

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, November 9th, 2014 1:30pm.

Colony in the Wood – club house

4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

November 2014

Say ‘Goodbye’ to the 2014 Hurricane Season!

President – Jay Thurrott 386/761-4804

Vice President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850

Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500

Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/763-2084

I know that *technically*, we still have several more weeks left to this year’s hurricane season, but in reality – the chances of a storm threatening us at this point are pretty remote. Now, with the end of the hurricane/rainy-season/summer we are entering that unofficial season – the dry season/fire-season/winter and it’s almost like someone turned off the faucet. We’ve gone from frequent rains to none at all.

That’s not necessarily a bad thing at this time of the year. We want to begin letting our plants dry out a bit as the days get shorter and cold weather begins sneaking below the Mason-Dixon Line. Now that we’re done worrying about the chances of being the target of a hurricane we can worry about how cold this Winter is going to be. We know what the long-term forecasters are saying and what the Old Farmer’s Almanac has predicted, but when it comes down to guessing in advance how many cold fronts will sweep through the state this year and how far the temperatures are likely to drop when they pass by, past track records of these forecasts are not very good. We just need to be vigilant – pay attention to what the local weather man says each night and be prepared to react when he or she says “you need to cover the plants tonight and bring in the pets because it’s going to get cold”! Let’s hope

for another mild Winter, but plan for a cold one!

This month’s meeting –

Our club was well represented at the recent World Conference in Hawaii and, as a result, lots of pictures were taken of the plants, the tours, and the scenery. This month we’ll share with you some of the photos representing the highlights of this truly memorable conference and I expect as a result, many of you will be thinking about planning a vacation to this exotic and exciting part of the world.



Neoregelia hybrid by Lisa Vinzant on one of many dazzling displays at the World Conference in Honolulu.

Please note also that this month marks the end of our business year (December is the Christmas party – no business meeting) so we'll be hearing from our nominating committee with their recommendations for officers to lead the club through the coming year.

This month also we'll be having a **members-plant sale**. Bring in your extra bromeliads (they do have a way of multiplying, don't they?) for a sales table if you wish to sell. We only ask that 1) the plants be clean and free of pests, 2) the plants be properly identified and a price marked in whole dollar amounts, and 3) you handle the sales. This is a great way to thin out your collection and make a few dollars in the process...that you can then spend on acquiring more plants! So we don't disrupt the meeting, **sales will take place after the business meeting and the program so please, no early bird transactions!**

Last month's meeting –

Terrie Bert visited us and presented a very interesting program titled "The Quietly Riotous Q and R Bromeliads". For many of us this was our first exposure to some of the Genera from the family of bromeliads that we don't commonly see. Terrie also brought a very nice selection of plants for sale from her collection and fortunately no one was hurt in the stampede to make purchases from her sales table. Thank you Dr. Terrie also for your generous donations of plants for our raffle table!

"A Bromeliad Garden for All" -

...or at least one for the residents and guests of Colony In The Wood. On Sat., Oct. 18th FECBS volunteers installed a Bromeliad Garden at our club's meeting place. Let's hope all that pass will get a little sense joy as we all do from these wonderful plants, and that some stop to really take in their beauty. I would like to give a big thanks to Jay & Calandra Thurrott and Virginia Dornbach for planting this garden. A big thanks to Bill



Virginia, Jay, and Calandra hard at work



An assortment of bromeliads brightens the planting area.

Hazard, Rick Ryals and Jay & Calandra Thurrott for the plants and to Sharon Gum for her donation

Someday I hope we can put together a Bromeliad Garden in a more public space where it will be "For All". I would also like to thank Sharlene Fox from Colony In The Wood for allowing us to plant this garden. Thanks again, to all for making this happen!

Bryan Manion



Bryan and Calandra discussing where to place some of the donated bromeliads

-Editor's note:

...and a *really* big thank you also should go to Bryan Manion for orchestrating this project. Great job!

