

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, December 13th, 2015 **12:00pm.**

Colony in the Wood – club house

4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

December, 2015

Christmas Party!

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

This will be our last meeting of the year and where has that year gone? It seems like only yesterday that I was struggling to write “2015” on things rather than “2014” and I think I finally have mastered the change...so now I’ll soon be writing “2015” for several months until I learn to write “2016”! Anyway, here we are in the middle of the holiday season and, as in years past, FECBS will have a Christmas party lunch on the December meeting date rather than our usual meeting. Please note that we will expect you to be at the Colony in the Wood clubhouse at noon instead of our usual time – so, if you arrive at 1:30 you may not be able to find any leftovers to eat! As usual, the club will provide the main course for the luncheon, the plates and cutlery, and the beverages. You, our membership, are asked to bring the side dishes and desert. A sign-up sheet was circulated at the November meeting and all present were asked to note what they would be bringing. This will hopefully avoid finding out at the last minute that everyone has decided to bring their family’s infamous lima bean, beet, and squid casserole. Of course, if everyone decided to bring their favorite brownie recipe I for one would not be too disappointed! Didn’t get a chance to put your contribution on the sign-up sheet? No problem – give one of the officers a call and let them know what you would like to bring.

Dues are due!

One of the great bargains of 2015 – FECBS dues were only \$15 for a single membership/\$20 for a family and now for 2016 we will be holding the line with no increase in dues! See Eve about your renewals. She assures me that she will take cash or check (no produce or livestock please – she’s still trying to figure out what to do with those from last year!) made out to FECBS for 2016 membership dues. Don’t forget to renew and then find that you no longer receive the newsletter because your membership lapsed!

Last month’s meeting –

Dr. Terrie Bert was our guest speaker for November and she presented a terrific program that finished up her series on bromeliad Genera from the beginning to the end of the alphabet.



Dr. Terrie Bert brought a wonderful assortment of bromeliads for sale at the November meeting.



Terrie's sale plants represented a wide range of Genera. Here we see Tillandsias, Ananas, Orthophytum, Dyckias, Alcantareas and more!

Our “*mount a bromeliad on something unusual*” challenge was a lot of fun and judging by the number of entries in the contest, you all really took this to heart! What a great looking bunch of bromeliads and what an unusual bunch of materials that they were mounted on! The rules to the contest were a little sketchy and I think we’ll have to firm them up a bit before we try this again, but I would love to see us repeat this challenge next year – the originality and quality of the entries were simply outstanding!

I tried to take photos of each and every entry, but some of the pictures didn’t look so good (the photos – not the entries. They looked great!) and I had to delete those, so please forgive me if your entry isn’t among the photos that are included below – it wasn’t intentional. I was only able to determine ownership of a few of the entries, so these pictures of the entries are unlabeled:



A seascape scene using some nice Tillandias



Aechme orlandiana mounted on a barbecue brush



“Bromeliad Fantasies” reflects the owner’s creativity!



A brace of fine looking Neo. 'Fireball's on oak



Nice proportion of plant to mounting material



Some tourist from Maine is missing their license plate!



Nice dark miniature Neo. on wood slab



This Neoregelia looks to be firmly attached to its mount



An interesting trio



Another Neo. showing nice root growth on this slice of wood



That's a piece of bamboo root holding Neo. 'Wee Willy'



It was hard to get the whole palm boot holding this assortment of bromeliads in the picture



Beautiful arrangement using materials from the seashore



Tillandsia bulbosa nestled in a sea urchin shell



Native plant – *Tillandsia recurvata*



Nice *Tillandsia* in a conch shell with wood stand



Tillandsia velutina firmly rooted in small shell



This *Tillandsia flavobracteata* was rooted on a porous rock from the beach and the rock placed in a decorative wheelbarrow

Thank you everyone for your participation in this challenge. By the way, we had 57 people in attendance at this November meeting and that might just be a record for us!

And...after the votes were tallied, the winners:



Tillandsia bartramii on paintbrush next to outstanding Cryptanthus wreath (sorry Rose – the photo of the wreath was too blurred to use)



Assortment of Tillandsias around window pane complete with lights and running water!



