

**FLORIDA COUNCIL  
of  
BROMELIAD SOCIETIES INC.  
Newsletter**

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Make checks payable to:  
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VOLUME XI - ISSUE I

FEBRUARY 1991

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February 1991

CATCHING UP - STAYING EVEN

Florida Council's first meeting of 1991 was held at the home of Ron & Carolyn Schoenau in Gainesville on January 12. Tom Wolfe of Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay was installed as 1991 Council Chairman. Dr. Frank of the Entomology & Nematology Dept. of the University of Florida was present and showed us slides of *Metamasius callizona* in various stages of development. Florida Council is funding research into means of eradication of this weevil which is decimating native bromeliads in South Florida. A progress report is reprinted in this issue.

At this meeting it was voted to purchase a camera for our BIC Director Harry Luther. This has already been done. Mr. Ed Hall purchased and delivered the camera to Harry so that he will be user friendly with it before he goes to Australia in March, where he will be keynote speaker.

1992 World Conference theme was announced by Tom Wolfe as "Bromeliad Safari". The naming contest was won by Narda Enander of Sarasota Bromeliad Society. Narda was Florida Council Secretary in 1990. Silent auction winner at the meeting was Ruth LeVasseur (\$35.00) & loser was Carol Johnson (\$12.00). Next meeting will be in Sarasota in April at the home of Wally Berg.

Weather tip. Florida farmers all know this, but home gardeners may not. All of our freezing weather occurs when the wind is from the North or Northwest. Should the wind shift to the Northeast you may relax--there will be no freeze. And then any succeeding wind shift will be clockwise--Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, and West before returning to the North & Northwest danger area.

Michael O'Leary was 1990 winner of the Ervin Wurthmann Award for Outstanding Member of the Year for Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ELLA KELLEY. On March 15, 1991, Ella Kelley, a member of the Seminole Bromeliad Society, will celebrate her 103rd birthday. Ella resides at 451 South Amelia Ave.; Deland, Fl. 32724. She is probably the oldest living bromeliad collector and is especially fond of *Neoregelia carolinae*. I am sure she would love to receive birthday congratulations from society members throughout Florida. Her picture was in the November-December issue of the BSI Journal.

Condolences to Art Van Hyning on the death of his wife, Marystel, on February 5, 1991. Art & Marystel have been active members of Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay for as long as there has been a society.

I have received a letter from Eleanor Flood; Star Rt. 1, Box 103; Crescent City, Fl. 32112. She is planning to move out of state, and would like to dispose of a sizeable collection of orchids and

bromeliads which she has collected over many years. She prefers to sell the collection as a unit. If interested, please write or call her at (904) 649-4771 evenings.

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The following is reprinted from the Calcoosahatchee Bromeliad Society Newsletter and they received it from Simone Van Stolk of Savannah. Simone is a member of two Florida Bromeliad societies and an accredited Bromeliad Judge.

--A portion of an article from the Savannah News Press entitled "Louisianans Want Back Spanish Moss"---  
"The avenue of oaks leads from the banks of the Mississippi River to the white doric columns of the Houmas House Plantation, a shaded path through the history of battle and blood, dreams and dust at what was once Louisiana's largest sugar plantation. But missing from this quintessential Southern scene is the curtain of Spanish Moss that once draped these elegant trees in extravagant abundance.

All over southern Louisiana, from the silent swamps of the Atchafalaya Basin to the green marshes west of Lafayette, the plant that is a symbol of southern pain and mystery has vanished from its former range. Scientists cite a loss of habitat, the oak trees that moss thrives on, and a destructive fungus as reasons for the disappearance. Whatever the reasons, the loss of Spanish Moss has compelled people to take unusual actions to re-create its allure and re-establish the plant in some of its traditional habitats.

Around the state, it has become routine to see homeowners gingerly tying or placing moss in their trees, hoping to establish new parental lines. Tree surgeons say they are often directed to save moss pulled from sick limbs and hang it on healthy ones."

Ed. Note: During the 1960s the growth of Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) was greatly diminished, at least in the Central Florida area and it was feared it would be lost altogether. It was finally determined that the use of copper sulfate by the state road department to kill roadside weeds was causing the damage and that practice was discontinued. Ball moss (*T. recurvata*) was killed by the 1989 Christmas freeze from Central Florida north. The Spanish Moss was damaged but did not die. It is difficult to imagine a Florida without Spanish Moss.