Plant Profile – What's light got to do with it? Part 1

You hear it all the time at bromeliad society meetings – “this plant can be grown in full light”; “this one is good for low light conditions”; “grow this plant in ‘dappled light’...what the heck are they talking about? One person's “bright” light is another's “medium” and what about a plant facing bright light in the morning, but shade the rest of the day? Why can't this term “light” be better quantified?

Years ago, before digital cameras, there was an effort made to discuss light levels in terms of “foot-candles”. In short, this was a measure of the intensity of light that can be given off from one lit candle, as measured one foot from that candle. Add more candles, that measured intensity goes up...so the higher the number, the brighter the light. 100 foot candles of light then would be the equivalent light generated by 100 candles if you stood one foot away. Seems like a good idea on paper for describing the amount of light striking a given spot (that spot being where you place your bromeliad), but the problem is that in

the real world light intensity usually varies with the time of day, the season of the year, the cloud cover and even the humidity – so we can end up with two identical plants, placed in locations where a light meter says that the light intensity is exactly the same, but one can develop a bad case of sunburn while the other loses its optimum color because it doesn't receive enough light. How can this be? One plant may receive shade as the angle of the sun's rays changes during the day while the other, set in a treeless area, receives the same amount of light from morning until dusk – big difference! Even though the measured light intensities were the same at a given moment, one plant received far more of the sun's radiant energy than the other. And so, we still struggle to describe how much light appears to be optimum for a given plant. If foot-candles measurements of light intensity don't really help us in talking about where to place bromeliads for optimum color and growth (unless you are growing indoors under artificial lights), what do we do? Maybe a good starting point in such discussions would be to agree on the extremes.

Let's start with extreme bright light conditions. We often hear requests from those new to the world of bromeliads for plants that can be planted in full sun. Unfortunately, there are very few bromeliads that can tolerate a location that is in the direct sun throughout the day... in our area. Those that can, are often cold sensitive and don't survive our winter's cold. Our friends in the southern parts of Florida have a much larger variety of sun-tolerant bromeliads to choose from since they typically don't have to contend with freezing weather, but around here choices are much more limited. If you're looking for bromeliads with distinctive blooms, these plants are usually not very attractive when not in bloom and may have stiff, heavily spined leaves that you need to beware of whenever you pass by. *Aechmea disticantha* (var. *schlumbergeri*) and *Quesnelia testudo* are good examples of

plants that can survive both extreme light intensity and extreme cold. Both varieties produce very attractive blooms, but are rather unremarkable for the rest of the year and both can quickly produce large, impenetrable clumps of plants around the declining parent plants so give them plenty of room to grow in your landscape.



Aechmea disticantha var. *schlumbergeri* produces a nice bloom in the Springtime, but look out for those spines!

For those interested in a smaller version of this same plant, *Aechmea disticantha* var. *glaziovii* fits the bill quite well and can be grown in direct sun like its much larger cousin. There are also several representatives of the *Quesnelia* Genus that can do well in our area under intense light conditions that can quickly scorch other plants. *Quesnelia testudo* is frequently seen in yards here as well as the very similar *Quesnelia quesneliana*



Quesnelia testudo – in low light conditions the leaves are dark green and can be somewhat “strappy”.
photo by Jag Thurratt



In full sun *Quesnelias* (this one is probably *Q. quesneliana*) become more compact and the leaves turn quite pale – but you have to admit that the bloom is very attractive under either light condition.

I was surprised recently to see *Neoregelia* ‘Martin’ growing in nearly full sun in the landscape in Charleston, S. Carolina, so it’s safe to say this is another variety that we can choose from.