Neoregelias on barnacle cluster



President's message –

I'm sorry to write about a painful, personal situation at such a joyous time of the year. My wife, Tree, and I have made the decision to let Butkus cross the "Rainbow Bridge". We've had him for over 12 years and unfortunately, he suffers from Degenerative Myelopathy (DM - the canine version of ALS). For the last year and a half he's gradually lost mobility as his hind legs weakened. We've employed adaptive measures - a rolling cart (which was great for a few months) allowing him to be mobile outdoors but his condition worsened and that option no longer worked. Presently, we've been using a "sling" which lifts his hind end and enables him to walk with assistance. His day now consists of laying around, sleeping and being carried outside to "do his business". We've asked many people "how do you know when it's time to say goodbye?" Their answer is always, "you'll know - he'll tell you". I'm sorry but that reply isn't applicable to Butkus. He doesn't whine. He doesn't show that he's in pain. He still eats. We, however, know his quality of life is not good.

Butkus is the only dog I've owned and he has been such an incredible joy to be around. My family's life has been greatly enhanced by his presence. He spoiled us. He has shown us Agape love - no matter how we treated him. His attitude reminds me of the joke that if you lock your wife and your dog in the trunk of your car for 3 hours, when you open it up only the dog would be happy to see you! He is kind, patient, curious, loving, protective of us and our property against raccoons, armadillos and

our cat scratching on things. He has never been aggressive towards people and is always looking to make a friend. When I was out in the garden weeding, washing the cars, cleaning up, mowing, etc... he was never far away. At times I thought he had explored his way off our property when he was really only feet away I just wasn't looking closely enough.

The pain that this situation brings is more emotional than I expected. The sadness will last for a while but after that, I know only fond memories will remain. I'm so sorry to see him go but even more thankful that I was blessed by such an incredible creature. He's my buddy! My family and friends will dearly miss him. If ever a dog gets angel wings, he'll be first in line!

What does this have to do with bromeliads....? Nothing! But I'm the President and I get to write what I want. Bill

Birthdays for December:

Happy Birthday to the following FECBS members:

Joan Campbell	Sudi Hipsley
Christoph Cardot	Crystal Hughes
Jack Dunlop	Ed Meiser
Marsha Tucholski	

As most of us know, we generally ask that you bring some item for the refreshment table on the month that your birthday falls on (happy birthday – now give us some food!), but since December's meeting will be the Christmas luncheon and there will be plenty of food for everyone, we ask that those December babies consider fulfilling their obligation by bringing food to the February meeting instead. For some odd reason, nobody in our group has a birthday in February!

Out and about –

I don't know how many of you receive the "Hometown News" or how many of those take this small paper from its plastic bag and read it (it's actually a pretty good little paper!), but in the November 13th issue Joe Zelenak had a very nice article about that bromeliad everyone either loves or hates: *Spanish Moss*. The article is titled "What you need to know about Spanish Moss". That's *Tillandsia usneoides* to those of us interested in bromeliads and most surprisingly, this is an accurate article that notes that even though it may look that way, this plant does not kill trees. Instead, it is opportunistic in searching for good light and may heavily colonize branches that are dying, devoid of leaves...and letting more light shine on the branch. In short, the plant didn't make the tree branch die, the dead tree branch attracted the plant! Mr. Zelenak even volunteers that for those (obviously deranged individuals) who want to remove Spanish Moss from their trees, it's best to manually remove it from branches and avoid the use of chemicals with their subsequent harmful effects on the environment. That's good advice! There are times when the judicious application of chemicals in the garden is unavoidable, but if given a choice it's often best to avoid their use.

...and don't forget the annual centerpiece competition at our Christmas luncheon!

