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Newsletter of the
Bromeliad Society of Central Florida

Volume no. 45, Issue no. 04

April 2018

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Where: Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Avenue, Orlando, FL 32803

6:30 –7:00 is pre-meeting time for purchasing Member Market plants!

Meeting officially begins at 7:00 pm

Member Market in April!

Please bring a snack, raffle/door prize plants, and show & tell plants to the meeting.

Please try to label your raffle and door prize plants, even if you can only write something such as “unknown Neo hybrid”, every little bit helps the members who are trying to learn about different types of bromeliads! Plants should be clean and insect free.

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The President's Message

An awesome April to all. Has been a great month so far. Just need some more rain. Hope your bromeliads are doing well.

Just a reminder that those bromeliads of yours that are looking great, or those you are really proud of, it's time to start cleaning them up for the Mother's Day Show next month. We will cover the various categories at our April meeting. But start selecting and cleaning your entries.

If you want to sell at the Mother's Day Show and Sale, please contact Georgia. If you sell, you will have to have 5 entries in the show. If you aren't selling, remember to come out and support our Society. You can help with setup on Thursday evening, selling on Friday, Saturday and Sunday or just come and add to your collection. It will be at Orlando Fashion Square mall. Karen and Eloise have been working on getting the word out. Everyone can play their part by telling your friends and putting it out on Facebook. There will be some beautiful Mother's Day gifts for sale.

Remember to come out to our April meeting and learn more about Vrieseas with Mike McMahon. Bring your favorites or problems to the meeting. There will also be a Member Market if you would like to sell some of your collection.

See you at the April meeting and at Fashion Square for our Mother's Day sale and show.

mike



Some of the variety found in the Vriesea genus.



This month's speaker is Mike McMahon!

Mike will be speaking on Vriesea. Many of us have seen examples of Mike's beautiful plants that he has shared at meetings, he is always seeking out more of the colorful patterned leaves of foliage Vrieseas! Mike will be bringing in plants to use as speaking points, no Powerpoint presentation needed as he will have "live models"!

Mike suggested that folks bring a Vriesea to the meeting if they have one...ideally one that is giving them heartache. Mike will lead a "plant clinic" type of discussion to try and get some of our problematical plants in shape. Sometimes a few changes in cultural practice can make all the difference.

Please bring in a blooming Vriesea if you have one currently so that everyone can see the wide variety in the genus. Don't be embarrassed if your plant has a few (or a lot!) of bad leaves, everyone has them...especially after our cold winter.

Mike will not be bringing plants for sale so there will be a Member Market this month.

Here is one of my cold damaged plants that I'll be bringing in for Mike to look at...I need a bit of guidance on what to do with the mother plant, if anything!



A followup to Jay Thurrott's presentation on bromeliad judging and shows.

I'd like to urge everyone to come out and get involved in our 2018 Mother's Day Show and Sale! It is an opportunity to learn more about bromeliads on a different level, work with your fellow members, and interact with the public to help them choose the perfect plants for their environment or for a gift.

Remember, there are many different divisions to enter your plants in. There are novice categories for those of us just wanting to get our feet wet, divisions for individual plants and multiple plants for both blooming and foliage plants, artistic and arrangement divisions, the list goes on. I'm just starting to be able to wrap my head around how the different divisions and judging works. No better place to learn than at the Show and Sale.

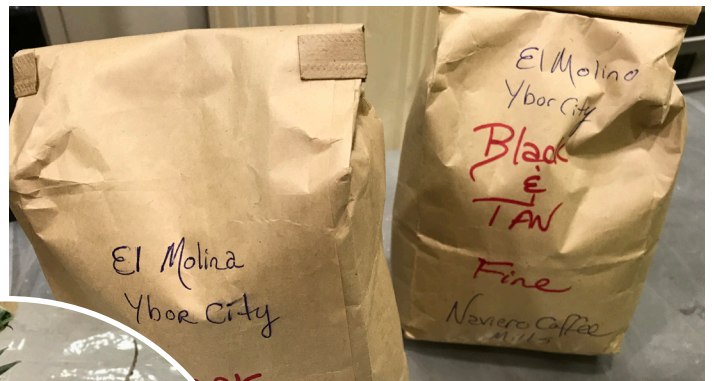
Grab one of the experienced members when you are viewing the show plants and have them explain a bit about what the judges might have been looking for in a certain plant division. Read the tags to see what plants our members are growing...you'll see some beauties!



