

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March 2014



NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:

Tuesday, March 4
Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

NEW LOCATION:

Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

floridabromeliads.org

Program

Two of our members, **Gary Lund** and **Ashley Graham**, will be the speakers at the next meeting and will tell us about the two bromeliad societies with which our own society is affiliated. Gary will talk about the Bromeliad Society International (BSI), and Ashley will talk about the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (FCBS).

Gary is currently on the BSI Board of Directors serving as one of the directors from Florida. He is known for his love of bromeliads with large and nasty spines, such as *Bromelia balansae*, all of which he grows beautifully. He is our current treasurer, a position for which he is well-suited, having previously served in that capacity for many years. He will have some spare copies of the quarterly BSI *Journal* available at the meeting.

Ashley is currently serving as the Chairman of the FCBS, one of three officers' positions that is rotated annually among the 10 Florida bromeliad societies (including ours) that are affiliated with the FCBS. She is also a member of the Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society, the Rare Plant Network and the Night Bloomers Circle of the Garden Club of St. Petersburg. She is an avid plant enthusiast, and grows bromeliads, begonias, orchids, palms and other tropical plants.

Plant Sales

All members are welcome to sell bromeliads at the March meeting. Feel free to bring related items for sale, such as driftwood and other mounting materials, potting soil, fertilizer, plant tags, and pots. Sellers are requested to donate at least one item to the evening's raffle table.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Phil Elting, of Elting's Exotic Plants nursery in Riverview, Florida, talked to us about his nursery and the bromeliads he grows, with an emphasis on the genus *Vriesea*. Here is a summary of his comments.

- Vrieseas are good puppers.
- His Vrieseas have withstood cold temperatures down to 34 degrees.
- Vrieseas are predominantly epiphytes and grow well in trees. To secure them, place them in the crotch formed by tree branches and fasten them with nylon hosiery, glue, and/or wire.
- Fertilizer will help them bloom well. Phil recommends a time-release fertilizer with a 13-13-13 nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium ratio.
- Too much fertilizer will leave an unattractive residue on the leaves.



- Iron and salt-water intrusion in groundwater and chlorine in treated city water can be harmful to Vrieseas (and other plants).
- Growers should test their irrigation water to be sure the water is appropriate for the plants. The county Cooperative Extension Center typically provides water testing without charge.
- Rain water makes the best water source.
- For potting medium, Phil recommends buying a good commercial potting mix and adding perlite.

New Meeting Location

As you are aware, the church where we had held our monthly meetings for the last 20 years recently told us we would have to change our meeting night to a Monday and pay an increase in rent. An alternative would be to keep the meeting night on the first Tuesday of the month and move to another location where that night is available. With the thought of pursuing the second option, our February meeting was held in a new location, the Good Samaritan Church on Park Boulevard in Pinellas Park, so that members could experience the church as a candidate for the site of future meetings. During the meeting the members looked around the new facility, discussed the options for meeting nights and locations, and then voted. The group overwhelmingly approved keeping the meetings on the first Tuesday of the month and moving the meeting location to Good Samaritan Church.



Enjoying the new meeting room at Good Samaritan Church

Ask-an-Expert Feature

Our new Ask-an-Expert feature at the last meeting was a resounding success. Both before the meeting and during the refreshment break people lined up at the table where the expert du jour, Barret Bassick (picture on the right), was seated, to ply him with their various questions regarding bromeliads. The expert at the next meeting will be Alton Lee.



Show and Tell

Reported by Helga Tarver

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|-------------------|--|
| John Edwards | <i>Billbergia 'Windii'</i> ; <i>Guzmania</i> (unknown cultivar); |
| Franne Matwijczyk | <i>Aechmea recurvata</i> var. <i>recurvata</i> |
| Kathy Risley | <i>Canistrum fosterianum</i> ; <i>Aechmea</i> 'Bert' |
| Linda Sheetz | <i>Guzmania</i> 'Optima'; <i>Guzmania</i> 'Splash' |
| Larry Sousa | <i>Neoregelia</i> 'Shocking Pink' |

Below are pictures of Show and Tell plants.



