FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2022

Celebrating over 68 Years in Bromeliads

April 2022 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: April 5, 2022; 7:30 pm

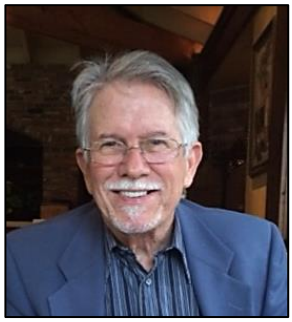
Location: Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

PROGRAM

The program will be a discussion of two upcoming events: our Annual Bromeliad Auction, May 3rd, and the Bromeliad Society International World Bromeliad Conference this June in Sarasota, FL. There will also be a demonstration on how to prepare plants for a show.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH PROGRAM



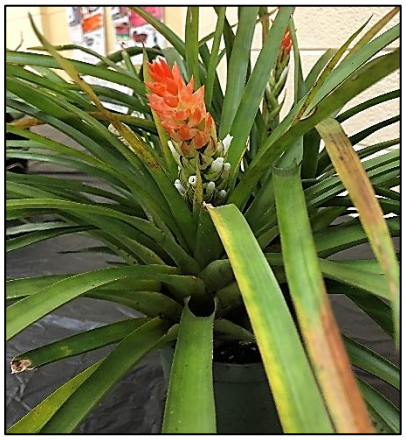
The speaker at our March meeting was Steve Byram from the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, on the topic *Bromeliads 101*, a beginner's guide to bromeliads. Steve started his talk with a brief history of the discovery of bromeliads and their original distribution in the Americas. He then talked about the dozen or so commonly grown genera and gave examples of some of the species for each, highlighting their main characteristics. He provided tips on how to use bromeliads in the landscape, such as planting them in areas where grass will not grow. For his soil mix, to promote good drainage, he prefers to use vermiculite instead of perlite and puts pieces of lava rock at the bottom of the pots, under the soil. To force bloom his plants, he places a plastic bag filled with apple slices over the top of the plant and leaves it there for about two weeks. The apple slices give off ethylene, a gaseous plant hormone important in fruit ripening, that will force the plant to bloom in about three months. He encouraged the use of a natural mosquito pesticide, *Mosquito Bits*, which is composed of dried bacteria that when placed in the water in a bromeliad's tank will activate and eat any mosquito larvae present.

SHOW AND TELL

Monika Hale — *Guzmania monostachia* (picture below)
Tillandsia bulbosa, mounted multiples (picture below)

Karen Mills	*Neoregelia unidentified hybrid*
Phil Monnig	*Tillandsia* 'Durrell' (*T. limbata* x *T. bulbosa* small form) *Tillandsia* 'Rosalia Mavrikas' (*T. schiedeana* x *T. baileyi;* picture below*)* *Tillandsia tenuifolia* 'Emerald Forest' (picture below) *Tillandsia rodriguezziana* Mexican form (picture below) *Tillandsia capitata* *Tillandsia* Jackie Loinaz (*T. concolor* x *T. capitata* 'Rubra') *Tillandsia paucifolia* Guatemala *Tillandsia* "Winners Circle' (*T. aeranthos* x *T. stricta*)
Linda Sheetz	*Vriesea botafogensis* (picture below)

SHOW AND TELL PLANTS



Guzmania monostachia

Tillandsia bulbosa cluster

Tillandsia 'Durrell'

Tillandsia 'Rosalia Mavrikas'

Tillandsia tenuifolia ‘Emerald Forest’

Tillandsia rodrigueziana

Vriesea botafogensis

THIS AND THAT

‘Tis the (Mosquito) Season, Again

Mosquitoes occur year-round and are most numerous in the rainy season, which in Florida is from mid-May through mid-October. One ecological niche for them is the water in bromeliad tanks and at the base of the leaves where they lay eggs as part of their life cycle. In Florida, mosquitoes found in bromeliad tanks include the native species of *Wyeomyia* as well as invasive species *Aedes albopictus* and *Aedes aegypti*, which may transmit mosquito-borne viruses such as dengue and Zika.