Culture Corner

And now...here's an interesting reprinted article from the BSI Journal from 1982 by Patsy Lou Worley regarding a subject that everyone wonders about – how best to water your bromeliads:

Watering Bromeliads

PATSY LOU WORLEY

Of the major growth requirements which affect bromeliad culture, water is the one that often receives the least consideration. When growers are asked about their watering schedules, one often hears answers such as "Oh, I water once a week", or "every day", or "twice a week." The answers they give seem straightforward and complete and since their plants are most beautiful, one is tempted to blindly follow the same regime. Fortunately, bromeliads are forgiving plants so it might be a month before they begin deteriorating. The question of how to water suddenly becomes urgent and much more complicated than it may have seemed.

First of all, consider what people mean by watering. A person who waters every day and another who waters once a week may be giving their plants about the same total amount of water. How can this be? Well, some use a mister and give their plants a light sprinkling each day and call that watering. Others take their plants, pots and all, and soak them in a tub of water once a week and call that watering. On the other hand, two people who both water with a hose may be providing very different total amounts of water. For example, in our household, I do not spend much time watering our bromeliads. Approximately once a week, I spray each plant lightly, put water in the cup and on the potting medium. Plants that require more water have been moved outside the greenhouse where nature can help with the watering. My husband, on the other hand, loves to water and will happily stand around for hours with a hose, spraying everything and everyone within range. His method is the probable reason our ferns were so beautiful. It also probably explains why *Tillandsia xerographica*, which unfortunately hung near some of the ferns, suddenly began to rot. It definitely explains why he is barred from entering our bromeliad greenhouse when he has a hose in hand. In my opinion, few bromeliads regularly like being drenched.

The second consideration concerning watering has to do with the type of bromeliad being grown. The species in the Bromeliaceae come from a wide range of habitats, encompassing everything from rain forests to dry, rocky beach areas. Consequently a rigid pattern of watering, such as with an automatic sprinkler system, will not be uniformly

effective unless all the plants are compatible with regard to their water requirements. If the watering pattern is selected to favor those species which are found in nature in wet situations, then those from arid habitats will surely suffer, and vice versa.

A third factor to take into account when choosing a watering method is the growing medium. Naturally a plant mounted on a piece of driftwood will require more moisture than the same plant grown in soil. I prefer to use less rather than more water, so I use a potting medium of about 2/3 regular soil to 1/3 Perlite. For good drainage, stones are put in the bottom of the pot and a small amount of sphagnum is put on top of the stones. Since the soil retains moisture, the amount of watering required is reduced. A lighter mixture of peat, pine bark and Perlite dries out more quickly and therefore requires more frequent watering.

Another factor to consider relates to geography and location. I am fortunate to live on the Gulf Coast of Florida where the sea breezes are laden with moisture. In the dry Midwest or the desert areas of Texas, or inside an air conditioned or heated home, watering requirements will be very different. It is advisable to keep these differences in mind when reading articles about the care of plants. Sometimes the author's place of residence reveals why a particular watering schedule is recommended over another; so a mental comparison of the author's and your growing conditions is recommended.

The last consideration to take into account is the time of year. Obviously the water requirements of most species will be different in the wet spring than in the hot, dry summer or cold, dry winter.

Many growers recommend that water be kept in the cups or centers of most bromeliads at all times. I have found, however, that this will promote center rot or fungus growth, especially in the hot summer months. I fill the cups when watering, but only once a week, so the cups have usually dried out before the next watering. I find it occasionally necessary to fill the cup completely until it overflows so that murky, stagnant water will be washed out.

Proper watering is not as simple as at first it may seem; fortunately, most species seem to be more forgiving of too little rather than too much water.

Bradenton, Florida

Looking ahead:

December 5-6, 2015
Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society show and sale

February 6th and 7th, 2016
Gardenfest – Free admission, parking
Over 90 vendors!
3250 Riverside Park Drive
Vero Beach

April 9th, 2016
Master Gardener sale at Volusia County
Fairgrounds. ½ day sale only!

April 16-17, 2016
Bromeliad Society of South Florida annual
show and sale at Fairchild Tropical Botanical
Garden.

May 8, 2016
Mothers' Day Show by the Volusia County
Orchid Society at the Volusia County
Fairgrounds

May June 13-19, 2016
BSI World Bromeliad Conference at the
beautiful Westin Galleria Houston Hotel.
Check the website of bsi.org for updates.

