



THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY'S

MERISTEM

Nov-Dec 2022



CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OFFICERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT— Julie Stein 919-522-1182 FLAGIRL56@aol.com

Past— PRESIDENT— Vicky Chirnside 941 928-3111 (dampearth@me.com)

**Vice-PRESIDENT— Dale Kammerlohr 863-558-0647
(dzdaze@embarqmail.com)**

SECRETARY— Alison Ackerman 239-851-3176 (Alison@spikowski.com)

TREASURER—Betty Ann Prevatt 239-229-7781 (bprevattpcc@aol.com)

STANDING COMMITTEES CHAIRPERSONS

NEWSLETTER EDITOR—Larry Giroux 239-850-4048 (DrLarry7@gmail.com)

FALL SALES CHAIRS—Brian Weber 941-256-4405 (brianweber1b@hotmail.com)

PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON—Tom Cowell 732-735-0121 njtom732@aol.com

WORKSHOP CHAIRPERSON—Vacant

SPECIAL TRIPS— Kyle Wade 570-269-5103 kwade46.kw@gmail.com

CBS FCBS Reps.—Vicky Chirnside 941-928-3111 (dampearth@me.com)

Julie Stein 919-522-1182 (flagirl56@aol.com)

MEMBERSHIP—Betty Ann Prevatt 239-229-7781 bprevattpcc@aol.com

Larry Giroux 239-850-4048 Drlarry7@gmail.com

OTHER COMMITTEES

DOOR PRIZE—Debbie McPhail 239-332-4607 or 239-910-3836 ;

email-deb.mcphail@yahoo.com & Membership

HOSPITALITY (Monthly Refreshments)—Diane Cornelison 239-233-7037

Party Chair—Vacant

RAFFLE TICKETS—Greeter/Membership table volunteers—Dolly Dalton, Luli Westra

RAFFLE COMMENTARY—Larry Giroux

GREETERS/ATTENDANCE—Betty Ann Prevatt; Dolly Dalton (dollyd@comcast.net), Luli Westra

SHOW & TELL—Dale Kammerlohr 863-558-0647

FM-LEE GARDEN COUNCIL—Alison Ackerman 239-851-3176 Alison@spikowski.com

LIBRARIAN—Norma Jean Ridzyowski 941-421-4730 normajeannridzyowski@gmail.com

HISTORIAN—Tom Cowell 732-735-0121 njtom732@aol.com

MARCH AUCTION CHAIR—Larry Giroux 239-850-4048 DrLarry7@gmail.com

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THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY

**November Meeting: Sunday, Nov 20th 2022
No December Meeting, instead “A Holiday Party”**

**Our Meetings have returned to the Ft. Myers– Lee
County Garden Council Building
2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers.**

The facility is north of the Edison Gardens parking lot and about 1/2 miles north of our previous meeting location— Covenant Presbyterian Church. Virginia Ave is approximately 3 miles north of the intersection of Colonial Blvd. and McGregor Blvd. and is the 2nd Street north of the Edison Gardens

**Our November will feature Jason Mellica
presenting**

“Personal Notes About Hybridizing”

(No Membership sales are allowed at the November meeting.)

The CBS Board has established a more structured schedule for our meetings, which we will adapt as necessary—

***12:30-1:15:** Doors open, check-in, membership, distribution of door prize tickets and sale of raffle tickets, membership or speaker plant sales.

***1:15-1:45:** Workshop **1:45-2:00:** Break, plant sales continue

2:00-2:15: Business Meeting **2:15-3:00:** Program followed by door prize

3:00-3:30: Break for refreshments **3:30-4:00:** Show and Tell and Raffle

4:00: Clean up

Please bring food, Friendship, Raffle and Show and Tell Plants

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2023 ARE DUE BY THE END OF JANUARY

Membership renewal fees are \$15/20 single/dual; New member dues: \$20/25, single/dual payable by check or cash at the meeting or by mail to

Betty Ann Prevatt, CBS Treasurer 2902 Second Ave. Fort Myers, FL 33916

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society is an active Affiliate of:



Cryptanthus Society



BSI



FCBS



FM/LC GC

November 2022 Program
“Personal Notes About Hybridizing”
By Jason Mellica

Our Society was first introduced to the unique hybrids by Jason in 2007 when he joined the CBS. Somewhat of a novice at that time, he had already developed many hybrids. The majority of the names of his creations have been taken from his intense interest in the Sci-Fi, mythology and fantasy worlds and cultures as demonstrated by his Menatur, Odysseus, Vampire Blood, Yoda’s Pagoda and Game of Thrones, just to mention a few of his nearly 150 crosses registered with the BSR.