Some shots from the March meeting!



Proof that Evan's new topknot hairstyle is actually...Georgia!



Monthly Meeting Minutes

Bromeliad Society of Central Florida — March 21, 2018

The meeting was opened at 7:00 pm by VP Marilyn Howser who introduced our speaker, Jay Thurrott. Jay's presentation was an overview of what bromeliad shows and bromeliad judging are all about, entitled "So, you want to be a bromeliad show judge".

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 pm by President Mike Saunders

Mike thanked Jay for the wonderful presentation and informative Q & A session. If anyone wants more info on Judges School please contact Mike.

February 2017 meeting minutes were approved.

Welcome!

Guests: Thanks to Calandra Thurrott for accompanying Jay for his presentation, nice to see you!

Treasurer's Report:

- Betsy gave the monthly Treasurer's Report and will file the report for audit.
- Betsy also gave a report on the Leu Garden's Sale – we beat our profits made from the 2017 Mother's Day Sale, whooo hooo!! We sold 800 plants and interestingly had a lot of cash sales. Betsy mentioned that usually when we have a lot of cash sales it's an indicator that folks are a bit more flush, a good thing!

Vice President's Report:

Marilyn gave us the run down on the upcoming events and also some updates:

- Field trip to John Boardman's home has been changed to April 28th because the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale is on April 14th. Time: 10am, an email will be sent out with the address, please let Marilyn know if you'll be attending.
- April's speaker will be Phil Elting of Elting Exotic Plants. He'll be speaking about Quesnelia and tissue culture.
- Info on the Leu Gardens plant sale is to come, an email will be sent out.

New Business:

- Mike thanked everyone who participated in the Leu Gardens Sale.
- Mother's Day Show and Sale: Georgia Orser is head of Sales at the Show and Sale. We will be in the same area of the Orlando Fashion Square mall as last year. Set up is Thursday night. We will review the plant categories, etc. at our next meeting. If you are selling or entering plants you must enter 5 plants minimum. Date: May 11-13.
- Georgia Orser is also in charge of Sales at the Central Florida Orchid Society's 67th Annual Orchid Show and Sale, "An Orchid Garden Party!" in June at the National Guard Armory on Ferncreek Avenue in Orlando.
- Don't forget – the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society's sale is April 14–15 at the Sanford Garden Club. There will be 24 sellers!

Old or Unfinished Business:

- Webmaster! Would somebody like to take care of a BSCF website? We are still in need of a volunteer!
- Newsletter Editor needed – if interested please let one of the officers know!
- Judges School – sign up now!
- Don't forget about the World Conference in San Diego, it should be great!
- Send Carole Wolfe articles and photos for the FCBS newsletter

Announcements:

- John Boardman spoke about the upcoming Show awards – please think about donating towards the awards if possible. You'll be listed on the Sponsor Board and it is tax deductible! John went on to explain that there are special awards given in the Show, what some of them are, and who they are in honor of. He also explained that in addition to ribbons there are commemorative gifts given for some of the categories. In the past these have been anything from pineapple/bromeliad inspired items to crystal, to unusual and beautiful momento boxes...and that the gifts this year are going to be great!
- If you are not receiving email please see Marilyn and she'll get it straightened out for you!
- We are doing a 1/2 page commemorative ad in honor of Dean Fairchild in the BSI World Conference program booklet, Karen to work with Craig Allen. Karen will send out the ad so that everyone can see it after it is approved by the Board.
- Please don't put plants on the chairs at Leu Gardens – it leaves dirt on the seats!

Show and Tell:

Claire, John and Karen brought items for Show and Tell, thanks for bringing in your special items!

Door Prizes and Raffle tickets were drawn.

The meeting concluded at 9:00 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Karen Steinberg.



A few more Vriesea to inspire you...an ocean of plants seen on the 2017 tour of McCrory's Sunny Hill Nursery and a close up from the 2016 Holiday party gift plants, from Color Zone Tropicals.

Bromeliad Basics: Fertilizer

Author: Melanie Dearing, taken from the January 2018 Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society newsletter, Pup Talk.

