

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2021

Celebrating over 67 Years in Bromeliads



July 2021 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time: Tuesday, July 6, 2021; 7:30 pm
Location: Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

It is true! We will hold a regular, in-person meeting at the church in July for the first time since we last met there in March 2020. The church has finally opened its meeting hall for use, with these conditions: we must limit the number of people, must wear masks regardless of vaccination status, and must sanitize the tables and chairs at the end of the meeting with cleaning material they will supply. There will be no shared refreshments, but some individual bottles of water and soda and packaged snacks will be available. People are encouraged to bring their own refreshments. It will otherwise be a 'normal' meeting. We will have a speaker (see below), plants for sale by the speaker, Show and Tell, the Raffle Table, and the Friendship Table.

PROGRAM

Dave Johnston, longtime FWCBS member and bromeliad grower and hybridizer, will speak on the topic of *My 40 Years of Growing Bromeliads and What Changes There Have Been*. This is the same talk he attempted to present to us in March 2020, but his computer malfunctioned, and the talk was postponed until our June 2020 meeting. However, by June meetings were cancelled due to the Covid19 pandemic. Well, third time is the charm.

Dave has had a collection of up to 2,000 different species and hybrids and is currently focused on hybridizing Billbergias. He has been a member of our society since 1992 and served as our president for two terms. In 1990, he started Exotic Landscapes, a full-service landscape contracting company, and Bromeliads Galore, a bromeliad nursery.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

PROGRAM

The June meeting was conducted via Zoom on Monday, June 14, 2021, with members of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society (SBS) joining in with us once again as they have for two previous Zoom meetings. **Ray Lemieux** (SBS) presented a program on the genus *Dyckia*. He used a slide program that was created by Keith Smith as part of the Bromeliad Society International (BSI) Media Library programs that are available to affiliated societies. The program included slides of 35 *Dyckia* species (from *Dyckia beateae* to *Dyckia wilsonii*) and 36 hybrids (*Dyckia* 'Avalanche' to *Dyckia* 'Yellow Glow').

Ray augmented the prepared talking points with comments based on his personal experiences, such as availability of a plant, care, growing techniques, propagation, and light and feeding requirements. Talking points also included native habitats and growing conditions. This is a summary of the presentation with some supplemental information.

OVERVIEW

- The genus *Dyckia* is in the plant family *Bromeliaceae*, subfamily *Pitcairnioideae*. It was named after the Prussian botanist, botanical artist, and horticulturist The Prince and Earl of Salm Reifferscheid-Dyck (1773–1861).
- The subfamily *Pitcairnioideae* is the most ancient lineage of bromeliads.
- The majority of *Dyckia* species are native to arid and high-altitude regions of central Brazil, with some found in Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, and Bolivia. Most are found in warm sunny areas ranging in altitude from sea level to about 6,000 feet.
- *Dyckia* species are terrestrial and saxicolous and prefer to grow in rocky and/or sunny areas. They are slow growers, typically with a low profile, and have a natural tendency to clump and grow into thick, large mats.
- They survive in warm regions with heavy rainfall for half the year and very dry conditions the rest of the year.
- They typically have thick foliage with spiny leaves and are often considered a succulent, but their leaves are not designed to store water. They rely on an extensive root system for their moisture and nutrients.
- Within this genus there is a wide variety in leaves, inflorescences, forms, and colors.
- Currently, there are 187 *Dyckia* species on the BSI Taxon List and 339 hybrids recorded on the BSI Bromeliad Cultivar Registry.
- The BSI registry also lists 15 bigeneric crosses of *Dyckia*—*xDyckcohnia* (nine with *Deuterochohnia*), *xDycklirium* (two with *Encholirium*), *xDycktia* (one with *Hechtia*), *xPitkia* (one with *Pitcairnia*), and *xPukia* (two with *Puya*).
- Leaves
 - While some *Dyckia* species have soft, straight leaves, they typically have thick, stiff, curved leaves that form a rosette (example pictured below on left). Two species that are the exception have leaves that fan out from a stem (one is pictured below on the right).



Dyckia platyphylla
(Source: fcbs.org)



Dyckia estevesia (Source: fcbs.org)

- While the spines on the leaf margins are commonly thick, hard, and sharp (pictured below on the left), they can range from soft to hard, and small to large size.
- The leaves come in a range of colors (green, rose, maroon, tan, silver, yellow; examples pictured below in the center and on the right) and a variety of leaf shapes (long and thin, short and fat, deeply lobed, or almost smooth).