For those who attended the WBC in Sarasota, this past June, you will remember Jason’s contributions to the Sarasota Bromeliad Society’s Exhibit.

We are fortunate to have Jason as our speaker in November to discuss his nearly 2 decades of hybridizing. Jason will be bringing plants for sale, so **NO MEMBERSHIP SALES**, please, at this meeting.

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society’s 2022
Annual Bromeliad Sale
December 3rd and 4th 2022

The 2022 CBS Bromeliad is still scheduled for the first weekend in December. It is understandable that due to the hardships and setbacks caused by Hurricane Ian, there will be a lot of plant people who do not want to or are not in a position to sell or buy at this time. There are others who are looking forward to this annual event to supplement their collection and/or income not to mention their desire to experience the blatant comradery shown at this event. Please support our annual sale as best as you are able and please volunteer if asked.

Edison/ Ford Winter Estates have graciously agreed to again host our 2022 Annual Bromeliad Sale on Saturday, December 3rd and Sunday, December 4th 2022. This year we will have only the Sale in the Banyan Tree area as we have had in the past. Included in the e-mail version of this newsletter are the rules for sellers, if you do not get the email version, the rules were in the last printed issue of the newsletter.

Please read the minutes from the August CBS Meeting, printed in the last newsletter issue, concerning important information about the Sale.

NEW CBS OFFICERS FOR 2023

We are very fortunate that for the upcoming year, the current CBS OFFICERS have agreed to continue in their current positions. At the November meeting the slate of Officers for 2023 will be presented to the membership for election. These individuals are:

PRESIDENT— Julie Stein

Vice-PRESIDENT— Dale Kammerlohr

SECRETARY— Alison Ackerman

TREASURER—Betty Ann Prevatt

As usual as allowed by the Bylaws, nominations are open to the membership for these positions and anyone who would like to run against any nominee, please submit your name to Julie Stein for qualification and inclusion on the ballot.

HOLIDAY PARTY TIME!!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18th 2022

FINALLY...FOOD, FUN and FOLIAGE.

Holiday Party— December 18th 2022. We have gone through a lot of grief this year and we owe ourselves some fun. Since Hurricane Ian, crews have been working on the **Garden Council Gardens** and they are ready for the site of our December Holiday Party. The format will be the same as in years past. Great food, plenty of cheer, overflowing raffle are sure to make for a pleasantly rememberable event to end this crappy year!

**Ft. Myers— Lee County Garden Council Building
2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers.**

Virginia Ave. is two streets north of the Edison Properties.

Members are asked to bring a favorite pot luck dish to share, such as casseroles, vegetables with dip, little sandwiches, cakes, cookies and about anything else that is edible. CBS supplies the paper and plastic goods, some beverages and a meat entree. If you prefer other cold drinks, bring your own, there will be plenty of ice. The

building has sitting for over 50 people, but if you want you can still bring your own more comfortable chairs for sitting outside, weather permitting.

Try to arrive around noon with your goodies so that the tables can be arranged buffet style. For those of you that cannot get there early, don't worry it is always closer to 1PM or later that we start to eat and the festivities begin.

After lunch there will be a raffle of bromeliad plants and items brought by members as gifts (no, you don't have to wrap and ribbon them). But, they should be nice, clean bromeliads or bromeliad related items that anyone would want to win. **Donations of other plant families such as orchids, ferns, fruit trees, native plants, etc. are also acceptable.** We are a diverse group of growers, who enjoy many different plants, so if you have extras of other types of plants donate them to our special holiday raffle. Tickets are still 3/\$1, so buy a lot. **Friendship Plants are also welcome...** these are those extra plants from your garden that might be of value to other members. These freebies are always appreciated. **But please, please...make sure you spray your plants or wash them very well...we don't want any members to bring diseases back to their collections or gardens.**

New members or anyone that needs more information, contact your Editor (Larry Giroux) at 239-850-4048 or Julie Stein at 919-522-1182. Bring your significant other, friends and relatives and expose them to our hobby, while enjoying the hospitality of our society.

