about your record keeping, but what is important is that you make notes concerning your bromeliads. You may think that you'll always remember where that plant came from or what the previous owner cautioned you about in its care, but in a surprisingly short time those memories fade away or blend in with memories of other comments regarding other plants and that information becomes lost forever. A few minutes spent now recording information about a newly acquired bromeliad can greatly enhance your future enjoyment as that plant grows, matures and responds to your care. Try to keep track of what works and what doesn't work so that you don't have to either reinvent the wheel or repeat past mistakes.

The Bromeliad World Loses One of the Greats –

We've just received word that Miami's Nat DeLeon has passed away. Recent recipient of the Wally Berg award, Nat was truly one of the giants of the bromeliad world and will be missed by all that he touched in his long horticultural career.

Bill's Garden -

Since I joined the Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society, my collection of hard-to-grow bromeliads has gone from the 16 I had started with, to easily several hundred varieties, including a few that were given to me from various people. I was gifted with several brand

new Cryptanthus species and an Aechmea vanda which was very hard to grow and rewarded all my efforts with one of the ugliest bloom stalks I have ever seen.

But a diabetic related stroke took me away from my garden with large groups of hard-to-locate plants; it was a garden with many of the species represented. But even here in the rehab center, I have found a way to keep bromeliads.

I keep a Billbergia 'Casablanca' and a few Tillandsia capitata in my room but have no space for more. I asked the residency manager if I could get some of my plants brought in and was so excited when she said yes. I was busy planning the Ridgecrest bromeliad gardens but it took time to get past the politics. Finally the speech therapist found out and she had one of the physical therapists bring in a plant box her boyfriend had built her.



What Bill's garden lacks in size, it makes up for in color and variety!

It's not the sturdiest box around but built with love and it is 3.5 feet off the ground so I can access it without bending over. I got the okay to put it in the front side garden and I had mom bring some of my showiest plants - particularly Billbergias and Neoregelias which take cooler weather better. I also have a Hohebergia 'Fudge Ripple' because of all my help with gardening. After the holidays, residents have been bringing me their Christmas plants such as poinsettias and a Christmas tree seedling.



Bill McBride in front of his bromeliad garden – note the *Hohenbergia* ‘Fudge Ripple’ that he is holding on to.

I have impressed both staff and residents with my knowledge of plants in general and especially bromeliads. I’m sure you wouldn’t be surprised at how many people were shocked to find out they had bromeliads in and around their garden/yard - imagine their surprise to learn that Spanish moss and air plants were really bromeliads! (*Tillandsia usnioides* and *Tillandsia recurvata*).



A visitor to Bill’s bromeliad garden.

I would like to thank the bromeliad club and some very special members for your support and encouragement. You’re always welcome to visit the Ridgecrest Bromeliad Garden on the North Patio. This has become a very pleasant and popular visitation spot with the colorful plants and its muster of peacocks in the

afternoons. In one photo you can see a young male fanning his tail feathers at the colorful bromeliads.

- Bill McBride

Bromeliads in print –

Sometimes it seems like you never see anything about bromeliads in print. New books devoted to bromeliad culture are few and far between and older books are soon out of print and difficult to find. References to bromeliads in magazines are often inaccurate or just plain ridiculous (have you ever seen those artists’ renditions of ‘Queens tears’ in seed catalogues that look like something from outer space?) and newspapers rarely note more than upcoming club meetings.

That’s why I was very surprised to see a very nice article about cold - hardy bromeliads in the Jan/Feb issue of Florida Gardening. The author Steve Asbell had clearly done some research or had personal experience with this topic. This magazine, by the way, has been one of those little known gems for the past 20 years that subscribers rave about and anxiously wait by their mailboxes for the next issue. That’s why I’m a little concerned to learn that it recently changed hands and is sporting a “new look”. Here’s hoping that it continues to have interesting articles about gardening specific to Florida residents.

Meanwhile, the Daytona Beach News Journal’s recent article titled “Breathtaking possibilities” by Nara Schoenberg discussed the current popularity of the bromeliad Genus ‘*Tillandsia*’ and suggested that those interested may wish to pick up a copy of Zenaida Sengo’s new book “Air Plants: The Curious World of *Tillandsias*” (Timber Press). I haven’t had a chance to review this book, but it’s good to hear that there is something new in print out there!

Birthdays for February:

February is apparently a rare month for birthdays – this month has the fewest club

member birthdays of the year! Happy Birthday this month to:

Linda Burgher
Richard Wallace
Gary Signs

Looking ahead:

March 8-11, 2015

1st World Congress on Bromeliad Evolution
Pernambuco, Brazil
www.bromevo.net

March 14-15, 2015

Spring Plant Sale at Leu Gardens
1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando
Free admission

March 15-15, 2015

Fairchild Tropical Gardens 13th International
Orchid Festival
10901 Old Cutler Rd.
Coral Gables, Fl.

March 27-29

Tropiflora's Spring Festival
www.tropiflora.com

March 27-29, 2015

Everybody's Flower Show at the Ocean Center
in Daytona Beach

April 11th, 2015

Volusia County Master Gardener's Plant Fair
(or is it 'Plante Faire'?) at the county
fairgrounds in Deland. This is a half day sale
and once again we have been invited to have a
booth.

September 26, 2015

Bromeliad Extravaganza hosted by the
Bromeliad Society of South Florida.
"Bromeliads in the Magic City".
711 NW 72nd Ave.
Miami, Fl. 33126

Double Tree Hilton Miami Airport and
Convention Center

Room rate of \$107/night plus parking

For more information about reservations, go to
<http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/M/MIAMADT-BRO-20150923/index.jhtml>



June 13-19, 2016

Start making plans now for the 22nd BSI World
Conference hosted by the Houston Bromeliad
Society in Houston, Tx. Attend seminars
conducted by some of the top names in the
bromeliad world and have the opportunity to
acquire the newest bromeliad hybrids and most
unusual species at the plant sale and rare plant
auctions. Experience some real Texas
hospitality!