

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, May 12th, 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

May, 2013

If April Showers Bring May Flowers...

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

I know... the punchline is supposed to be “*Pilgrims*”, but this certainly has been an unusual Winter and now, Spring. Often, our rains stop in February and then it may be June or July before we get another shower. That’s why we often refer to this as our “dry season” or “fire season”, but this year the April showers have been a most welcome surprise. Let’s hope that this weather pattern continues a bit longer – maybe we can start to make up some of that rain deficit that has been mirroring the national debt these past few years!

April has been a very busy month with all of the bromeliad shows and sales going on around the state. Now as we enter our Summer season, things should slow down for a while and maybe we can devote a little more time to our own bromeliads. Summer is when they are actively putting out new leaves, forming offsets and maybe surprising us with an occasional inflorescence. Now is really the best time to go through your collection, inspect each plant and do a thorough clean-up. Remove those dead and damaged leaves. Inspect each plant for the first signs of a scale infestation and be prepared to treat those plants that are harboring the little critters. Left unchecked, scale can make a real mess of an otherwise beautiful plant and now, with the availability

of some of the systemic pesticides, there’s no reason why scale insects should spread through your collection. Take a good look at your potting mix in each pot – these don’t last forever and will eventually break down, compact in the pot and no longer retain moisture. This is a good time of year to remove the plant, rinse out the pot (if you are going to reuse it) and refill the pot with fresh potting material. Your bromeliads will appreciate this personalized treatment and will look healthier and more robust as a result of it.

This year’s Master Gardeners sale.. at the Volusia County fairgrounds went very well with lots of beautiful bromeliads being sold and lots of interest from the public in learning more about just what these unusual plants are and how they can grow them in their own yards. This is really a great fund raiser – it’s only a half day long and the sales booth is absolutely swamped with eager buyers during that short time. The weather was beautiful and everyone had a good time! Many thanks to all who helped out, but we need to especially acknowledge Bill Hazard for coordinating this effort; Jack Dunlop for taking on the task of handling receipts, making change, and keeping all of the tags straight; and Alan Bennett, Sudi Hipsley, Rick Ryals and Bill McBride for providing

all of those great looking plants for sale!



Eager customers waiting for the gates to open at the fairgrounds

Let's be Careful Out There!

This is the time of year when we all spend more time in our gardens and greenhouses as we prepare our plants for their most active annual periods of growth. This is also the time of year that all manner of critters – reptile, insect, amphibian and mammal - are wandering around and either looking for a home or for a mate to share it with. Our own Bill McBride provided the following article regarding snakes that may turn up in this area, along with some nice photos to aid in their identification... although I suspect that for many of our readers, remaining in the presence of any snake long enough to get a positive ID on the species is not something that they intend to do. Thanks Bill... and we look forward to your next article!

OK- Bromeliads attract all manner of insect and both amphibians and reptiles. My unworldly collection of Anole lizards attests to that. Earlier this year I had an adult female and a barely adult black racer snake come to my yard to mate, sadly they entered the thin wire mesh I had covering my better plants and both died before I got to them. Black racers are going to be the snake most of you see, they freely move among urban areas and love to eat lizards. Before you get rid of any though, they do eat another creature which can harm us; the pigmy rattler. Most of us live near enough to a pine forest or old growth oak hammock that pigmy

rattlers can visit our yards and possibly curl up against a nice bromeliad. Black racers eat them as do king snakes, many birds, and things like raccoons and foxes.



PIGMY RATTLER (Venomous)

Part of the problem with the eastern pigmy rattlesnake is both its tiny size and its superficial resemblance to an eastern hognose snake (another harmless snake you might find.)



HOGNOSE SNAKE (harmless)

The Eastern hognose snake (Heterodon platirhinos)) is a master of disguises and bluffs. It will strike without hitting, It will puff up and hiss like a cobra and last of all it will turn on it's back and play dead. The pigmy rattler and it's MUCH larger cousin, the eastern Diamond back, both have a strong hemotoxic venom which causes cells to break down and leads to hideous wounds if not taken care of. Fortunately, no one has died from a pigmy rattler snake bite, but many have from the Eastern Diamond back.



Eastern Diamond back (venomous)

Another worrisome fact about the pigmy is its rattle is so small, it sounds like a bug-not a dangerous snake. The Diamond back doesn't have that issue, it can be heard loud and clear.

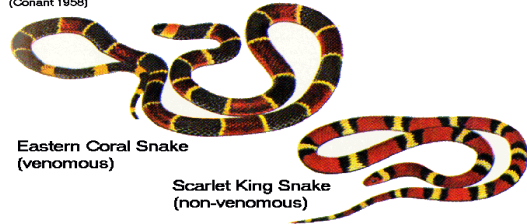
Another dangerous snake you might find if you live near a freshwater spot is the water moccasin. Moccasins are easy to disturb and most will have an aggressive nature. If one appears, call an expert to remove it.