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It is important that you send me your updated 1991 membership roster. Any Newsletter which has an incorrect address will not be forwarded and will mean we are wasting postage.

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Keep an eye out for a small gray moth. It may be a banana moth and they lay eggs which hatch into a small grey "worm" which preys on *Tillandsias*. Presence is indicated by a web-like substance around the base of the *Tillandsia*.

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Please remember and tend to the sick, the lonely and the bereft in your membership. There seems to be more than usual this Winter.

FCBS REPRESENTATIVES 1991

|                                    |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| CALOOSAHATCHEE<br>(FT. MEYERS)     | Eleanor Kinzie<br>2888 Second St.<br>Fort Myers, Fl. 33916<br>(813) 332-0210                      | Betty Ann Prevatt<br>2900½ Second St.<br>Fort Myers, Fl. 33916<br>(813) 334-0242        |
| CENTRAL FLORIDA<br>(ORLANDO)       | Ed Hall<br>1111 Glen Garry Cir.<br>Maitland, Fl. 32751<br>(407) 647-2039                          | Audrey McCrory<br>3615 Boggy Creek Road<br>Kissimmee, Fl. 34744<br>(407) 348-2139       |
| FLORIDA WEST<br>COAST<br>(T. PETE) | Morris Dexter<br>409 Bayview Dr.<br>Bellair, Fl. 33516<br>(813) 584-6598                          | Helen Dexter<br>409 Bayview Dr.<br>Bellair, Fl. 33516<br>(813) 584-6598                 |
| IMPERIAL POLK<br>(WINTER HAVEN)    | Carl Perryn<br>5066 Varty Road<br>Winter Haven, Fl. 33884<br>(813) 324-2008                       | Rose Schmidt<br>29 Lake Ave. -Aqualane<br>Winter Haven, Fl. 33880<br>(813) 293-5365     |
| JACKSONVILLE                       | Carolyn Schoenau<br>P. O. Box 12981 (2033 20th Ln.NW)<br>Gainesville, Fl. 32605<br>(904) 372-6589 | Al Muzzell<br>Box 14442, University Station<br>Gainesville, Fl. 32604<br>(904) 372-6589 |
| SARASOTA                           | Wally Berg<br>2251 Constitution Blvd.<br>Sarasota, Fl. 34231<br>(813) 924-0060                    | Jane Dahlin<br>935 Bayshore Dr.<br>Englewood, Fl. 34223<br>(813) 475-4612               |
| SEMINOLE                           | Carol Holland<br>350 Glen Haven<br>Merritt Island, Fl. 32952<br>(407) 453-1509                    | Carol Johnson<br>3961 Markham Woods Rd.<br>Longwood, Fl. 32779<br>(407) 333-0445        |
| SOUTH FLORIDA<br>(MIAMI)           | Nat DeLeon<br>11000 SW 77 Ct.<br>Miami, Fl. 33856<br>(305) 666-3280                               | Connie Johnson<br>13075 SW 60 Ave.<br>Miami, Fl. 33156<br>(305) 667-7890                |
| TAMPA BAY                          | Tom Wolfe<br>5211 Lake LeClaire Rd,<br>Lutz, Fl. 33549<br>(813) 961-1475                          | David Johnston<br>5665 99th Terrace North<br>Pinellas Park, Fl. 34666<br>(813) 545-8010 |
| WEST PASCO                         | Gwen Carnegie<br>1734 Magnolia Rd.<br>Belleair, Fl. 34616<br>(813) 584-7749                       | Bob Steiger<br>8920 Sharon Dr.<br>New Port Richey, Fl. 34654<br>(813) 845-0222          |

1991 OFFICERS FCBS

Chairman: Tom Wolfe  
 V-Chairman: Jane Dahlin  
 Secretary: Helen Dexter  
 Treasurer: Carol Johnson

Metamasius callizona kills bromeliads in southeastern FloridaJ. H. Frank<sup>1</sup> and M. C. Thomas<sup>2</sup>

Epiphytic bromeliads of the genus Tillandsia are one of the most striking features of the natural landscape in Florida. Tillandsia usneoides and T. recurvata are widespread, and are joined in the southern part of the peninsula by T. utriculata, T. fasciculata, T. circinnata and others. The rough bark of oak and cypress trees provides much of the substrate to which the bromeliads attach. Where these epiphytic bromeliads are abundant, it is usual to find that a few of them have fallen to the ground, generally as a consequence of breaking of dead tree branches to which they are attached. The ground may be littered with broken tree branches and bromeliads after a hurricane. Even though the fallen bromeliads appear healthy, still attached by their roots to branches, they are subject to grazing by rabbits and other mammals, and at most sites will not survive long.