The Zika virus has been around for decades with the most recent outbreak in Brazil in 2014, which led to a small outbreak in the US in 2016-2017. (There have been no reported cases of Zika virus in the US since 2017.) This led to the misconception of some people that mosquitoes found in bromeliads were a major source of the virus. Dr. Howard Frank, entomologist and Professor Emeritus at University of Florida (UF), conducted research in the late 1970s and late 1980s that showed the larger larvae of the native species *Wyeomyia* outcompeted the small larvae of the two invasive *Aedes species*, and as such, the native species acted as a biological control of the invasive mosquito.

At the time of the 2016-2017 occurrence of Zika in the US, Dr. Frank and others attempted to quell public fears about mosquitoes in bromeliads but in some cases to no avail. Their appeals to the mosquito control directors of several cities and counties went unheeded. In the City of Miami Beach, the mayor ordered all bromeliads be removed from all public spaces and private gardens.

A newly published 2021 report from UF/ IFAS titled *Mosquitoes and Bromeliads* by Ana L. Romero-Weaver, L. Philip Lounibos, and Eva A. Buckner presents new findings that support Dr. Frank's earlier work. To access this document, you can use this link: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN1343. It is well worth reading the report. It starts with a discussion of mosquitoes and their life cycle and how bromeliads can play a part in the cycle. It says, yes, bromeliads can produce mosquitoes but no, bromeliads do not produce mosquitoes that transmit viruses to humans when native *Wyeomyia* species are present to act as a biological control of the invasive *Aedes* species.

The report recognizes that native *Wyeomyia species* can still be a biting nuisance and makes suggestions to control them in bromeliads, which also apply to birdbaths. It suggests that if you are not able to handle mosquito control in bromeliads in your yard, you should consider eliminating them altogether and growing other types of plants.

These are some suggestions for controlling mosquitoes in the yard and can also be applied to birdbaths.

1. Flush out mosquito eggs, larvae and other debris accumulated at the base of bromeliad leaves and tanks with a hose at least once a week.
2. Add to the water larvicides such as Methoprene (a growth regulator) or *Mosquito Bits*, which are dried bacteria (*Bacillus thuringiensis*, aka Bti) that activate in the water and eat larvae.
3. Spray homemade formulas, such as an environmentally safe liquid soap, on the water surface to reduce water surface tension. That in turn makes it difficult for mosquitoes to land on the water to lay their eggs and for the larvae that develop here to breathe. Some people use cooking oil spray on the water surface, but this can make the leaves greasy, reduce the water absorption and allow the leaves to burn in the sun.

IN THE GARDEN

Vriesea philippo-coburgii (aka ‘Bonfire’)

Vriesea hybrid

Submitted by Gary Lund

Dyckia species or hybrid, with orange flowers

Aechmea distichantha var schlumbergeri

Aechmea lueddemanniana rubra

Aechmea ramosa cv 'Yellowstone'

Notes:
Gary says he has had the *Aec. lueddemanniana* rubra pictured above for years, and maybe got it from the old Palmer Nursery. Alton Lee says he remembers it from years ago, that it was costly then and was possibly from Ervin Wurthmann. The *Aec.* 'Yellowstone' to the right has yellow berries instead of the species *ramosa* red berries and is possibly one of Bullis' plants.

BROMELIAD AND OTHER PLANT EVENTS, 2022

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)

May 3, FWCBS Annual Bromeliad Auction, 7:30 pm
Good Samaritan Church, 6085 Park Boulevard Pinellas Park, FL
(susansousa1@yahoo.com)

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/)

2022 FWCBS Board of Directors

President	Phil Monnig, pjmonnig@gmail.com
Vice President	Richard Poole, rapoole4469@yahoo.com
Secretary	Brian Corey, bcorey2@tampabay.rr.com
Treasurer	Gary Lund, garybrom@yahoo.com
Immediate-Past President	Kathy Risley, karisley@gmail.com; @tamabay.rr.com
Newsletter Editor	Linda Sheetz, lsheetz@tampabay.rr.com
Trustees (3)	Karen Mills (2019-2022), karen4photo@aol.com
	Sandy Holloway (2022-2023), sandandy@tampabay.rr.com
	Monika Hale (2022-2024), mainherz@verizon.net