Billbergia 'Windii'



Guzmania 'Splash'



Guzmania (unknown cultivar)



Guzmania 'Optima'

THIS AND THAT

Andy Price (July 29, 1926 - February 24, 2014)

(with contributions by Helga Tarver, Alton Lee and Marty Baxley; some photographs from BSI.org website)

Andy Price, a member of FWCBS since the mid-1970s, passed away on Monday, February 24th; he was 87. Passionate about growing bromeliads and sharing his knowledge with others, he was an active and energetic participant in our Society. He encouraged our group to get involved in local plant sales, serving as the Sales Chairman for a number of years, and he held numerous workshops on bromeliad horticulture. He was a driving force behind our Society's bromeliad displays at three of the BSI World Bromeliad Conferences (1980, 1992, and 1996), with the displays in 1980 and 1996 winning first prize. Andy was a mainstay in our involvement with the annual Florida State Fair where he entered prize-winning bromeliads in the judged shows. At the fair he also manned a horticultural information booth where he fielded questions from the



general public about growing bromeliads. Over the years he hybridized numerous bromeliads, some of which have yet to be registered. In 2011, essentially retiring from growing, Andy sold his bromeliads and greenhouses to Marty Baxley. Andy was dedicated to bromeliad causes and contributed much to those causes over the years, and for his efforts, he was honored as a recipient of our Membership Service Award in 2011. Some say he was a 'diamond in the rough' but that was part of his charm. He was quoted as saying that he fell in love with bromeliads, was excited by and about them, and had no worries when he was among them.

Billbergia 'Priceless' was named for Andy.



And these are some of Andy's own hybrids.



Neo. 'Charming DeRolf'



Neo. 'Lemon Drop'



Neo. 'Tom Tarver'



Neo. 'Mercury Is in Love'



Vriesea 'Andy's Dream'

David Smith

David Smith, a member of FWCBS for over 10 years, passed away peacefully last Saturday, February 15, after a long, hard-fought illness. He was 65 years old. An avid horticulturist and bromeliad grower, he was

the owner of Acme Bromeliads and had been in the interior landscaping business for about 30 years. David was a steady vendor at our sales events, and was always generous with his plant donations for our annual auction and monthly raffle table. FWCBS will make a donation in his name to the LifePath Hospice, Tampa Chapter. .

New Member

Please welcome Molly Mines of Clearwater, who joined our society at the last meeting. We know she will enjoy what our society has to offers her.

New Librarian(s)

Maria Fernandez and Pat Frey are joining up to serve as our new librarians, a position previously served by only one person. This dynamic duo will be introducing us to the many wonderful books in our library. For our newer members, and our longtime members who may have forgotten, FWCBS has amassed a good deal of bromeliad literature, including some books that are out of print. This library material is a valuable resource for your bromeliad questions, and you are encouraged to use it. They may be checked out for a month at a time, with exceptions of a few that are rare and/or out of print. See Maria and Pat at any meeting to find out more information about the library.

2014 Dues Payable

Dues are payable now. You can send a check, payable to FWCBS, to the treasurer Gary Lund, 904 Oakwood Drive, Largo, FL 33770.

UPCOMING EVENTS, 2014

March 1-2, Bromeliad Society of South Florida Annual Bromeliad Show and Sale
Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, Coral Gables, FL (305-667-1651)

March 29-30, 2014, GreenFest Plant Sale
University of Tampa, Tampa, FL (friendsofplantpark.com/greenfest)

April 4-6, 2014, Tropiflora Spring Festival
Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267 (tropiflora.com)

April 12-13, 2014, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (cas.usf.edu/garden)

April 26-27, 2014, Green Thumb Festival
Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL (stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb)

September 8-14, 21st World Bromeliad Conference, Bromeliads in Paradise
Honolulu, Hawaii, USA (www.bsi.org/new/wbc-2014-registration-and-info)

2014 FWCBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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