Front Cover: I transplanted about 8 of my *Pitcairnia* collection from my old house to my new house about 2 years ago. On September 28th my neighborhood had a seven and one half foot of brackish/ saltwater surge, which covered my in ground bromeliads , including all of my *Pitcairnias*. The plants of this very large genus grow mostly in tropical forests terrestrially and are bathed and feed by rain water and bodies of fresh water. I had no idea what to expect. To my surprise, several of them started to spike, especially the *Pitcairnia angustifolia* seen on the front cover. To my amazement, the 8 or so plant clump in the picture started immediately to spike and rapidly branch and bloom and continues to do so for the last three weeks. Back Cover: Closeup of a *Pitcairnia augus-*

tifolia's inflorescence demonstrating the progression of maturity of the blooms from the bottom to the top of the branches of the spike. Pitcairnia's are generally very easy to hybridize and often self-fertilize producing capsules of very feathery seeds. Photos by Dr Larry Giroux

Bromeliad Exposé: *Pitcairnia* By Dr. Larry Giroux

Pitcairnia is a genus of the botanical Family Bromeliaceae, Subfamily Pitcairnioideae. The Genus Pitcairnia has the second most species of any of the bromeliad family (after Tillandsia). Prior to 1999, there was a distinction between the Genera Pepinia and Pitcairnia, both for species and crosses of the two genera, resulting in the bigeneric xPitinia, when a cross of the two genera was made. When the Genus Pepinia was determined to be an invalid genus based on DNA testing, plants with the Pepinia designation were changed to Pitcairnia and all bigenerics are simply Pitcairnia. Even today there may be plants labelled incorrectly.

Habitat: Almost all *Pitcairnia*s are terrestrial or saxicolous, which means you need to grow them in a media or their roots need to be able to draw nutrients and water from a media, whether it is the soil in a pot, humus between the fissures in rocks or leaf mold in the crotch of trees. Although there are some *Pitcairnia* that appear to be growing epiphytically, however, their roots are often supplementing any leaf absorption of food and water. The majority of this genus can be found in moist rainforests, but its distribution from Northern Mexico throughout the Gulf and Caribbean and South America, includes all kinds of environments where they thrive. It is believed that a bird may have carried seeds from South America to Africa to explain



Pitcairnia smithiorum, is a species named for the collectors, Sam and Hattie Lou Smith, which they discovered in Peru. A grouping of these plants in bloom is a memorable sight. Many hybridizers use this species to give their hybrids a fuller inflorescence. Photos by Dr Larry Giroux



Jim Pearce made *Pitcairnia* Flaming Arrow (above) from two species having their own unique character– *Pitcairnia pseudoundulata* (lower, left, photo by John Gilbert) a wide petiolated leafed plant whose inflorescences emerge below its foliage and *Pitcairnia burle-marxii*, which is a small plant with wide discolor leaves and an upright inflorescence.



In year round warmer climates, *Pitcairnia*s are great landscape plants that spread and produce showy inflorescences, as seen here on a street in Cairns, Australia. Hawaii is another location where this genus is used in public and private gardens throughout the state as an ornamental “grass”

the one species of bromeliad, *Pitcairnia feliciana* found in western Africa.

Appearance: *Pitcairnia* have been called the “grass” or “weed” bromeliad because of the appearance of the leaves of most of the plants of this genus. There are some exceptions such as *Pitcairnia tabuliformis* and *burle-marxii* and even variegated species such as *echinata* ‘Variegata’, but most are relatively soft leafed, green with spines that tend to get more dangerous toward the base of the leaves. Many have bract-like stiff, sharp, pointed leaves encircling the bulbous base of individual plants. The plants send up offsets to create clumps. These are somewhat difficult to separate and usually you just wait until you have a large clump, remove it from its pot and saw the group into halves or quarters and replant. If planted in the ground they can spread into massive groupings. If potted, they quickly become pot-bound and/or can out grow the pot and start sending shoots out ever hole and cracking or tearing the pot.

Propagation: Many have brightly colored and conspicuous inflorescences and sprays of tubular flowers in shades of red and orange, which explains why hummingbirds are *Pitcairnia*'s more commonly their pollinators along with insects, moths and small bats. Although the inflorescences tend to grow upright, some have a unique characteristic of growing horizontally or along the ground for long distances. Dry capsules containing the seeds are readily formed, which split to release numerous light weight seeds that can be air borne or can be carried away by passersby.