Most bromeliads do not require fertilizer to thrive. However, there are some varieties that can benefit from regular, light feedings. Providing them with additional nutrition can help enhance flower production and foliage appearance.

Bromeliads actively grow in the summer months and profit from fertilizer during this time. If you choose to use a liquid fertilizer, simply apply it at 1/4 strength. Another method is to use a time release powder or pellet formula. The grains should be lightly sprinkled around the base of the bromeliad. Regardless of the approach you take, it is important to keep the fertilizer out of the central tank. Allowing fertilizer to sit in your bromeliad's central cup can cause its foliage to burn and may invite rot.



Take care not to over-fertilize your plant. Bromeliad foliage tends to get leggy and their vibrant colors can fade when presented with too much fertilizer.

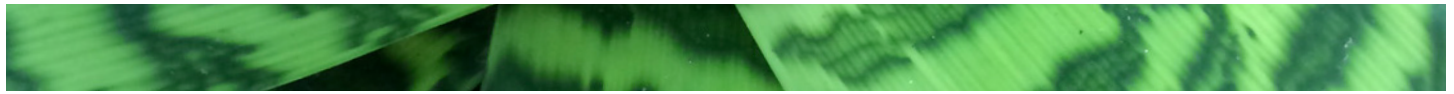
Controlled Release or Slow Release, What is the Difference?

From the November 2017, Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group NSW Club News with thanks to Fernlands Nursery.

Although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, the terms 'slow-release fertilizer' (SRF) and 'controlled-release fertilizer' (CRF) strictly do not mean the same thing – even though both do release plant nutrients at a slower rate than when highly-soluble conventional or 'straight' fertilizers are used. For those who are unclear of these differences, we hope that the following simplified explanation of these distinctions will be both interesting and informative and explain the different manner in which each of these two classes of fertilizer releases plant nutrients.



Slow-release fertilizers (SRFs), unlike controlled-release fertilizers, are not encapsulated in coated pellets. The most commonly used slow-release fertilizers are those which supply nitrogen (N) at a slower rate than if a readily-soluble source of nitrogen were applied (e.g. ammonium sulphate, ammonium nitrate or urea). In one of the methods to achieve this, fertilizer manufacturers synthesize what is known as long-chain molecules by chemically combining a nitrogen source molecule with an aldehyde – for example, urea formaldehyde or methyl urea. The delayed release of nitrogen is achieved by microbial action in the growing medium – slowly breaking down the long-chain molecules and



eventually converting the resulting ammonium nitrogen to nitrate (the form of nitrogen which plant roots can take up).

There are other forms of slow-release nitrogen (e.g. IBDU) which differ in composition and modes of action. However, the above example is given to explain the concept of a slow-release fertilizer compared with a controlled-release fertilizer (which we will explain below).

It should be emphasized that the duration of release in a slow-release fertilizer cannot be controlled because the effectiveness of the microbial organisms in molecular breakdown is in turn dependent on other factors – including the nature of the growing medium, its moisture level and temperature. Also, a release time extending beyond two or three months cannot be expected....

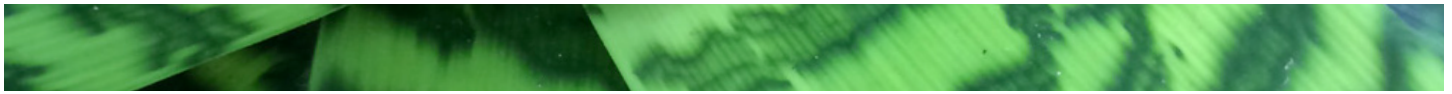
Controlled-release fertilizers (CRFs) differ fundamentally from (SRFs) in both technology and mode of nutrient release. Soluble essential plant nutrients, either individually or in various homogeneous blends are encapsulated in an organic resin or polymer coating to form pellets. This coating is the secret of delayed release of nutrients in a CRF. The physical process by which this is achieved is explained in simplified terms below.

It should be emphasized that the term 'controlled' implies a much greater degree of control in the rate, pattern and duration of nutrient release than can be achieved using SRFs. The principles behind the success of CRFs were first employed several decades ago. Subsequent technological advances and refinements have led to a range of well-known brands of CRFs – for example, Osmocote, Nutricote, Plantacote, Floracote, Multicote, Basacote and Macracote.