Dyckia 'Mercury'
(Marian Kennell)



Dyckia 'Yellow Glow'
(Linda Sheetz)



Dyckia 'James Red'
(Richard Poole)

Inflorescence

- The inflorescence rises on a long stem, usually from the side of the plant rather than from the center. The inflorescence may be a single spike, or it may be branched.
- They usually bloom in the spring.

Flowers

- Flowers are colored red, orange, or yellow and have a bell shape. (See example pictured on right.)
- They are pollinated primarily by hummingbirds, bees, wasps, and butterflies.



D. 'James Green'
(Richard Poole)

CULTIVATION

- Soil: Grow in a well-drained organic soil mix with perlite.
- Pots: While they are best grown in the ground, they can also be grown in a pot. Choose a pot that will accommodate the plant's large root system. Adequate pot space encourages maximum mature size.
- Light: Place in the brightest sun they can adapt to. They thrive in full sun but can take up to 50% shade.
- Moisture: Water regularly and reduce watering in the winter and when the plant is blooming. They will rot if overwatered. They are xeriscape plants and can tolerate long periods without moisture.
- Nutrients: Add slow-release fertilizer or a weak liquid fertilizer through growth period. Do not fertilize in the cold season.
- Temperature: One of the most cold-tolerant bromeliads, they thrive in a temperature range of 40°F to 90°F. They have been known to withstand temperatures in the 20s and higher than 90.

PROPAGATION

- They reproduce both by seed and vegetatively from offshoots.
- Seed: Seed capsules are short and fat and contain many seeds. Like other bromeliads in the subfamily *Pitcairnioideae*, they have dry seed capsules that split and release light-weight seeds for distribution by wind or attaching to an unsuspecting passerby. They are easily propagated from seed.
- Pups: Pups can be removed and planted separately or allowed to grow in clumps attached to the mother plant. Dyckias are prickly and difficult to deal with. The best way to remove pups or take apart a large clump is to remove the plant from the pot and start from the bottom. Use a sharp knife or small saw and be sure to wear gloves and arm protection. Try to preserve as much of the pup roots as possible. Most pups are slow to root and start growing, but when the plants root system fills the pot, move the plant into a larger pot.



Cluster of *Dyckia* "Cherry Coke" (on the left) that Barb Gardner painstakingly (emphasize this word) took apart and repotted as separate plants (on the right).

Additional information about the genus *Dyckia* is available at these on-line sites.

- Constantino Gastaldi, Dyckia Brazil blog: <http://dyckiabrazil.blogspot.com/>
- Encyclopedia of Bromeliads: <http://florapix.nl/bcg/encyclopedia/brome/>
- BSI: <http://www.bsi.org/new/>
- *Bromeliads in the Clouds*, Derek Butcher: <http://imperialis.com.br/banco-de-dados/>

SHOW AND TELL

Dick Dailey	<i>Aechmea</i> 'Blue Tango' (picture below) <i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Betty Ann Prevatt' (picture below) <i>Cryptanthus</i> 'Lime Green' (picture below)
Barb Gardner	<i>Dyckia</i> 'Cherry Coke' (<i>D. platyphylla</i> x <i>D.</i> 'Carlsbad'; picture above in the 'Program' section) <i>Dyckia</i> hybrid
Monika Hale	<i>Aechmea</i> 'Frederike' <i>Aechmea zebrina</i> <i>Guzmania</i> hybrid

Lutheria (formerly *Vriesea*) *splendens* (picture below)
Vriesea hybrid

Marian Kennell (SBS) *Dyckia* 'Mercury' (picture above in the 'Program' section)
Dyckia 'Alice'

Richard Poole *Aechmea* 'Black Zombie' (picture below)
Aechmea dichlamydea var. *trinitensis*, one of the parents of *Aec.*
'Blue Tango' (picture below)
Aechmea hybrid, *fasciata mariae-reginae* 'mini' x *fasciata*
Dyckia 'James Green' (picture above in the 'Program' section)
Dyckia 'James Red' (picture above in the 'Program' section)
Dyckia 'Silver Spurs'
Hohenbergia stellata (picture below)
Neoregelia 'Andy Price', 'Carol Johnson' and 'Mango Tango'
(pictured together below)
Neoregelia 'DeRolf', cultivar of *Neo. Johannis*
Neoregelia 'Lila' (picture below)
Neoregelia 'Margaret' (*Neo. carolinae* x *Neo. farinosa*; picture below)
Neoregelia 'Red Bird' (cv. of *Neo. carolinae*)
xNidumea 'Midnight' (*Nid. innocentii* x *Aec. fasciata*)

