

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, August 11th, 1:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

August, 2013

Do You Have Hylaeaicum?

President – Rick Ryals 386/679-8700

Vice President – Eretta Morris 386/677-9557

Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500

Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084

You may not even know that you have...
...Neoregelias that belong to the sub-group *Hylaeaicum*. Our speaker this month will enlighten us about these plants that come from the Amazonian basin area and will share information about other varieties as well. Come join us as we welcome Charlie Birdsong from the city of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



From an interest that began in the late 1960's and a collection that began with Mulford Foster plants-obtained through Eric Knobloch (*who was Eric Knobloch? He was a contemporary of Mulford Foster following Morris Henry Hobbs as a president of the Louisiana bromeliad society according to a BSI Journal article written by Foster in the late '50s. You may recognize the name from the early Tillandsia hybrid 'Eric Knobloch' made by Joe Carone, another noted bromeliad "pioneer"*

from that era) Charlie now has over 2000 bromeliads, representing many Genera in his collection. He is a charter member of the Bromeliad Society of Baton Rouge and representative to the Southwest Bromeliad Guild for that club. Also active in the BSI, he is a master bromeliad show judge as well as currently serving as a Director representing Louisiana. Charlie has been the BSI Affiliates Shows Chairman since 2010 (*that means that if you hold a standard bromeliad show, you'll be getting in touch with Mr. Birdsong at some point*).

Charlie is a frequent visitor to the Sunshine State and rationalizes visits to bromeliad vendors in Florida by combining trips to see his daughters who live in the state with side trips to nurseries and bromeliad society clubs throughout the state. He has visited our club several times in the past, but this will be the first time as a speaker. We're glad to have him visit us and I can guarantee that he'll have an interesting program, so don't be late!

August in the garden...

What should you be doing in the garden this month? I know it's hot out there, but there is work to be done! This is a good month to separate and pot up those offsets that you've been observing for the past few months. They've been getting larger each month and now, if you follow the rule of

thumb (who makes these rules anyway and what's his thumb got to do with it?) you can separate a pup once it's one half to two thirds the size of the parent plant...but realistically you can separate one that's one third the size of the parent as long as it's done when growing conditions are good and the plant is healthy and actively growing – which is pretty much now. The idea is that the pup needs to be large enough to be able to survive on its own stored energy while it establishes itself in its new surroundings, separated from the parent plant. Separate the pup when it's too small and it just doesn't have enough vitality to live on its own. Right now conditions for growing bromeliads don't get much better than this with our mild temperatures and daily rains that keep the humidity high. Don't wait too much longer for separating those offsets though, because the days are getting shorter now. Before you know it, we'll be seeing the cooler weather that you are longing for and that will be accompanied by not such ideal growing conditions for many of our bromeliads. In fact, many of our bromeliads become essentially dormant in the Fall and Winter – another good reason not to put off potting up those offsets this month.

Take a good look at your potting mix also this month. Pick up that potted bromeliad and look to see if the mix is soggy and compacted. Is it still holding water several days after the last rain? You might want to replace that mix before rot organisms become a problem. Along with the shorter days and cooler weather of Fall, we'll likely be entering a period of dry weather and what is a soggy mess of a potting mix today will become a bone-dry mess that won't retain any moisture. Change it out now before it becomes a problem.

If you haven't done so recently, also check your plants for any signs of scale, mealy bugs or other pests. Stop them by an application of an appropriate pesticide (I know, that's a dirty word to many, but pesticides most certainly have their place in

this world!) before they get out of control. Just this week I noticed the handiwork of snails on some of my seedlings and quickly stopped the attack, but if I had waited much longer before taking action I would likely have lost many young plants.

Birthdays for August:

For those of you with August birthdays your ranks are now joined by the newly arrived Prince of Cambridge!

Alan Bennett	Margaret Gilien
Marty Borkosky	Sharon Gum

Happy Birthday all!

\$5. OFF and Lots of Fun!

In an effort to encourage your participation at the next Bromeliad Extravaganza – 'Bromeliads on the Rocks', September 21st in Indian Rocks Beach we are offering \$5 OFF the \$60 registration fee. You might recall our club hosting the Extravaganza here in Daytona Beach several years ago and now it's time to support our friends at the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society as they host this year's Extravaganza. I like to refer to these Extravaganza's as our 'Florida Convention' and the biennial BSI convention as the 'World Convention. This years' event is full of informative speakers, a huge plant sale, a delicious banquet and a rare plant auction. If you're interested in attending this event (banquet and rare plant auction) please complete the registration form (including your meal choice) and get it to our treasurer, Eve Krauth no later than August 11th (our next club meeting) to be included in this special club promotion. Please make your check for \$55 payable to the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society, as per the instructions on the registration form. The plant sale on Saturday from 9am to 4pm is free to attend and open to the general public with free parking. Registration forms and information can be found at

www.floridabromeliads.org. We will also have some registration forms available at our August Meeting. The deadline to book hotel rooms at the Holiday Inn Harbourside, 401 2nd Street, Indian Rocks Beach 33785, (727)595-9484 at our special rates is August 21st. A special wine and cheese social will be held on Saturday evening at the hotel (location – TBA) just for our club members, prior to dinner. It's going to be a busy Saturday of Bromeliads, please come join us!

Rick

Last month's meeting –

George Aldrich's program "Collecting Bromeliads in Costa Rica" was informative, entertaining, and a definite hit. I know I'll think about his comments regarding the bananas they grow for export in Costa Rica every time I peel a Chiquita from now on! Thank you George and Irene and thank you for your generous donations to our raffle table!

Once again, Hedy provide some "over the top" table decorations – this time with a patriotic theme for the Independence Day holiday. Thank you Hedy!

Sunshine Updates

Please keep Bill McBride in your thoughts as he is convalescing at:

Ridgecrest Nursing & Rehabilitation Center,
1200 N Stone St, DeLand, FL 32720

Billy would love a visit by friends or a card. Mary advises that he will be moving to another facility, location is currently unknown, and that she would love to keep in touch with everyone as well.

Ed Meiser is recovering from some serious surgery on his ticker; please keep him in your thoughts. His home address is:
530 McCracken Rd, Lake Helen, FL 32744

And just this evening (August 1st) we are learning that John Quirk is recovering at Halifax Hospital from lung surgery. John has recently been undergoing radiation for cancer and has been incredibly upbeat. Hedy believes that John will remain at Halifax for at least another week, Room #461, 303 N Clyde Morris Blvd, Daytona Beach, FL 32114. Their home address is: 343 Tosca Street, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168. Please keep John and Hedy in your thoughts and prayers.

Special Thanks

At our June meeting we held a fabulous, 20th Anniversary Celebration and I believe by all accounts it was a huge success. With 73 folks in attendance (our largest event ever!) there were incredible decorations, wonderful gifts and surprises, loads of plants, great food and desserts and of course the great camaraderie of our club. There are so many people to thank, that I'm afraid I'll miss someone by listing all the names. But each aspect of the event involved lots of our members volunteering to make the event a success. Some folks I want to thank for our successful plant auction is our guests who traveled from our sister clubs: Marty Folk, Butch Force and Gary Signs. Also special thanks to John Boardman who donated many plants but was unable to join us for the event. Recognized at the event with a very special gift (a pineapple birdbath), were some of our long time members: Harriet Herrin, George & Irene Aldrich, Joan Campbell, Jane Upham, Jay & Calandra Thurrott. We so much appreciate these members for all the work and dedication they have given these last 20 years, making our club - loads of education, fun and fellowship!

Distributed at this celebration was also our club directory for 2013-2014. The directory was compiled, edited and published with the wonderful talent of Jane Villa-Lobos and Judith Davies. This is only the second time the club has ever published a directory and it is beautiful. Thank you – Jane and Judith!

I jokingly said prior to the event that we would have 200 plants in the auction to celebrate our 20th— well I was just a little off. We had nearly 300 plants! Thank you everyone, for a memorable 20th Anniversary Celebration!

Rick

Plant Profile – Aechmea blanchettiana

Now here's a bromeliad that is sure to catch your attention – whether it's in bloom or not! When not in bloom, you are immediately struck by the size of this plant (each leaf is easily 3ft. long and several inches wide) and the remarkable yellow to orange to red color in the leaves (depending on which clone you may have and how much sun the plant sees), but when it is in bloom it's hard to look away from the tall, heavily branched inflorescence that looks to be on fire with its brightly colored bracts and flowers.



Aechmea blanchettiana bloom spike

First described in 1955 by Lyman Smith, this plant name refers to Jacques Blanchet, a Swiss naturalist who brought back many plants from the Bahia region of Brazil in the 1800s including this very noteworthy bromeliad.

Our area is very likely near or at the northern limits of where *Aechmea blanchettiana* can be grown outdoors in the landscape and, really, that's the only suitable place for such a large plant. Much farther north and the cooler winter temperatures may prove to be too much for it. How much cold will this plant tolerate? Clearly some clones

are more cold tolerant than others, so there is no certain answer to that question. I was given a pup from a specimen that had been grown in a yard in Daytona Beach for many years, had never been covered to protect it from the cold and in that time had survived many cold Winters, so it may have become somewhat acclimated to the area. I've found that with a single layer of frost cloth that particular *Ae. blanchettiana* has survived 28 degrees F (-2 degrees C) with no damage... while a companion plant of the same age, but uncovered turned completely white and was killed to the ground at that temperature.



The rare, pure white form of *Aechmea blanchettiana* – shortly before it tumbled from the pot onto the ground.



This plant was outside in the same temperature as the one pictured above, but was covered with one layer of frost blanket

I've also seen progeny from my plant shrug off shore excursions of temperatures below freezing (but above 28 degrees) with only minor damage, so I'm thinking that this is a relatively cold hardy clone. Of course the key is the number of hours the plant is exposed to freezing temperatures, but while I've

generally heard that *Ae. blanchettiana* is not particularly very cold hardy, my plants seem to be more of the exception to that rule. Outside of that, this is quite a carefree bromeliad to add to your collection. It makes a great specimen plant or even more eye-catching as a mass planting. If you can manage to protect your *Ae. blanchettiana* when a cold spell approaches, the rewards from growing this plant are certainly worth the effort!

Looking ahead:

August 10, 2013

Bromeliad Bash at the USF Botanical Gardens. Free talks at 11am and 12. 12210 USF Pine Dr., Tampa <http://gardens.usf.edu>

August 17-18

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society sale at the Sanford Garden Club, located at 200 Fairmont – corner of Fairmont and 17-92 in Sanford

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!!

September 21, 2013

Central Florida Orchid Society's auction: 9am to 3pm at the Maitland Civic Center –

641 S. Maitland Blvd.

www.cflorchidsociety.org

March 28-30, 2014

Everybody's Flower Show returns to the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach. Watch for more details in the future!

September 8–14, 2014

Bromeliads in Paradise – the 21st BSI World Bromeliad Conference hosted by the Hawaii Bromeliad Society. For more information go to www.bsi.org