Tillandsia utriculata, T. fasciculata and T. circinnata in Broward County and the southern part of Palm Beach County are now dying for another reason. Bromeliads of these three species are being killed by larvae of Metamasius callizona (Chevrolat), a Neotropical weevil whose presence in Broward County was first discovered late in 1989 (O'Brien et al. 1990). Our examination of bromeliads on the ground at sites in these counties (Map 1) in February 1991 showed that many had been killed by weevil larvae. Such bromeliads typically showed extensive mining by weevil larvae in the base of the plant, which had broken away from the roots (as in Fig. 6, p. 204, vol. 40, of Journal of the Bromeliad Society). By taking apart such bromeliads, we were able to collect 23 larvae, 32 pupae (each in a fibrous cocoon) and 22 adults of M. callizona, alive, most of them from Broward County parks. We found no eggs or very small larvae but, because of their size, these would be easier to miss than large larvae.

The precise life cycle of the weevil is yet unknown. We have not yet observed oviposition, and do not know whether it continues throughout the year. We do not know how long the eggs, larvae and pupae take to develop, nor how long the adults live. Our immediate objective, with support from the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, is to be able to rear all developmental stages of the weevil, in a laboratory at the University of Florida, for research purposes. When a ready supply of laboratory-reared eggs, larvae, pupae and adults is thus assured, we hope to begin research on biological control of the weevil.

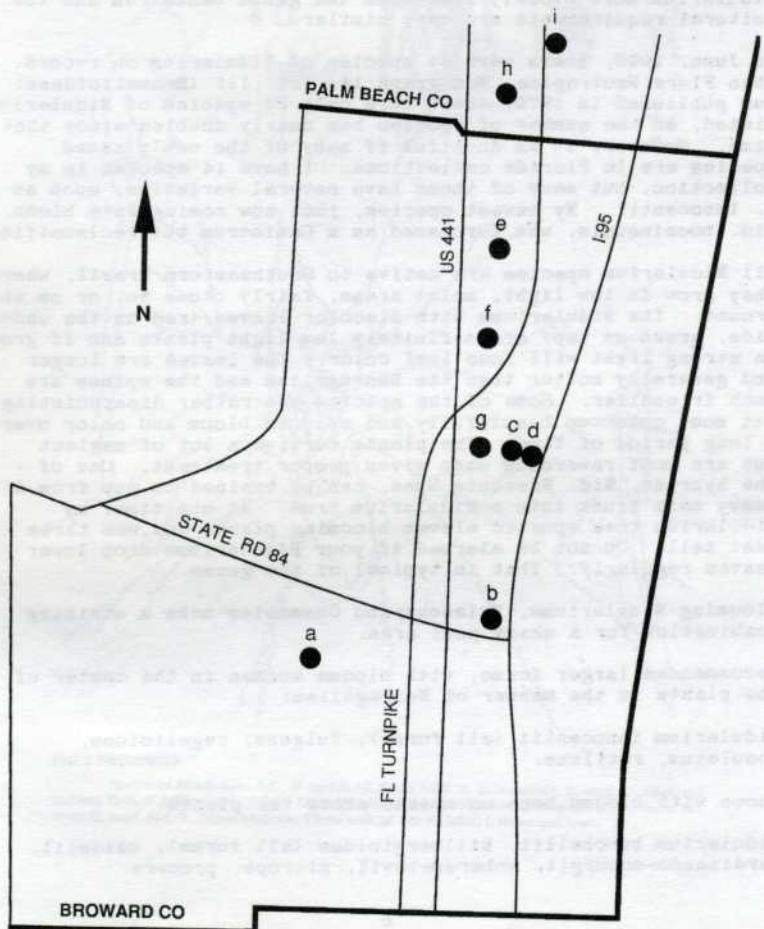
**Reference:**

O'Brien, C.W., Thomas, M.C., Frank, J.H. 1990. A new weevil pest of Tillandsia in south Florida. J. Bromeliad Soc. 40: 203-205, 222.