Bill Schumacher *Ananas* 'Lava Burst' (*A. cosmosus* var. *erectifolius*, formerly *A.*
lucidus)
Neoregelia 'Fire Bird'
Tillandsia capitata

Linda Sheetz *Dyckia* 'Yellow Glow' (registered name; also called 'Moon Glow' and
'Golden Glow'; picture above in the 'Program' section)
Vriesea warmingii (picture below)

SHOW AND TELL PLANTS



Aechmea "Blue Tango"



Cryptanthus 'Betty Ann
Prevatt'



Cryptanthus 'Lime Green'



Lutheria (formerly Vriesea) splendens



Aechmea 'Black Zombie'



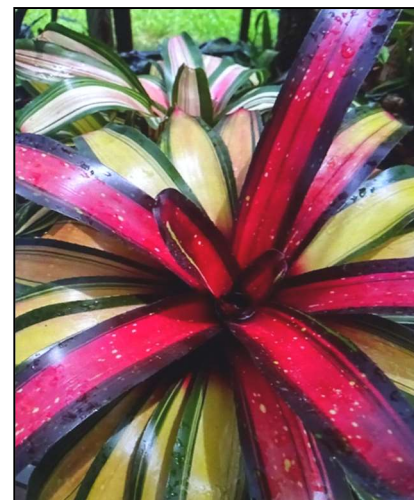
Aechmea dichlamydea var. trinitensis



Hohenbergia stellata



Neoregelia 'Lila'



Neoregelia 'Margaret'



Left to right, *Neoregelia* 'Andy Price', 'Carol Johnson', and 'Mango Tango'



Vriesea warmingii

THIS AND THAT

'Tis the Season--Mosquito, that is.

The rainy season is upon us, and it brings with it mosquitoes, and this is the time to think about proactive ways to deal with these pests. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water such as the water in bromeliads. The eggs hatch into larvae that turn into pupae that become adult mosquitos who repeat the cycle. This cycle is typically seven to 10 days long. There are various 'remedies' but each needs to be repeated periodically, such as every seven to 10 days to make certain the reproductive cycle is broken. These are some ways to treat them.

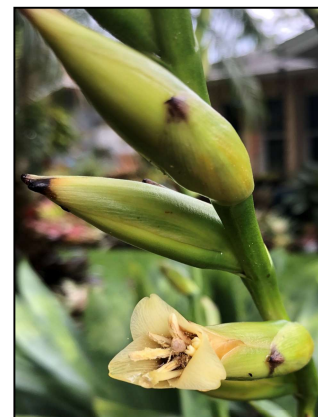
1. Use a hose to flush out the water—and mosquito larvae and eggs—in the plants once a week.
2. Scatter a larvicide such as BTI, which is granules of dried bacteria, into the center of the plant and at the base of leaf axils. The bacteria will hatch in the water and eat the larvae. BTI is sold as 'Mosquito Bits' and can be purchased on-line and at some hardware stores and nurseries. They are effective in the water from seven to 14 days. Apply more often as needed.
3. Some people coat the water in bromeliads with a small amount of food-grade cooking oil or spray. This covers the surface of the water and prevents larvae from breathing air.

Be aware that personnel from The Pinellas County Mosquito Control District have begun making visits to homes looking for mosquito larvae in standing water in containers and bromeliads. Someone from the county inspected our yard earlier this week and found mosquito larvae in a few bromeliads and in one birdbath. We told him that we flush water out of our bromeliads once a week with a hose. He gave us some mosquito literature and then with our permission treated the bromeliads and birdbaths with BTI. Be further aware that they have the authority to write citations and levy fines if they determine that mosquito abatement is not being conducted when mosquito larvae are found. For details about the county's authority, see the Pinellas County Code of Ordinances Article XI-Mosquito Control at this link:

https://library.municode.com/fl/pinellas_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeld=PTIIPIC_CO_CH58EN_ARTXIMOCO.

IN THE GARDEN

Below is a picture of a cluster of five *Vriesea gigantea* var. *seideliana* (aka 'Nova'). The cluster started with one medium size plant about six years ago when I placed it in a large ceramic pot. It proceeded to produce four pups that grew to about the same size as the mother plant before the mother put out this inflorescence this spring.



Vriesea gigantea var. *seideliana* (aka 'Nova')

BROMELIAD AND OTHER PLANT EVENTS, 2021

October 9-10, USF Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale **TENTATIVE**

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

October 29-31, Tropiflora Fall Festival

Tropiflora Nurser, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota (Tropiflora.com/events)

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