

FLORIDA COUNCIL
of
BROMELIAD SOCIETIES inc.

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Quarterly Newsletter.

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THE PROS & CONS OF BROMELIAD PLANT RAFFLES

Most of our societies incorporate a plant sale or raffle of some sort into their monthly meetings. It seems a good way to augment the treasury. But, there is growing concern that the practice is becoming a disenchanting factor for the dedicated member with a large collection as well as those members who are commercial growers.

There are probably as many ways of handling the plant sales as there are societies. Here in Central Florida the society sells donated plants at silent auction, with the donor placing a minimum bid on the plant. Members then make written bids on slips of paper, tuck them under the desired plant and high bidder purchases. The Seminole Society conducts a similar auction, but the plants may be donated or sold on commission. Seminole also sells raffle tickets for one choice plant which is either donated or sold to the society. I have attended meetings in other parts of the state where raffle tickets were sold and the drawings went on and on for a dozen or so plants, some of which were okay, some were mediocre and some were poor. I do not know if the plants were donated or purchased.

The plant raffle seems a bonanza for the beginning collector. But, should the plants be sold so cheap? Everyone should be made aware that for any bromeliad plant to be available someone probably crossed a creek on a fallen log, climbed a tree, snatched the plant from a swarm of wasps or stinging ants, cleaned, trimmed and brought it back to see it committed to fumigation and limping recovery for years before bringing it to bloom and reproduction. Some of the old time collectors tell me--"I go to great effort and expense to acquire the new species and hybrids. Then they expect me to donate the pups and they sell for practically nothing to people whose only effort is to attend a meeting." Some of these collectors have stopped going to society meetings for that very reason.

Commercial growers (some) feel they are being victimized by the membership. They say because they have lots of plants they are expected to give a lot of them. They also complain that raffle prices make it tough to sell plants at a normal market price, and why should they be expected to cut their own throats? Local society members very rarely purchase plants from local growers--they will travel to buy from out-of-town growers or purchase by mail order. Strange, but as a commercial grower myself, I know this to be true. Local bromeliad society members rarely visit my greenhouses. I have known people to travel to California and pay double the price for plants which are available right here in Florida.

QUESTIONS:

1. Are we losing our most valued and knowledgeable members because we expect too much of them? What do we do for them in return?
2. Should the bromeliad societies make an effort to keep the market price of bromeliads fairly high, as the Orchid Society does with their plants, or is it more desirable to bring prices down?
3. Are we performing a valuable service to our new members when we make the plants (possibly mediocre) so easily available and inexpensive?

Should they not be taught how to grow them first? And how to distinguish between trash and value?

Where do I stand? I don't, since I fall into all three categories-- collector, commercial grower and still learning and looking. However, it is a problem that needs discussion. Believe it--in a good portion of the state it is having an effect on membership. Please talk about this at your meetings, and get the grumbling out in the open. Let me know how YOU feel. I will publish your letters in the next issue.

AFFILIATES NEWSLETTER

Congratulations to Mary Jane Lincoln for a first-rate BSI Affiliates Newsletter published January 1985. I hope that every society president will make it available for all members to read. It contains much news as well as BSI membership and show policy changes.

COLD FEET

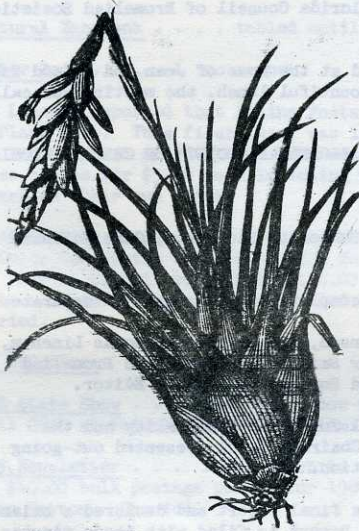
Al Muzzell reports 6 degrees on Monday, January 21 in Gainesville; it was 16 degrees at Pineapple Place in Longwood on January 21 and January 22, 26 degrees on the 23rd and 28 degrees on Wednesday, January 24. Then, 24 degrees on Sunday January 27 at 6:00 a.m. and 28 degrees at 11:00 p.m. on February 8. *Vriesea carinata* and *Aechmea distichantha* were completely killed outdoors for the first time ever. Twenty four degrees was the reported low in Ft. Myers and 30 degrees in Miami. Most Florida bromeliad growers are catching on to the facts of life and learning what to do when the cold strikes. Or, maybe, our weather forecasting is better. There seem to be fewer catastrophes this winter.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A BROMELIAD JUDGE?

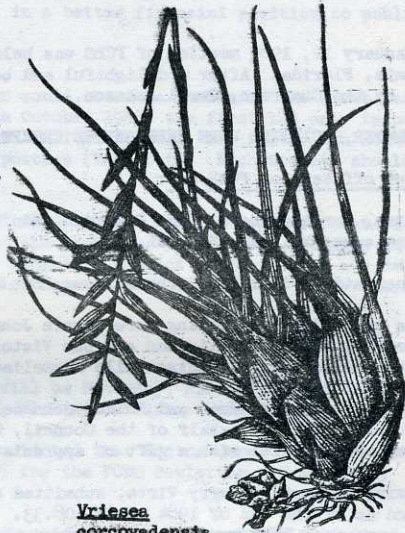
Florida judges (bromeliad) who will be recertified as a result of the November 1984 Judging Symposium in Ft. Myers will be qualified to act as instructors in the training of new judges. Your Florida Council plans to offer judge's training if/when we can form classes. Please inform your society president or either of your Florida Council reps if you are interested.

PROGRAMS

Seminole Bromeliad Society announces the following programs for the coming months and invites visitors to join with them in enjoying the special features. Bud Martin, Program Chairman, plans a BSI Slide program for March. In May, Ed & Glenna Simmons of Mt. Dora will give a program featuring their travels in Central and South America. June is reserved for the annual trip to Selby Gardens. All Florida societies located on the western part of the state will be contacted and invited to join in the outing. Last year there was quite a crowd from Tampa Bay, Florida West Coast and Imperial Polk Bromeliad Societies. As reported on the Show Page, Seminole Bromeliad Society is repeating last year's all day work shop and it will again be on the third Sunday in September.



Vriesea flammea



Vriesea corcovadensis



Vriesea triangularis

Several years ago I purchased a number of *Vriesea corcovadensis* from Europe. When they came into bloom there was furious controversy as to whether they were not *Vriesea flammea*. They, in fact, look nothing like the plants in my collection labelled *Vriesea corcovadensis*, which have dark leaf bases and pointed leaves. Research reveals the following: *Vriesea corcovadensis* is a transitional form of *Vriesea flammea* and is indistinguishable from it except when in bloom. Bracts on both are red and blooms are white or pale yellow, both are stoloniferous and of similar size. I have concluded that the plants purchased from Europe are really *Vriesea flammea*. The plant known in Florida as *Vriesea corcovadensis* is actually *Vriesea triangularis*. It would be nice to locate an honest-to-goodness *Vriesea corcovadensis* for comparison.

Cited: "Bromeliads" by Werner Rauh; "Flora Neotropica, Monograph 14, Part 2" by Smith & Downs.