Water moccasin (venomous)

The last dangerous snake you might find is both the most venomous and the least dangerous. It's the coral snake:

(Conant 1958)



Eastern Coral Snake
(venomous)

Scarlet King Snake
(non-venomous)



Coral snake (venomous)

It has a neurotoxic venom similar to its cousin, the cobra. The coral snake eats other snakes and lizards mostly, so it has tiny fangs and can't open its mouth that much.

IF you come across a snake, please be careful, Use this guide to see if it's venomous and then either ignore it or get someone to move it for you, IF it is venomous, get someone capable to deal with it. I'll discuss the small highly dangerous bugs next time.

Bill McBride

Birthdays for May:

Audrey Hayes	Jerry O'Keefe
Robert Jacks	Jillian Thurrott
Terry Kahn	Mally Trzeciak

Happy birthday everyone!

20th Anniversary Celebration/200 Plants in the Raffle

Our very first club meeting was held at Sugar Mill Gardens in Port Orange, in the summer of 1993. For nearly twenty years we've been learning about bromeliads and having a great time doing it. While the club started small, we have grown to over 70 members, from all areas and backgrounds. A truly diverse and blessed group

To celebrate this momentous anniversary we will have a celebration June 9th, at 1:30pm, our regular meeting date. Please feel free to bring your spouse/significant other/bff (best friend forever) or potential new member. The club is having a complete barbeque meal catered in. We'll have a big cake and if your birthday month is June please continue to bring a dessert to share (as we do each month). Everyone is invited to attend and everyone is asked to bring two plants for our 200 Plant Raffle (250 plants for our 25th and 300 plants for our 30th – you get the picture). We'll have both our regular raffle (\$1.00 a ticket or \$5.00 for six tickets) and a silent auction of some spectacular plants given to us for this special event.

It's going to be a great time, see you June 9th!
Rick Ryals, President

Name that plant...

We've pretty much exhausted my list of photos of the more common, easy to identify bromeliads. That means it's time to move up to the more unusual varieties and you're going to have to put on your thinking caps to identify these! I'll provide a few more hints to their identifications, but these will be more of a challenge.



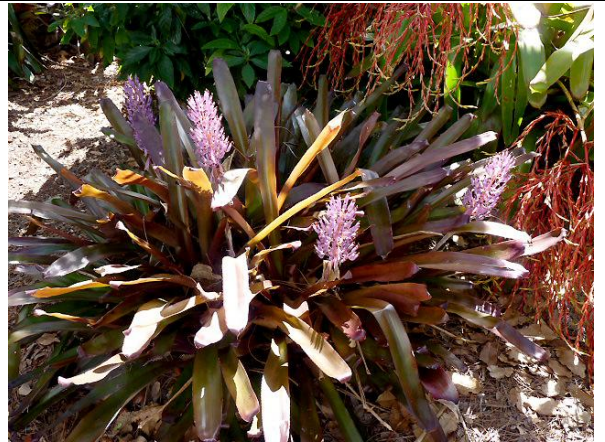
#1.

This clump of plants has grown outside of one of greenhouses at Selby Gardens for many years. It catches everyone's attention with its brilliant color in the leaves and its size (nearly one meter in height). Closely resembling *Hohenbergia castellanosii*, this plant is from Brazil and the name refers to its full, pyramid shaped inflorescence.



#2

This second picture is of a very nice plant from Brazil and Ecuador with soft, spineless leaves. The name refers to the startling, blood-red color that develops in those leaves as it comes into bloom. Mr. Guzman would have been impressed!



#3

Another Brazilian plant, our last mystery bromeliad was collected in 1977, but not described as a new species until 1991! The name seems to be the subject of some dispute - most notably Uncle Derek in Australia says that the jury is still out on this one as to what Genus it should be placed in. This attractive clump was seen at Selby Gardens and is frequently used in the landscape in South Florida, but I suspect that it would do well in this area also with a little protection from the cold.

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

1. *Acanthostachys strobilacea* – I said it last month – it's a shame that more bromeliads don't have common names. This one is a mouthful, but despite its intimidating sounding name, this plant is very easy to care for, a real conversation piece when displayed in a large pot, and rewards its owner with very attractive little flowers that resemble small pineapples

2. *Tillandsia ionantha* – Everyone should have at least one of these in their collections. There are quite a few different varieties available and they all produce very attractive tubular purple flowers...except var. 'Druid' with its white flowers. New plants tend to form on the base of the parent at 90 degree angles, so it's not long before you have a nice ball of these plants that can be hung from a tree limb or some other support.

3. *xNeophytum 'Galactic Warrior'* – we've shown pictures of this plant in the newsletter

before, so everyone should have gotten this one right. I'm not a big fan of most of the bi-generic hybrids, but this cross of *Orthophytum navioides* with *Neoregelia carolinae* 'Meyendorffii', is one of those fairly rare experimental results that is actually more attractive than either of the parents.

