

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2022

Celebrating over 68 Years in Bromeliads



March 2022 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: March 1, 2022; 7:30 pm
Location: Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Meeting Protocols: There will no longer be a limit on the number of people who can attend meetings, but there will still be no shared refreshments and the church where we meet still requires masks regardless of vaccination status and cleansing of tabletops at the end of the meeting.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

The speaker at our March meeting will be Steve Byram from the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay (BGTB). His topic will be *Bromeliads 101*, an overview of the history of bromeliads, their classification, how to use them in the garden, growing tips, and where to purchase them. Much of his presentation is based on experiences learned in 15 years from his own garden.

Steve has been a member of the BGTB for 15 years and has served as secretary, vice president and president. He has volunteered as a Pasco County Master Gardener for 10 years and has given many talks at garden clubs, nurseries, public libraries, public gardens, and bromeliad societies across the State of Florida.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The speaker at our February was Jason Mellica who has been growing and hybridizing bromeliads for the past 26 years. He has registered about 140 of his hybrids with the Bromeliad Society International (BSI) Bromeliad Cultivar Registry, of which about 125 are *Neoregelia*. His presentation titled *Rise of the Tiger Neos*, was about the 'Tiger' series of *Neoregelia* hybrids he has made using *Neoregelia carcharodon* cv. (cultivar) 'Tiger' and various of its progeny in the crosses.



Jason Mellica

Neo. carcharodon cv. 'Tiger' is one of the Neoregelia Carcharodon Group of bromeliads which are related to *Neo. carcharodon* but in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. They are considered by some to be related species but have been given cultivar names. According to Derek Butcher, there have been several cultivar names given to forms where taxonomists have refrained from formally linking them to species. (They fall in the taxonomic limbo, as it were, of 'are they a species or a cultivar/hybrid?') Bromeliads with this relationship to *Neo. carcharodon* have been linked by calling them part of the Carcharodon Group. In addition to *Neo. carcharodon* cv. 'Tiger', other examples of bromeliads in this group include 'Rainbow', 'Silver', 'Macho', 'Giant' (which some consider to be the same plant as 'Macho') and 'Spines'.

Neo. carcharodon was introduced in the U.S. in 1939 when Mulford Foster brought back several specimens that he had collected in various areas in Brazil. It is characterized as large and robust, with stiff, greyish green leaves with maroon specks above and maroon blotches below. Its leaves have prominent dark spines and red tips. It was given the name *carcharodon*, which means "with shark teeth", because of the large spines. According the Tropiflora Nursery website, the original *carcharodon* is unknown and may not be in cultivation.

Neo. carcharodon cv. 'Tiger' (picture on the right) (known variously as *Neo. Carcharodon* 'Tiger', *Neo. 'Tiger'*, and *Neo. 'Skotak's Tiger'*) is one of four bromeliads in the Carcharodon Group that Chester Skotak and others introduced into cultivation in the 1990s. Chester reportedly found 'Tiger' in a collection in Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil, therefore it is also referred to as *Neo. 'Skotak's Tiger'*. It can grow from 24 to 28 inches across and has bronze coppery red leaves with deep maroon cross-banding. It is used in the landscape and takes on best color when grown in full sun. Since its introduction, 'Tiger' has been used widely in hybridizing, creating untold numbers of bromeliads with tiger-like spines and stripes, starting with Chester Skotak's hybrid *Neo. 'Hannibal Lector'* (*Neo. 'Rafa'* x *Neo. 'Skotak's Tiger'*).



Neo. carcharodon cv. 'Tiger'

Jason said his goal in making his 'Tiger' hybrids was to create hardy, colorful, patterned bromeliads that could be used in the landscape in full or partial sun conditions where they achieve the best colors. While most of these 'Tiger' hybrids grow about 24 inches across with leaves about 3 inches wide, some can get quite large, up to 3 feet or more across with 5-inch-wide leaves. They are a hardy lot and do well in the landscape.

Jason stated that he does the cross-pollination process of his Neoregelias in the mornings because the flowers close by mid-day. He selects the two plants he wants to cross and opens the petals of a flower on each of them. He then extracts pollen from the stamen (male part) in the flower on one plant and places it on the stigma (female part) of the flower on the second plant. The second plant is called the 'seed' plant, because after it is fertilized by the pollen it will produce a seed pod. Jason says he can harvest about 50 seeds from a mature *Neoregelia* seed pod. During the first year after the seedlings have sprouted, they are most vulnerable and need protection until they can harden. They grow very slowly initially and after a year might only be a few inches tall. When they have grown large enough to display distinctive

characteristics, Jason goes through them and culls out the ones that he considers undesirable and keeps only those that show the potential to develop the specific characteristics he was targeting. For a soil mix, Jason uses three parts peat moss to one part perlite and then some water that he stirs into the mix.

