



May 2010

CALOOSAHATCHEE
BROMELIAD
SOCIETYs
CALOOSAHATCHEE
MERISTEM

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During a recent tour of the terrestrial house at Tropiflora by grower Ray Lemieux, I photographed this *Hechtia lyman-smithii* in full bloom. Although hechtia rosettes (see picture on back cover) are seldom ostentatious, their long spikes of numerous and sometimes colorful flowers make them worth-while bromeliads to grow in your collection, including a succulent garden. On occasions they also have the trait of being able to bloom a second time from the mother plant, a unique characteristic among bromeliads as well as being somewhat more cold tolerant. Photos by Larry Giroux.



THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY

MEETING TIME AND PLACE:

May Meeting Sunday May 16th 2010

ST. JOHN the APOSTLE CHURCH 3049 MCGREGOR Ave. FT. MYERS.

DOORS WILL BE OPEN AT 12:30 FOR SETUP.

MEMBERSHIP SALES WILL BE PERMITTED
at the May Meeting.

Friendship plants, Raffle items are always welcome.
There will be a Door Prize and Show and Tell

May Program

(Will start shortly after 2 PM)

“Fertilizers: The Old, the New and into the Future”

By Craig Morell

During a previous program, Craig talked to us about pesticides. This prompted a return visit and a continuation of the topic. At the May meeting he is going to discuss the different types of fertilizers and which are most beneficial to our plants. If you are confused about the numbering system used to quantify the ingredients in fertilizers, you need to attend this meeting.

May Workshop

(starts at 1:15PM)

“Bromeliads - from Brazil back to Cape Coral”

By Geri and David Prall

Just returning from attending a Palm Society Conference in Rio, the Pralls will present an impromptu slide show of photos of bromeliads & other plants both in habitat and in gardens including the Rio Botanical Garden & the Roberto Burle Marx Garden. They will compare how bromeliads were grown in Brazil to their own collection in Cape Coral.

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society is an active Affiliante of:



FM-LCGC



**Cryptanthus
Society**



**Bromeliad Society
International**



FCBS

Society News

Message from the President

I am sorry that more of you didn't come to our 30th Birthday Party; I'm sure the weather forecast prevented others from not attending.. Even with a little rain, we had a great time.

I thank the nearly 30 that did brave the weather - the gardens were beautiful in the rain and we really didn't get too wet.

Between the drops we shopped the sales tables, toured the gardens and enjoyed our raffle under the Gazebo. We used two of the available rooms and Larry Giroux provided us with a slide presentation about Guatemala that continually played during the day. Many thanks to Mary McKenzie and Betsy Burdette, who arranged and organized our party. Well done!

Our raffle table at our meetings has been a little bare lately, so please try to bring something to share, either a plant or a bromeliad related item. Also, don't forget the Show and Tell table, great opportunity to show off your blooming bromeliads, get plants identified or learn about their care from more experienced growers.

Many of us had a lot of damage from the winter, but it is nearly summer and our plants are looking much better. It is not too soon to start potting pups for our sale at the end of the year.

I hope some of you got to attend one or more of the shows held on April 17-18. These are terrific times to see many different plants, meet new friends and buy new bromeliads. Bromeliad Society of Central Florida is having their show on May 8 & 9 in Orlando. And don't forget to make plans for the World Bromeliad Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Hope to see you at the meeting. Eleanor

Change in Meeting Format

To accommodate Craig Morell's schedule, following the opening of the meeting at 2 PM by President Eleanor Kinzie, Craig will start his program. After the presentation, we will resume the Business Meeting, Show and Tell, the Refreshment Break and the Raffle.

Our May Speaker

Craig Morell is the chief horticulturist at Pinecrest Gardens (formerly Parrot Jungle) in East Miami. He is an experienced horticulturist in tropical gardening and is quite familiar with and proper use of the various chemicals including fertilizers and pesticides, which are available in the marketplace. Be sure to attend this program for good practical advice about these products from an expert who actually uses these products.