Neoregelia ‘Martin’

We're only noting three possibilities here for bromeliads to plant in full sun in our area. There are many others that you might consider – several Neoregelias, some Aechmeas, some Billbergias and some Nidulariums. Some of our members have had success with them while others have not, so the best recommendation is for you to experiment on your own. See which of these do well given your own environmental conditions. If you decide to experiment with bromeliads in a very bright area of your yard, start out with a young, immature plant - even one still attached to the parent plant. Younger plants are much better at adapting to hostile growing conditions than mature plants. As an example of this I can report that some years ago I experimented with a young *Vriesea* 'Marieae', a plant that most would consider extremely tender, mounted it on a piece of driftwood and placed it in an area that received full sun all day. The plant survived quite nicely (even developing an interesting pattern in its leaves not seen in more typical growing conditions) and went on to produce a bloom and offsets of its own. Given the same environment, an adult plant of this variety would likely not have survived, or at a minimum, developed 'sunburn' area on its leaves. What happened to that plant eventually? Some years later, after doing very well in full sun, it died (I 'lost' it) after a prolonged period of cold weather. And that's the other part of the equation in East Central Florida – bromeliads that can tolerate intense light conditions, often can't handle extreme cold. That's why we must select landscape bromeliads with care and plan to cover them when sudden cold weather approaches...with the exceptions of the three varieties pictured above. They're so rugged; I suspect that they could be grown well north of Florida!

Next month we'll take a look at the other extreme in light conditions – heavy shade cover. What bromeliads tolerate low light, what ones thrive under the same conditions and how you can tell if you need

to move to a brighter location (your plant, not you...well, maybe you too!).

Out and about...

I find that one of the most enjoyable parts of being part of the bromeliad community is travelling to visit other bromeliad societies, touring botanical gardens and members' gardens and I think many of you do as well. If you have had an interesting visit and would like to share that information and perhaps with some photos as well, forward them to me and I'll see that they're placed in this section of the newsletter for others to enjoy.

Several of our club members recently visited Houston (site of the upcoming 2016 World Bromeliad Conference) for the SW Bromeliad Guild's "Bayou City Bromeliads" show and sale. The show was wonderful, as expected and we had enough of a taste of the town to look forward to 2016's conference there. One of the highlights of our visit was a garden tour of David Klein's greenhouses.



Louisiana's Michael Young on the outside looking in We're used to "shade houses" rather than greenhouses, but in this part of the country unless your plants are in a greenhouse they won't survive the Winter. These two structures were uniquely designed to be open on each side during the warmer seasons and totally enclosed in Winter. Typically the insulation of the structures along with the large mass of plants and water features retain enough heat so that heaters are not necessary

when the outside temperatures stay at or below freezing.



Tropical paradise bordering a walk in side one of David Klein's greenhouses – photos by Calandra Thurrott

Long-time club member and first Honorary Trustee Bill McBride's birthday was last month and many of our members visited him at the rehab center where he resides to help celebrate that birthday.



Bill's birthday party in DeLand

Bill says he misses everyone at FECBS and plans on attending a club meeting soon. We miss you too Bill and look forward to seeing you again!



We were too late to see the entire cake, but most of the photo image was still intact – amazing detail!

Birthdays for November:

Happy Birthday this month to:

Roberta Anderson	Harriet Herrin
Jean Hochdoerfer	Bryan Manion
Theresa Pavell	Marilyn Rauch
Susan Rowley	Rob Sedelmyer

Looking ahead:

November 7-9, 2014

74th Ramble at Fairchild Gardens in Miami--
Plant sale, art, antiques, rare books, food,
music. 9:30-4:30 each day.
10901 Old Cutler Rd.

November 7-9, 2014

Sarasota Bromeliad Society show and sale at
South Gate Community Center –
3145 Southgate Circle
Sarasota 34239
10am to 5pm on Saturday, 1pm to 4pm on
Sunday

December 6-7, 2014

Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society sale at
Terry Park
3410 Palm Beach Blvd., Ft. Myers

March 27-29, 2015

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

September 26, 2015

Bromeliad Extravaganza hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida "Bromeliads in the Magic City" More details to follow as they become available, but mark that date on your calendar!

June 13-19, 2016

Start making plans now for the 22nd BSI World Conference hosted by the Houston Bromeliad Society in Houston, TX. Experience some real Texas hospitality!