Now let's explain how a CRF works: The coating on the pellets acts as a selectively-permeable or semi-permeable membrane – a barrier to some molecules, but allowing certain different molecules to pass through. When a CRF is applied to an adequately-moist growing medium, there is a one-way passage of water through the coating to the inside of the pill. This phenomenon is called 'osmosis'. The absorbed water partially dissolves the mineral nutrients inside the pill to create a highly-concentrated solution. This then increases the hydrostatic pressure within the capsule. When the hydrostatic pressure becomes equal on both sides of the capsule, no more water will enter.

How then does the fertilizer get out into the growing medium? This is attributable to another phenomenon known as 'diffusion' (the movement of molecules from a liquid of higher concentration into a liquid of lower concentration). Again the key lies in the structure of the coating which contains



minute micro pores. When the plants are watered, the hydrostatic pressures become unequal inside and outside the capsule, and a small amount of dissolved nutrient moves out, by diffusion, through these micro pores into the growing medium.

- The rate of nutrient release in a CRF is, in most cases, temperature-related. An increase in temperature causes the micro pores to expand in width, allowing more nutrient to diffuse out; remember, this is not osmosis but diffusion. (Osmosis is water in, diffusion is nutrient out.) The nutrients are then dispersed within the growing medium (also by diffusion) – coupled with percolation of dissolved nutrients when the plants are watered. We should regard this correlation between increased nutrient release and increasing temperature as a key redeeming feature of a CRF: Cooler weather, in general, means slower plant growth – and lower nutrient demand. This lower demand correlates with the reduced rate of nutrient release. Conversely, as temperatures rise, growth increases – demanding more nutrient. This is exactly what happens in the temperature-related release pattern of CRFs!
- The duration of nutrient release is governed in most cases by the thickness of the coating – although there are some other technologies. Products have been developed which offer release times ranging from 2 to 24 months.
- A range of ‘patterned’ releases can be achieved in a product by blending a mixture of pellets with differing release rates or formulae – designed to synchronize with specific nutritional requirements during a growth cycle.

Benefits of using SRFs and CRFs

The major benefits of using slow- or controlled-release fertilizers over readily soluble ‘straight’ fertilizers include:

- Slower release rates mean longer-term feeding and minimal nutrient wastage through leaching.
- A high degree of control over release rates, duration and pattern (CRFs only), means better synchronization of nutrient release with demand.
- Improved plant growth and health (plants get what they need as they need it).
- Reduced frequency of application, with associated lower labor costs.
- Environmental benefits (minimal nutrient in leachate, reducing freshwater marine contamination).
- Minimization of concentrated nutrient build up – a risk for high salinity-related root and leaf burn. There is now a developing trend to transfer these benefits, long-proven for container-grown stock, to field crop production by changing to slower-release fertilizers – especially where environmental concerns are an issue.



Upcoming Events

May 11–13, 2018

BSCF Annual Mother's Day Show and Sale
Held at the Orlando Fashion Square Mall, 3201 E. Colonial Dr, Orlando, FL 32803

May 29–June 3, 2018

BSI World Conference in San Diego, California <http://www.bsi.org/new/conference-corner/>

Now is a great time to join the Bromeliad Society International as they are offering a discount to new memberships! www.bsi.org

June 2–3, 2018

Central Florida Orchid Society 62nd Annual Show and Sale, "An Orchid Garden Party!"
BSCF will have a sales booth and also a display area.
Held at the National Guard Armory, 2809 S. Ferncreek Ave, Orlando, FL 32803

November 2–3, 2018

Mead Botanical Garden GROWvember Fall Plant Sale
1300 S. Denning Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32789



Our Meeting Next Month: Wednesday, May 16th, 2018

The Bromeliad Society of Central Florida meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 7–9 PM at Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Avenue, Orlando, FL 32803. Guest speaker plants are for sale before the meeting from 6:30–7:00. You'll enjoy informative programs, Show & Tell, plant sales, refreshments & door prizes. Members also receive a monthly newsletter—all for an annual membership fee of \$15 per member, plus \$5 per additional family member (no charge for full-time students). Visitors are always welcome.

BSCF is a nonprofit Florida corporation recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization.

Donations to this society are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

BSCF is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International, Inc., and a member of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc. and the Cryptanthus Society.

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