Passing of a Long Time Friend



Polly Pascal

It is with deep sadness that I have to report the loss of a devout member of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society and personal friend, Polly Pascal. Although Polly lived in the Fort Lauderdale area and was a member of the Broward County Bromeliad Society first, she was a long time friend of Gene McKenzie, and seen on our coast often. The two of them were traveling companions at World Bromeliad Conferences as well as many Shows and Sales. Polly became a member of CBS in 1996. She would attend our Shows and volunteer on various committees. She was an active BSI accredited Judge and of course judged our Show on many occasions. Polly will be very, very badly missed from our lives. Thank you Polly for your frequent words of praise and your offers of help.

Our Birthday Celebration

For those who attended our 30th Anniversary Party, we countered the rainy day with our usual enthusiasm. Besides conversation, sale plants, a great lay out of food, and raffle, there was a continuous slide presentation featuring a 2006 tour of Guatemala by Larry Giroux and Steve Hoppin.

Many thanks to all who turned a soupy day into a fun celebration of our 30 years as the largest Bromeliad Society in the US.

Bromeliad Expose By Larry Giroux

A trip to Tropiflora in Sarasota Florida is always a fun time, especially when I have my camera in tow. This past visit with friends from Houston was no exception. Although Dennis and Linda Cathcart were away, Brian Weber, a Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society member and past President, made us feel right at home. Our friends are especially into terrestrial bromeliads - cryptanthus, dyckias, hechtias, etc. And fortunately for us, Ray Lemieux, expert terrestrial grower at Tropiflora, was able to give us some of his time and show off the multiple successes he and other growers are having at the nursery.

For the last few years, Tropiflora has been filling a contract with a Singapore gardens for 100's of thousands of plants. Reports in the Media has given the public the impression that Tropiflora is closing down or is no longer able to provide plants to US and other worldwide consumers. If you have been to any of the Spring or Fall Plant Festivals at Tropiflora in the last years, you will know this is far from reality. Propagation of existing plants and the creation and importation of new items is an ongoing process.

The following photographs document just some of the plants our friends and I discovered during our tour. And I highly recommend if you have a free afternoon and want to go bromeliad exploring, check out Tropiflora. But be sure to make room at home for a few new additions.



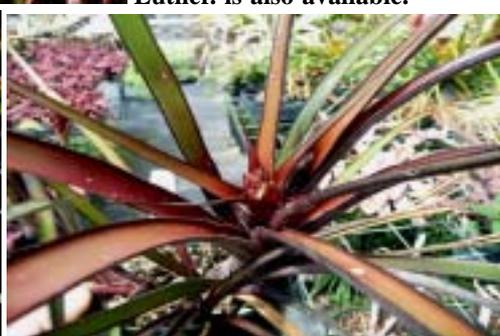
During the past year or so, a new temperature regulated area has been provided for the cryptanthus collection at Tropiflora. I made straight to this house to check out how these plants fared during the winter. I was impressed by their condition, numbers and variety.



Having visited large gardens in the Far East, I knew immediately that the large groupings of *C. bivittatus* cultivars like 'Ruby' seen here were destined for topiary designs in Singapore.



It was nice to see *Cryptanthus bromelioides*, red form; one of the few crypts with colored petals (pink). Brian Weber is just starting to propagate in quantity, *Cryptanthus acaulis* 'Ray Coleman' (syn *C. 'Rubens Rangel'*). The clone he has, turns a pink-bronze color infused in the leaves when exposed to brighter light. Nearby was the other variegated *Cryptanthus acaulis* called 'Variegata', which was discovered in Japan almost 4 decades ago.



The somewhat rare large form of the species *Cryptanthus lutherianus*, named for Harry Luther, is also available.

Ray Lemieux is propagating and hybridizing many of the terrestrials at Tropiflora. I was impressed by the variety of orthophytums, which he is working with.

A recent species introduction from Brazil is the pink flowered *Orthophytum conquistense* from Bahia Brazil. Already this is a sought after specimen. Of the spiked types of orthophytums, the red petaled *O. lemei* can easily be distinguished from others when in bloom.

The pin-wheel orthophytums have always been desirable plants for the collector and exhibitor. Here we see *Orthophytum navioides* (Amaral clone), *burle-marxii* and *albopictum*. There are several other *Orthophytum* "species", which are being grown by Ray for evaluation and identification.

Photos by Larry Giroux.



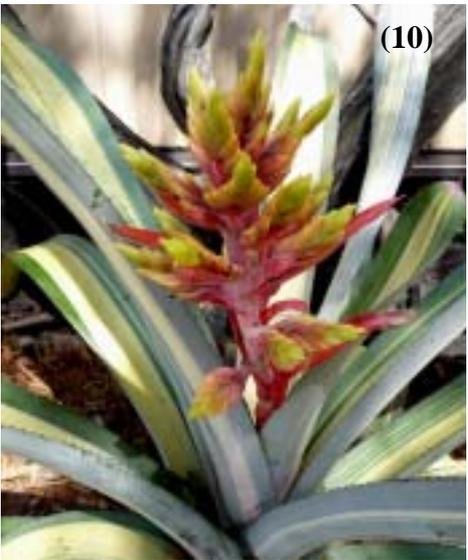


I treat each visit to Tropiflora as a learning experience. How would you know what the inflorescence of the bigeneric cross of a cryptanthus and a billbergia should look like? Here is seen (1) *Cryptbergia* 'Red Bird' in bloom answering any of my doubts. For years I have been mis-labeling my *Bromelia penguin* as *B. balansae*; now I have seen the true 5-6 ft tall flesh eating monster (2). Even Botanical gardens aren't guaranteed to have *Lymania spiculate* (3) or *Ronnbergia columbiana* in flower (5). The "Smith clone" of *Aechmea tayoensis* (4) was available

for purchase the day I was there. (6) shows a small portion of Ray Lemieux's "lab" where he is working with terrestrial bromeliads.



From a common cryptanthus to the rare variegated *Pitcairnia echinata* (7), Tropiflora is trying to accommodate all bromeliad collectors. Throughout the public areas of the nursery, the Cathcarts have planted small displays of “yard” plants such as this *Aechmea mertensii* (8) and the colorful variegated *Aechmea* ‘Little Harv’ ((10), both of which make outstanding landscape plants. Besides acquiring new species, which may have commercial value as stand alone specimen plants, Ray Lemieux and Ray Coleman are experimenting with these plants to create unusual and attention worthy cultivars such as the *Dyckia* ‘Mercury’ X *reitzii* ‘Ruber’ hybrid (9) for future use. Photos by Larry Giroux.





A blooming *Alcantarea vinicolor* in the tropical jungle created by Lyle Bowen at his South Fort Myers home. Previously classified as a *Vriesea*, this and many vrieseas were moved into the new Genus- *Alcantarea* created by taxonomist Jason Grant. Photo by Lyle Bowen.

The Beautiful and Unusual in Steve's and Larry's Gardens
 Photos by Larry Giroux



Acanthostachys strobilacea blooms along its tubular, stiff leaves. Seldom seen is the unusual fruiting bodies. The inflorescence has been compared to a miniature pineapple, another bromeliad to which it is closely related.

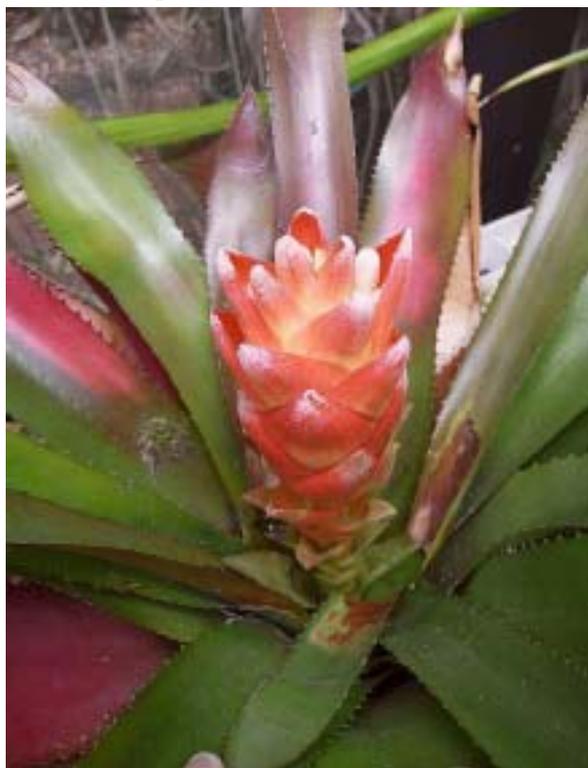




Aechmea brassicoides has an unusual rosette of crinkled leaves, which envelop its center. At blooming the inflorescence has to poke itself through the constricting leaves in order to be fertilized.



Aechmea caudata 'Blotches' (above) doesn't look like the typical aechmea until it blooms. The 12-15 inch rosette is an eye-catcher due to the intense blue-purple blotches on the lime green leaves; many of which are in a concentric pattern on the rosette of leaves.



By combining traits of *Aechmea nidularioides* and *bicolor* an unusual plant with colorful leaves and a vibrant, long lasting inflorescence was created. Presumably many plants of the grex of this cross are in cultivation, which explains the various color versions in collections.



There are many cultivars and varieties of *Aechmea nudicaulis* in cultivation. When I was new to bromeliads, I had some difficulty distinguishing any *Aechmea nudicaulis* not in bloom from billbergias. It wasn't until I was pointed out the tell -tale "thumbprint" along each leaf of *nudicaulis*, that my confusion disappeared. In this picture these impressions are clearly seen from different angles on several leaves.



Billbergia are easy to grow, preferring to be grown hard. They have been given a bad rap for the short duration of their blooms, which are really beautiful and bizarre up close. Hybridizers like Don Beadle and Jim Irvin have given more reasons to grow billbergias by introducing cultivars with beautifully colored foliage. A visit several years ago to Jim Irvin's shadehouse was rewarded with a vision of an entire wall of high hanging billbergias. With the sun shining through their leaves, it was reminiscent of a stained glass window in a church. This effect has been achieved by the use of *Billbergia vittata* 'Domingos Martins' in the creation of many billbergia hybrids, such as *Billbergia* 'Hallelujah' seen here.

Cryptanthus come in many different shapes, colors and patterns. *Cryptanthus leopoldo-horstii* (seen to the right) and *warasii* are two species of cryptanthus that seem more like dyckias or hechtias. This particular reddish clone of *leopoldo-horstii* is much scarcer than some others and is more sort after by succulent



growers and xeric cryptanthus growers alike. Note the “waffling” of the leaves, which is produced by the unfolding of the leaves as the rosette is created. These are present in several other bromeliads, which also have the more succulent type leaves.



For many bromeliads, in order to obtain a variegated pup off a variegated mother, the offset must arise from the base of a variegated leaf. Sometimes instead of a variegated plant you may get a totally green plant and in some cases an albino plant with no green chlorophyll in the leaves. In the case of the

variegated cultivar *Cryptanthus acaulis* ‘Ray Coleman’ (syn *C.* ‘Rubens Rangel’), because the variegation is unstable, green, variegated and albino offsets can be expected.



Not all the beautiful plants in our yard are bromeliads. This unnamed croton has a combination of unusually shaped leaves as well as great color and pattern. I had mentioned earlier about the passing of Polly Pascal; this plant was acquired from her many years ago and is a beautiful living reminder of my friend.



The bigeneric \times *Cryptananas* ‘Pink Utopia’ was produced over 30 years ago by Hummel at his nursery in California. It is ironic in that the best growing conditions for this plant is a hot and humid environs, not typically available in California. I was first introduced to ‘Pink Utopia’ at a combined International Cryptanthus Show and a Southwest Bromeliad Show. John Anderson won Best in Show with this plant. Obviously Texas’ weather conditions are favorable for this bigeneric.



Another point of interest about this bromeliad is the description given by Don Beadle in the 1998 BCR. Although the exact parentage of this cross is unknown (as is true of many of Hummel’s cultivars), Don suspected that a *Pseudoananas* was used since the fruit does not have a terminal pup (as does a typical *Ananas* pineapple plant). However, my plants and the plant pictured in the Photo Index on the FCBS website has a “top” offset, suggesting that ‘Pink Utopia’ is indeed a cross with a true *Ananas*.



This series of pictures (these are three different plants) show the emergence of the inflorescence, the formation of the “pineapple” like fruit and maturity of the ovum. As with most bigenerics, I would expect no seeds or infertile seeds. The third picture shows the effect of 28, 29, and 30 degree F nights on the terminal offset. I hope to have better luck with the pup developing seen in the middle photo.



This is the time of the year when dyckias are blooming. Typically the primary bracts and petals of dyckia flowers are either yellow or orange as seen in the two pictures above. Of course with hybrids all bets as far as color as off as in this unnamed hybrid with peachy colored primary bracts and yellow petals. Although hechtia petals can be yellow or orange, white, pink or red are common. (See photo of *Hechtia lyman-smithii* on the front cover.). Other distinguishing characteristics between hechtias and dyckias are that usually dyckias have no or minimal branching of the inflorescence, which emerges from between the leaves, while hechtias have multiple spike branching and develops from the center of the rosette.

Hohenbergia stellata is a stellar performer in any garden where it is grown. The 3 foot spike covered with clusters of red bracted, violet flowers, stands out in any landscape. The inflorescence seems resistant to heat and sun with little fading for weeks. It also makes great floral arrangement material for the home if you are willing to cut it off.





For 40 years this unique plant was simply considered a different looking cryptanthus. Initially called *Cryptanthus duartei* after its discover, in 1990 due to differing petal characteristics, it was moved to the Genus *Orthophytum* and given the new species name *supthutii*, since the name *Orthophytum duartei* already existed. A few years ago, still not fitting in with the two types of orthophytums and with the discovery of another bromeliad with remarkable similarities, *Lapa itambensis*, these two plants were “lumped” together in the new Genus *Lapa*. the older species name *duartei* was resurrected. *Lapa duartei* has succulent type leaves and

develops offsets from the base of the plant. It is blooming in April/May here in Southwest Florida.



We have recently acquired a new tillandsia, which we were told was an unidentified species. Does anyone know what it might be? The flowers suggest that it is a tillandsia,

but the 2 dimensional paddle like bracts may indicate a vriesea. Leaves are thin and resemble those of *Tillandsia cyanea*. At first glance, with similar leaves, upright inflorescence, same colored bracts and flowers thought of *T. foliosa*, but it is not.



The unique covering of hairy trichomes of *Tillandsia ehlersiana*, makes this a visually very interesting plant. I can't help but touch it every time I pass it.

Many of the pitcairnia are in bloom right now; including this unnamed hybrid by Steve Hoppin. The three foot inflorescence is covered with typical 3 inch long flowers. It is unique due to the salmon colored petals and yellow and light peach stem of the spike. I'm sure it will have a name soon.



I have always been intrigued by the rosettes on the spikes of orthophytums from which the small flowers emerge. As many as 10 of these clumps can develop. I've been told that if you peel off the lower layers of leaves, each of these can produce a new plant. I've tried it and it works, but the offsets which arise from the base are faster growing and more vigorous.

And last , but not least you all need to go outside soon and find some Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) and search out the tiny (0.6 cm) highly fragrant flower on this very unique bromeliad, native to our state.



BROMELIADS
in the

Big Easy

Catch the Fun.... July 26-August 1, 2010

19th World Bromeliad Conference

Hosted by BSI & GNOBS

Astor Crowne Plaza Hotel

New Orleans, LA USA

For Conference Schedule and Registration Information
visit our website: GNOBromeliads.com

For Hotel reservations contact the Astor Crowne Plaza
at (504) 962-0500 or visit www.astorneworleans.com



Read the Expanded Newsletter

I have been asking members who have e-mail, if they can start receiving the Meristem exclusively by e-mail and I have gotten a good response from the membership. I want to remind the members that even if they can not receive the e-mail version, because they have dial-up internet service, they can still go to www.fcbs.org and read the expanded Meristem directly online. Go to www.fcbs.org to view this expanded electronic issue, if you are not already opting to receive it or let me know if you want me to send it to you. Editor

Calendar of Bromeliad Events

May 8-9 Bromeliad Society of Central Florida's Annual Mother's Day Bromeliad Show. For further information contact Betsy McCrory at betsymccrory@aol.com

July 26-August 1, 2010

The BSI World Bromeliad Conference - Bromeliads in the Big Easy (Astor Crowne Plaza - New Orleans). "Catch the Fun".

NEW EDITOR IS NEEDED FOR THE CBS MERISTEM. Please contact Dr. Larry Giroux at DrLarry@comcast.net

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See Betty Ann Prevatt for more information.



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The Program by Craig Morrell will start at about 2PM---This is a change from our normal schedule---Please note this time change!