Below are pictures of some of Jason's 'Tiger' crosses that he showed us, all of which have *Neo. carcharodon* cv. 'Tiger' in their background either directly or two or three generations removed.



Neo. 'Teleport' (*Neo. 'Clairvoyant'*
x *Neo. 'Groves Red Tiger'*)¹



Neo. 'Polar Shift'
(*Neo. 'Lila'* x *Neo. 'Euterpe'*)²



Neo. 'Zeus'
(*Neo. odorata* x *Neo. 'Skotak's Tiger'*)



'*Neo. 'Dark Energy'*' (*Neo. 'Zeus'* x
Neo. 'Mo' Peppa Please')



Neo. 'Meditation' (Neo. 'Metis'² x Neo. 'Pink Sensation')



Neo. 'Sound Waves' (Neo. 'Metis'² x Neo. 'Prophecy')

Notes:

1. Neo. 'Groves Red Tiger' is from a Neo. 'Skotak's Tiger' cross.
2. Neo. 'Euterpe' and Neo. 'Metis' are from a 'Hannibal Lecter' cross which is from a 'Skotak's Tiger' cross.

SHOW AND TELL

Karen Mills

Aechmea gamosepala in a small bird cage (picture below)

Tillandsia ionantha in a ceramic 'hand' (picture below)

SHOW AND TELL PLANTS



Aechmea gamosepala



Tillandsia ionantha

THIS AND THAT

Dick Dailey

We were devastated to learn that beloved member Dick Dailey passed away on February 12th. He was 77.

He and his wife Nancy joined our bromeliad society in 2009. In 2017 and 2018 he served as our president and in 2019, 2020, and the first half of 2021 he was on our Board of Directors as an advisory immediate past president. He was generous in many ways, giving both his time and creativity to our group. To promote our goals at every turn, he developed colorful brochures and signs for our various events. His auctioneering skills at our annual bromeliad auction managed to coax bidders to offer high prices for a plant. His charm and determination were persuasive.



Dick Dailey, 1944-2022

He was avid about his bromeliad collection that included specimens from many genera, and he eagerly shared what he had with others—a pup here, a mature plant there. In recent years his enthusiasm expanded into the genus *Cryptanthus*, and his involvement was complete to the point that he was elected president of the Cryptanthus Society in 2022.

He and Nancy divided their time between their home in St. Petersburg and their second home in Homosassa, Citrus County, engaging fully in both those communities. He maintained almost all his bromeliads in the large shady yard at the home in Homosassa.

His was always ready with a smile, a handshake, a kind word, and a witty comment. The fullness of the life he had with family, friends, business associates, and community leaders is laudable and enviable. Too numerous to encapsulate here, one can read about some of his accomplishments in his obituary which is available at this link:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/chronicleonline/name/richard-dailey-obituary?id=33077797>

IN THE GARDEN



Androlepis skinneri



Neoregelia 'Prairie Fire'

Sandy Holloway



Aechmea orlandiana hybrid



Bilbergia 'Casa Blanca'

Gary Lund



Aechmea 'Bert'



Aechmea ramosa

Barb Gardner



Tillandsia ionantha var *van-hyningii*

Barbara Black, East London Bromeliad Society,
South Africa



Alcantarea nahoumii

BROMELIAD AND OTHER PLANT EVENTS, 2022

March 12-13, Leu Gardens Sale

Harry P. Leu Gardens, 1920 North Forest Avenue, Orlando, FL, 9am-5pm each day
(<https://www.leugardens.org/plant-sale-march-12-13-900-a-m-500-p-m/>)

March 26-27, Tampa GreenFest

Tampa Garden Club, 2629 Bayshore Drive, Tampa, FL, 9am-4pm each day
(<https://www.tampagardenclub.com/event/tampa-greenfest/>)

April 9-10, USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
(<https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/botanical-gardens/>)

April 23-24, Green Thumb Festival,

Walter Fuller Park, 7891 26 Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL, 9am-4pm each day
(<http://www.stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb/>)

April 23-24, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Annual Spring Plant Sale

Sanford Garden Club, 200 Fairmont Dr., Sanford, FL, 9am-4pm each day
(<https://www.sanfordgardenclub.com/sbtps>)

June 7-11, 24th World Bromeliad Conference, *The Big Show*, BSI's 70th Anniversary
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Sarasota, FL (<https://www.bsi.org/new/conference-corner/>)

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