

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, December 14th, 2014 12:30pm.
Colony in the Wood – club house
4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

December 2014

Christmas Party!

President – Jay Thurrott 386/761-4804
Vice President – Bill Hazard 386/882-3850
Secretary – Jillian Ragia 386/801-2500
Treasurer – Eve Krauth 386/871-1041

This month there will be no regular business conducted at our monthly meeting...

...Instead – it's our annual Christmas party!

Please note that the party will begin at 12:30 instead of our usual 1:30pm.



Club members from past Christmas party anxiously awaiting the dinner bell!

Like last year, we will be having a centerpiece competition and, of course, it will be a Christmas theme but should emphasize bromeliads in the centerpiece. Give it a try, it's great fun, and who knows? You may just come up with the winning centerpiece!

Last month's meeting –

We had our annual nominations and election of officers for the upcoming year during the November meeting. Beginning in January the letterhead on the newsletter will change to reflect the following:

President – Bill Hazard
Vice President – Linda Stagnol
Secretary – Ed Meiser
Treasurer – Eve Krauth

Welcome new officers and thank you for volunteering to serve your bromeliad society in 2015! I'm sure that you can count on the support of the entire membership as you take over the reins of leadership.

The "Bromeliad Garden For All" that was created by Bryan and his gang of landscapers and reported in last month's newsletter has been well received by the residents of Colony in the Woods. Jean Hochdoerfer has passed along their appreciation for our contribution to the beauty of the community.

We also had the popular feature of "member sales" last month where club members brought in bromeliads for sale – from members, to members.



Club members arrived early to set up "member sales"



Show and Tell – Hedy holds up a very nice *T. ionantha* ball.



Close up of Hedy's colorful *Tillandsia ionantha* clump.

Plant Profile – What's in a name?...

I've always been interested in the origins of bromeliad names and, for me it's almost like reading a good mystery novel when I find that one of my tags is marked wrong and I eventually track down the correct name for that plant. This month's plant profile might be called "*the case of the bogus Billbergia*".

Many years ago I was given a *Billbergia* with its plant tag labelled as "B. Manda's Othello". I've never had very many *Billbergias* in my collection and hadn't studied them very closely, so when I was given this very dark leaved plant, I automatically took the name to be correct and didn't give it another thought...until years later when I came across a plant labelled "Manda's Othello" on a sales table. This plant didn't look much like mine of the same name and I automatically (and

arrogantly, I might add) assumed my plant was named correctly and this one was not! At any rate, I purchased the imposter and looked forward to tracking down its rightful name.

At about that same time, my old plant came into bloom, as it did each February (some bromeliads are such reliable bloomers that you can predict just when they'll put up their bloom spike!), but this time I looked a little closer at the flowers and noticed that they were uniformly dark blue. The leaves on the plant were very dark, almost black, with some faint scurfy banding on the undersides and very small teeth along the leaf edges. Leaf tips slowly tapered to a point and barely curled outward – where leaves on my newly acquired plant, besides having much larger and more widely spaced teeth, rather abruptly ended in a pinched tip. They were also decidedly dark red with scattered cream colored spotting. Butcher's photo of 'Manda's Othello' on the FCBS website didn't show the bloom for this plant, but several uncredited pictures on the BSI Cultivar Registry showed that the flowers on 'Manda's Othello' were green and only the tips were blue – a light blue. Hmm...!



Billbergia 'Manda's Othello' – photo from Cultivar Registry on BSI website.

I had to wait until November of the following year before my newly acquired B. 'Manda's Othello' put up a bloom spike and both it and the plant itself looked exactly like the photos on the two websites. Half the mystery was solved – it was my plant from 20 years ago that was incorrectly labelled! The new plant was, indeed, 'Manda's

Othello'. But now, what was the I.D. of my old plant?

It was at a judged bromeliad show that I noticed an entry of a *Billbergia* with uniformly dark leaves that resembled mine quite closely. It wasn't in bloom, but I jotted down the name of the plant and at my first opportunity, searched for its picture on the FCBS site. The photo there by Herb Plever looked very much like the plant in the show and like my old plant, but Mike Wisnev's pictures of the bloom of *Billbergia* 'Nita' on the BSI site really solved the mystery and confirmed that this was indeed the plant I was given nearly 20 years ago...and that was mislabeled!



Billbergia 'Nita' – photo by Herb Plever from Cultivar Registry on BSI website



Photo of *B. 'Nita'* bloom – by Mike Wesnev from Cultivar Registry on BSI website

For those of you interested in such things: *Billbergia* 'Manda's Othello' is quite an old hybrid, registered in 1973 but possibly dating back to the early 1950s and described as a possible cultivar of *Billbergia saundersii* or hybrid. *Billbergia* 'Nita' is a Beadle hybrid, named for Don's mother, and is the product of crossing *B. vittata* with *B. 'Caliente'* (another Beadle hybrid). 'Nita' was registered in 1984.

If there is a lesson to be learned here, I guess it's that there are always bromeliads in circulation out there that have incorrect names on their tags. In this case there was a wrong name from 20 years ago and one that I would have unknowingly perpetuated if it hadn't been for those wonderful resources – the BSI and FCBS websites!

Out and about...

The Sarasota Bromeliad Society had a judged bromeliad show and sale in November that Rick, Francisco, Calandra and I were fortunate to participate in.

This is always a wonderful show and this year their 29th annual show was no exception – beautiful plants displayed for all to see.



'Cornocopia of Color' entry in Sarasota Bromeliad Society show

If you ever want to view a wide variety of well grown bromeliads, you should visit a standard judged show. Upcoming shows are listed in the newsletter as I become aware of their scheduled dates and locations.

On the way home we stopped at Bok Tower in Lake Wales. I had never been there before, had always meant to stop when I had the opportunity, and was pleasantly surprised at this ‘combination’ National Historic Landmark, contemplative garden, and bird sanctuary – not to mention the terrific food offered at the garden’s café (I’m all about the food!).



Bok Tower in Lake Wales

Bromeliads were prominently featured around the gardens – including an eye catching ‘living curtain’ of Tillandsias.



Tillandsias – strung on monofilament line and hanging from the edge of the roof.

Birthdays for December:
Happy Birthday this month to:

Joan Campbell
Ed Meiser
Jane Hill
Sudi Hipsley

Mattie Eisenberg
Christophe Cardot
Jack Dunlop

Looking ahead:

December 6-7, 2014

Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society sale (no judged show this year) at Terry Park
3410 Palm Beach Blvd., Ft. Myers

March 8-11, 2015

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

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!