This month's meeting:

We are extremely fortunate in having Alan Herndon as our speaker for this month's meeting. Alan and his wife Rhonda own Tradewinds Tropicals nursery in Homestead, Florida and have been driving forces in the Bromeliad Society of South Florida for many years. In addition to having served in most of the officer positions in that club as well as show chairman for the BSSF shows, Alan is a BSI accredited judge, a director in the BSI, and a very active member of the editorial review committee for the BSI Journal. In his spare time, he has developed a computer program to simplify the judging process in standard bromeliad shows. A Florida native (now there's a rare thing!), Alan was born in Miami, grew up in the Homestead area and has worked with people in the bromeliad industry for decades. From a "bromeliad family", Alan also has two brothers located in Miami- Dade County specializing in bromeliad nursery/sales. A trained botanist, Alan attended Cornell University in New York and then went on to obtain his Masters degree from FIU. He has since published numerous bromeliad-related articles. I'm looking forward to what is sure to be a very interesting program by Alan!

Last month's meeting:

There wasn't one, but let's hear from those members who went on the bus trip to South Florida. From what I've heard, everyone had a good time and managed to bring a lot of new plants home with them as well as fond memories of the visits to Casa Phippsberger, Fairchild Gardens, and Block Botanical Gardens.



FECBS president Rick Ryals presenting Inigo Eigelberger with *Aechmea* 'Captain Mike' at Casa Phippsberger in Palm Beach



Rick presenting Dr. Jeffrey Block, with *Aechmea* 'Captain Mike' after touring his fascinating gardens in Miami – this and previous photo courtesy of Francisco Cardoso.



Poster of Dr. Jeffrey Block's botanical gardens in Miami.



Park your van at Fairchild Gardens... who knows what it will look like when you leave!

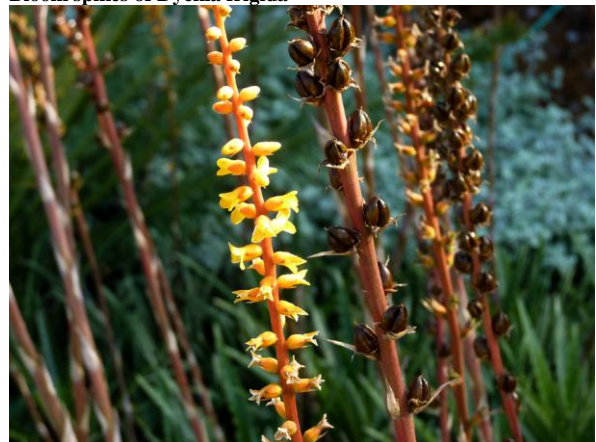
You just never know...

where you're going to find bromeliads in the landscape. Last month, when we were in Charleston, S.C. we came across a clump of *Neoregelia* 'Martin' happily growing in the ground in an old church yard. Doesn't it get too cold to grow bromeliads in South Carolina? This month's surprising find came as I was heading toward Daytona on Peninsula Drive – suddenly I saw multiple (hundreds?) of stalks of blooming *Dyckias* by the edge of the road. Now, here's where it gets a little more interesting: I recall many years ago that one of our club members by the name of Doris Crumbley was given a rather unusual *Dyckia* that one of the founding members had obtained at a rare plant auction at a BSI World Conference. She lived in a mobile home park in Orange City and dutifully planted the *Dyckia* in her yard.

That plant not only went on to produce a beautiful bloom, it multiplied until she had more plants than she knew what to do with. A very knowledgeable worker in a local nursery became intrigued with her story of these carefree plants and persuaded (ok, she was asking everyone she could think of to take some of these thorny things off her hands!) her to part with several. This same worker told me that he was involved in landscaping a piece of property along Peninsula Drive and intended to use a wide variety of unusual and exotic plants in the project. Now, many years later, after pulling off the road to photograph this mass planting of *Dyckia frigida*, I realized that this was the same piece of property that the nursery worker had talked about and that in all likelihood, I was looking at the descendants of Doris's *Dyckias*!



Bloom spikes of *Dyckia frigida*



Note seed pods on older bloom spike next to a fresher one with flowers still opening.

Looking ahead

May 5

Sugar Mill Gardens 'Spring Fling', 950 Old Sugar Mill Road, Port Orange. Sunday from Noon to 4pm. Set-up is 9am to 11am. Our club will be offering plants for sale. If you would like to sell plants please contact Bill Hazard at billtreehazard@gmail.com.

May 11-12, Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Mother's Day Sale
Fashion Square Mall, Orlando, FL
www.mybscf.org

May 11 & 12 - Volusia County Orchid Society Show & Sale, Volusia County Fairgrounds, Deland. 9am - 4pm both days. \$1.00 off the \$4.00 admission fee at www.vcosonline.org.

June 9 – FECBS 20th Anniversary celebration

August 17-18

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society sale

September 7, 8 2013 – SW Bromeliad Guild show and sale in Dallas, TX. Also, the Cryptanthus Society's International Cryptanthus Show...and the BSI's annual meeting. All at the same place!

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
If you can only attend one bromeliad-related event a year, this is the one to go to!!

December 6-8, 2013

Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society show and sale. This will not be a standard BSI show.

September 8-14, 2014 – BSI World Conference. Ala Moana Hotel. 410 Atkinson Drive. Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. Register now for what is sure to be an unforgettable event!