<sup>1</sup>Entomology & Nematology Dept., University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-0740

<sup>2</sup>Division of Plant Industry, Florida Dept. of Agric. & Consumer Services, Gainesville, FL 32602

Map 1. Sites in Broward County and southern Palm Beach County where living specimens of *Metamasius callizona* were collected on 4-6 February 1991: (a) Tree Tops Park, (b) Secret Woods Nature Center, (c) Easterlin Park, (d) Parks HQ, (e) Tradewinds Park, (g) country club, (h) golf course, (i) construction lot. Additionally, damage by the weevil was seen at (f) Fern Forest Nature Center, but no weevils were collected. Sites (a-f) are administered by the Parks and Recreation Division, Broward County Commission. Sites (a-g) are in Broward County, (h-i) are in Palm Beach County.



## NIDULARIUMS ARE NICE

Nidularium, from the Latin nidus meaning nest, and describing the circular arrangement of the blooms within the colored inner bracts.

There seems to be a lot of confusion regarding the genus Nidularium and people complain that it is difficult to grow them well. The problem is that the plants are very similar in appearance to Neoregelias and are consequently given the same treatment, with adverse results. Nidulariums are tolerant of cold, wet conditions, most of them like low light and they should be fed regularly. This is the direct opposite of the treatment of Neoregelias which are grown in strong light, seldom fed and kept on the dry side. To my notion, the genus Nidularium more closely resembles the genus Canistrum and the cultural requirements are very similar.

In June, 1990, there were 41 species of Nidularium on record. When Flora Neotropica, Monograph 14, Vol. III (Bromelioideae) was published in 1979, there were only 23 species of Nidularium listed, so the number of species has nearly doubled since that time. However, it is doubtful if many of the newly named species are in Florida collections. I have 14 species in my collection, but many of those have several varieties, such as *N. innocentii*. My newest species, just now coming into bloom, *Nid. bocainensis*, was purchased as a Canistrum but reclassified.

All Nidularium species are native to Southeastern Brazil, where they grow in low light, moist areas, fairly close to, or on the ground. The Nidulariums with discolor leaves (red on the underside, green on top) are definitely low light plants and if grown in strong light will lose leaf color. The leaves are longer and generally softer than the Neoregelias and the spines are much friendlier. Some of the species are rather disappointing, but most color up beautifully and stay in bloom and color over a long period of time. The plants survive a lot of neglect but are most rewarding when given proper treatment. One of the hybrids, *Nid. Francois Spae*, can be trained to pup from a heavy main trunk into a Nidularium tree. At one time, my Nidularium tree sported eleven blooming plants and was three feet tall. Do not be alarmed if your Nidulariums drop lower leaves regularly. That is typical of the genus.

Blooming Nidulariums, Vrieseas and Guzmanias make a striking combination for a shady pool area.

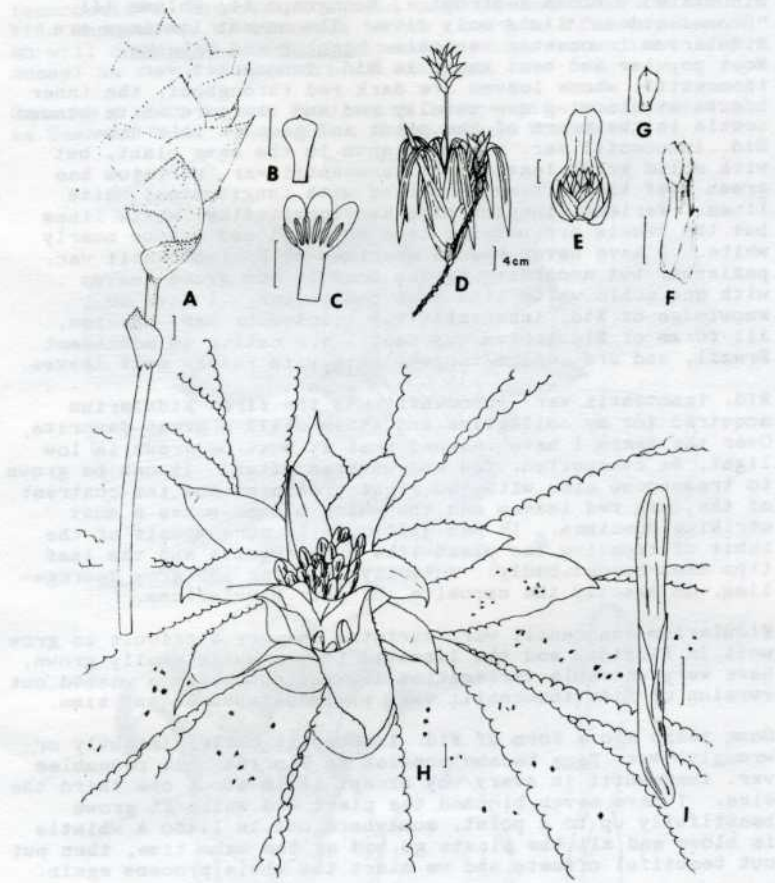
Recommended larger forms, with blooms sunken in the center of the plants in the manner of Neoregelias:

*Nidularium innocentii* (all forms), *fulgens*, *regelioides*, *rosulatum*, *rutilans*.

Those with blooms born on spikes above the plants:

*Nidularium burchellii*, *billbergioides* (all forms), *seidelii*, *ferdinando-coburgii*, *scheremetevii*, *microps*, *procera*.

Hybrids: Nid. *innocentii* x *regelioides*, Nid. Ruby Lee, Nid. Francois Spae, Nid. Digenium, Nid. Vienna, Nid. Maureanum, Nid. fulgens x *regelioides*, Nid. Chantrieri. Nid. Ruby Lee & Nid. Maureanum are both crosses of the forms of the species *innocentii*, so they are probably not hybrids but are contrived cultivars.



**Flora Neotropica**

Species of *Nidularium*. A-C, *N. seidelii* (A. Seidel 6-20): A, inflorescence; B, sepal; C, petals and stamens. D-G, *N. billbergioides* (Mosén 3253): D, habit; E, branch of inflorescence and bract; F, flower and bract; G, sepal. H-I, *N. fulgens* (Antoine, Phyto-Icon. pl. 24): H, habit; I, flower and bract.



## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

## Nidularium innocentii-----

There are seven varieties of species *Nidularium innocentii* listed in the June 1990 "Alphabetical Listing of Bromeliad Binomials". *Flora Neotropica*, Monograph 14, Volume III, "Bromelioideae" lists only five. The newest listings are *Nidularium innocentii* varieties bicolor and bauense. Most popular and best known is *Nid. innocentii* var. *innocentii*, whose leaves are dark red throughout, the inner bracts at blooming are usually red and the pure white blooms nestle in the heart of the plant and give it its name. *Nid. innocentii* var. *wittmackianum* is the same plant, but with solid green leaves. *N. innocentii* var. *striatum* has green leaf blades heavily marked with longitudinal white lines. Variety *lineatum* also has longitudinal white lines but the bracts are usually less colorful and may be nearly white. I have never seen a specimen of *N. innocentii* var. *paxianum*, but according to the book it has green leaves with one solid white line down the center. I have no knowledge of *Nid. innocentii* var. *bicolor* or var. *bauense*. All forms of *Nidularium innocentii* are native to southeast Brazil, and are medium/large plants with rather soft leaves.

*Nid. innocentii* var. *innocentii* was the first *Nidularium* acquired for my collection and it is still a great favorite. Over the years I have learned that it must be grown in low light, be overpotted, fed and watered often. It can be grown to tremendous size with the right treatment and the contrast of the dark red leaves and the white blooms makes a most striking specimen. It was difficult to cure myself of the habit of treating the plant like a *Neoregelia* and the leaf tips then burned badly. Actually, however you grow *Neoregelias*, do exactly the opposite for your *Nidulariums*.

*Nidularium innocentii* var. *striatum* is very difficult to grow well in Florida, and the lined forms, while easily grown, have very unstable variegation and may revert to a washed out version of *Nid. innocentii* var. *wittmackianum* at any time.

Some years ago a form of *Nid. innocentii* called (rightly or wrongly) var. Nana became popular in Florida. It resembles var. *innocentii* in every way except it is about one third the size. I have never bloomed the plant and while it grows beautifully up to a point, somewhere out in limbo a whistle is blown and all the plants go bad at the same time, then put out beautiful offsets and we start the whole process again.

There have been many *Nidularium* hybrids made from *Nidularium innocentii* var. *innocentii*, but the best are those which retain the dark red leaf coloring (*Ruby Lee*, *Maureanum*), but these are not really hybrids but cultivars of two forms of *Nidularium innocentii*. *Nidularium Chantrieri*, a beautiful plant with stiff dark red leaves is listed both as a *Nidularium* hybrid (*N. innocentii* v. *innocentii* x *N. fulgens*) and as a bi-generic (with *Neoregelia carolinae*). I bow to the experts as to which is correct. I have also acquired a hybrid called