Care: *Pitcairnia*s have a voracious appetite and thirst. It is recommended that you make available a sufficient quantity of slow release fertilizer in the mix when potting or repotting up these plants. Fertilizing with a diluted water soluble general purpose fertilizer in a ¼ strength each time you water can be of great benefit. Remember you're not foliar feeding, so be sure that the fertilizer gets to the roots. During the dry season it is wise to use a saucer under your plants. Avoid clay pots in dry climates since they tend to dry out the mix very quickly, grow your pitcairnia in larger plastic pots. When the temperature is consistently low and the light diminished, you can cut down on the amount of fertilizer. Some pitcairnia actually become dormant and lose their leaves. Less water is also necessary during the wintertime. If kept properly hydrated, *Pitcairnia*s can tolerate cool temperatures but not necessarily cold temperatures. The condition of their roots and their ability to absorb sufficient food and moisture is imperative to the health of your plants. If you suspect that your plant is root bound, occasionally pull it out of its pot then check it. It may be time to saw apart the plant and repot the portions. Any potting mix with added pine bark, sponge rock, perlite or such to keep the mix loose, is ideal. Properly spaced plants growing in a well ventilated area are seldom bothered by disease or insects. Cut out dead leaves and providing air circulation will reduce the chance of insect infestation. Occasional scale or mealybugs present problems. Treatment with systemic Imidacloprid and/or topical Seven helps with preventative and eradication.

When not in bloom many pitcairnia appear as un-interesting green grass; however there are several, which are discolored with reddish under leaf surfaces and even some with color leaves that change with the seasons. This genus excel in their flashy inflorescences of red, orange, green, yellow, purple and flower petals tinged with black. Indoor protection in colder climates or year round in-ground growing will allow nearly anyone, anywhere to enjoy these ornamental bromeliads.



Pit. maidifolia (1)- this is a very showy species with yellow, green and peach colored bracts and cream colored petals. *Pit. imbricata* (2) has a very long tubular red inflorescence with bright yellow flowers that progressively bloom from the base of the growing inflorescence. *Pit. amblyosperma* (3) is a frequently seen yellow petal species. A variegated form of *Pit. echinata* (6) is now in cultivation; its inflorescence is branched and is orange. *Pit. atrorubens* (7) has an inflorescence mimicking a water fountain with pale yellow flowers. Dr. Sam Smith, who did extensive hybridizing since the '80's, produced this *Pitcairnia* Stephen Hoppin (4. 5) from *smithiorum* x *sanquinea*. An interesting characteristic of this plant is that under certain cultural conditions, the leaves will turn partially yellow, then reverting back with seasonal change, enhancing their appearance.

Minutes of the CBS General Meeting
Lee County Garden Council Building Sept 18th, 2022

Call to order: 1:26 by President Julie Stein

Guests: Lia Andrews and Jeannie Roth

New Members: None

In Attendance: 30

General Meeting:

Announcements:

Brian Weber, our Sale Chair, and Betty Prevatt reviewed how to tag plants for our big sale on Dec. 3 & 4 at the Edison Estates. and reminded sellers to bring their own tables and tents. Brian also explained that a more detailed set of procedures plus a map will be forthcoming in our next newsletter.

Betsy Burdette handed out the corrected signs for the sale reminding us that while Cape Coral does not allow them, they are ok everywhere else. They can be put up any time on private property, but if not, they should be put up on that Friday before the sale. All signs should be removed on Sunday, to avoid loss.

Program: CBS members Mike Michalski and his wife Patty Gonzalez from Mike's Bromeliads in Miami presented a huge number of gorgeous slides from their trip to the nurseries of Chester Skotak and Foremost Company in Costa Rica. Their friends Grant and Keli Groves went with them. Not only did Mike show spectacular specimens grown under controlled environments, but wonderful street views lined with lush bromeliads, and sightings of sloths and coatimundi. He also shared many interesting growing tips and anecdotes throughout his talk.

Door Prizes: Debbie McPhail brought a large and majestic *Quesnelia marmorata* and Mike donated a beautifully striped *Cryptanthus arelii* 'It' for our door prizes.

Show & Tell: Dale Kammerlohr presented several plants brought in by various members.

Raffle: Dale, assisted by Julie Stein and Dolly Dalton awarded the donated plants to 14 lucky winners.

Meeting adjourned: 3:09

Respectfully submitted by Alison Ackerman

Minutes of the CBS General Meeting
Lee County Garden Council Building October 16th, 2022
MEETING WAS CANCELLED



Dr. Larry Giroux, Editor
80 Skyline Drive
North Fort Myers FL 33903
(239) 850-4048 DrLarry7@gmail.com



**The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society's 2022
Bromeliad Sale Sat-Sun Dec 3rd and 4th 2022
Edison/ Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers**