

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

August 2013

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[floridabromeliads.org](http://floridabromeliads.org)

## NEXT MEETING

### Date & Time:

Tuesday, August 6  
Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

### Location:

Hope Presbyterian Church  
1698 South Belcher Road  
Clearwater, Florida 33764

## Program

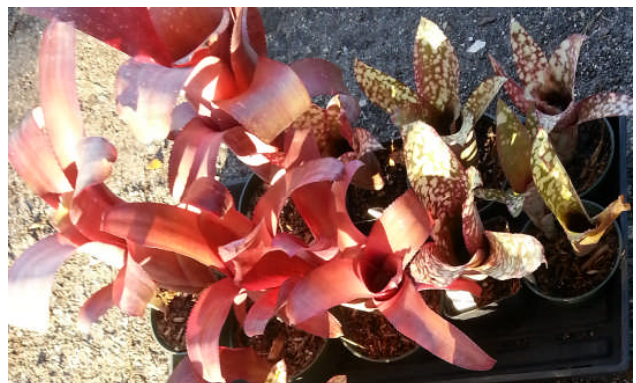
Brian Corey and Linda Sheetz will talk about the 'Cool Broms' bromeliad conference they attended last March in New Zealand that was hosted by the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand. The conference was the seventeenth in the series of Austral-Asian bromeliad conferences that are held every other year in that part of the world; the next one will be in Australia in 2015. The 'Cool Broms' conference was a three-day event that included 12 seminars by world-renowned bromeliad growers, tours of five private gardens and nurseries, and other items typical of such conferences, such as a banquet and a rare plant auction.

## Plant Sales

All members are welcome to sell bromeliads at the meeting.

## Special Raffle Event

Thanks to a generous donation by bromeliad grower Ben Sill of South Carolina, the August meeting raffle will offer approximately 50 plants from Mr. Sill's greenhouse, some of which are his own hybrids. Below are pictures of some of the plants that will be in the raffle. Be prepared to win one, or more, of these lovely plants. **NOTE:** Because of the large number of plants, members should **not** bring raffle plants to the August meeting but should instead bring them to the September meeting.



## LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### Program: Panel Discussion



The panel, left to right: Alton Lee, Barret Bassick, Dave Johnston, and Marty Baxley

At the July meeting Alton Lee headed a panel of Barret Bassick, Marty Baxley, and Dave Johnston, each of whom made a short presentation on a particular aspect of growing bromeliads and then took questions from the audience. Major topics included how to remove and pot pups (Marty), fertilizers for and diseases of bromeliads (Barret), grooming/preparing plants for sales and shows (Dave), and sunlight and weather in growing bromeliads (Alton).

While there are generally accepted guidelines for growing bromeliads, there are a variety of approaches to those guidelines. Below is a summary of the information gleaned from the presentations and discussions that includes a range of opinions offered, as well as from other sources. Products named and methods described are not intended as unqualified endorsements but rather as examples of what has worked for some growers. All growers are encouraged to try various products or methods to see which works best for them.

#### Removing and potting pups

- Remove pups when they are about one-third the size of the mother. If they have roots they can be removed when smaller.
- Some pups can be pulled off while others need to be cut with a serrated-edge knife or appropriate clippers.
- Place the pups in the same size pot as that used for the mother, position the pup in the center of the pot, and add an appropriate medium (soil mix). Do not put soil above the plants caudex (stem).
- Press the soil to ensure the plant is stable and can root better.
- A basic planting medium consists of 1/3 soil, 1/3 pine bark, and 1/3 perlite. A commercial soil suggested to use as the base soil is Fafard 3 or Fafard 3B, available from Garden and Hardware in Pinellas County and J.R. Johnson Supply in Ruskin. Others have used other potting soils successfully.
- For plants that prefer less moisture and more drainage, such as Vriesea, add more perlite to the soil mix. For plants that prefer more moisture, such as Pitcairnia, add sphagnum moss to the mix.
- Place an appropriate amount of a time-release fertilizer in the pot, either ¼ to ½ inch below the soil surface or at the depth of the roots.

#### Fertilizers

- While bromeliads can live on very few nutrients and excel at adapting to harsh niches and hard conditions, they can benefit from fertilizers in horticulture.
- Three active ingredients (macronutrients) in all fertilizers are nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium, listed on package as N-P-K, respectively, each with a number that indicates the percentage of that ingredient in the package.
- For a source of magnesium, use a weak solution of Epsom salts once a year.
- For a source of micronutrients, use Superthrive, one to two times a year.

- Some growers spray Miracle-Gro at half strength on their plants.
- Most growers prefer to use a time-release fertilizer such as Nutricote or Osmocote. (Nutricote is also sold as Dynamite which can be more expensive.) Some feel that Osmocote can leach out quickly and that Nutricote is more lasting.
- Caution: Plants can become leggy if fertilized too much.

#### Disease/Pests

- To treat bromeliads for the exotic bromeliad weevil that is killing bromeliads in central and southern Florida, use a pesticide formulated with Imidacloprid as the active ingredient. This compound is found in several of the Bayer Advanced pesticides. More information about weevil control can be found on the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies website, fcbs.org.
- For small infestations of scale, use alcohol applied to a Q-tip to remove individual scale. For heavy infestations, use an Imidacloprid product.
- The presence of spider mites and mealy bugs can be prevented or reduced by placing plants in an area with good air movement, which is what bromeliads prefer. To treat infestations of these insects, use Imidacloprid.

#### Growing Plants for Show and Sale

- Guidelines for growing plants for show and sale are essentially the same: clean, healthy plant, clean pot, no dead leaves, proper name tag, no dead blooms, and such.
- To clean water deposits on plants use white vinegar, Sprite, or soda water on a toothbrush to scrub the deposits (gently) and then rinse with clean water.

#### Weather and Light Conditions

- For winter cold fronts, use frost cloth to cover plants in the landscape that cannot be put in a warm shelter.
- For strong summer storms and hurricanes, put plants in a shelter, lay them on their sides, and/or if evacuating, take a box of your favorites to save.
- Bromeliads like filtered and shifting sunlight, as under an oak tree canopy or in a shade house, or soft, early light until noon. Some plants will tolerate full sun but most like a little protection.
- Afternoon sun is stronger, hotter than morning sun.
- Too little light (too much shade) can cause weak, fading or poorly colored foliage and leggy plants. It can also cause variegated plants to lose variegation and become solid green. Some bromeliads, such as Nidulariums and Guzmanias, prefer shade.
- If Vrieseas have elongated middle leaves, it is likely they are in too much shade and/or have received too much fertilizer.
- Too much light may cause bleaching or burning on the leaves.
- Some general rules for deciding proper light conditions based on plant characteristics are:
  - Low light, out of direct sun: thin, soft, flexible leaves with few or no spines, and/or deep green or dis-color (green on top and reddish below) leaves
  - Bright, filtered or indirect sunlight: brightly colored or silvery, somewhat stiff leaves with moderate spines
  - Partial to full sun: very stiff, succulent, thick leaves with heavy spines, and/or reddish or yellowish-green coloration.

#### **Show and Tell**

Reported by Helga Tarver

Marty Baxley	<i>Neoregelia</i> 'St. Bernard' (named for Marty's brother); inflorescences for four Alcantarea: <i>A. odorata</i> , <i>A. regina</i> , <i>A. geniculata</i> , and <i>A. 'Merlot'</i> (The last one is thought by some to be X <i>Vriecantarea</i> 'Merlot'.)
Mary Sue Beeler	<i>Ananas</i> 'Lava Burst' ( <i>Ananas lucida</i> variegated)
Alton Lee	<i>Vriesea erythrodactylon</i> ; <i>Aec. dactylina</i> ; <i>Aec. retusa</i> ; <i>Tillandsia</i> 'Creation'
Steve Littlefield	<i>Til. usneoides</i> ; <i>Til. utriculata</i> ; <i>Til. recurvata</i> , growing together on a tree branch
Franne Matwiczkyk	X <i>Neophytum</i> 'Firecracker' ( <i>Orthophytum navioides</i> x <i>Neo. 'Fireball'</i> )

Kathy Risley  
Linda Sheetz  
Helga Tarver

Neo. 'Heart's Blood'; Neo. 'Blueberry Tiger'  
*Vr. flammea*; Neo. 'Stars and Stripes'; *Til.* hybrid, possibly *Til. brachycaulos* x  
*fasciculata* registered as *Til.* 'Maria Teresa L'  
*Til. funkiana*; *Til. concolor* x 'Cuicatlan'

Below are pictures of Show and Tell plants.



*Aec. dactylina*



*Aec. retusa*



Neo. 'Stars and Stripes'



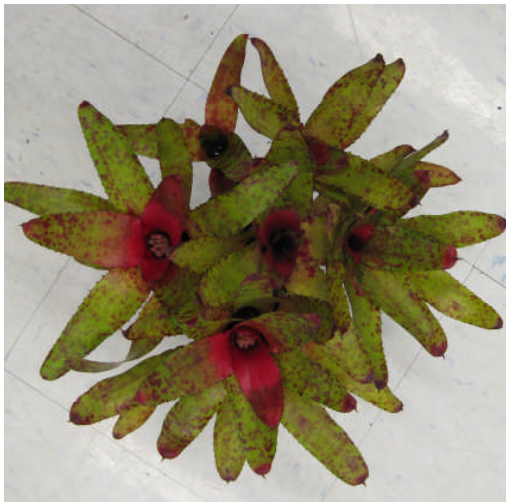
Neo. 'St. Bernard'



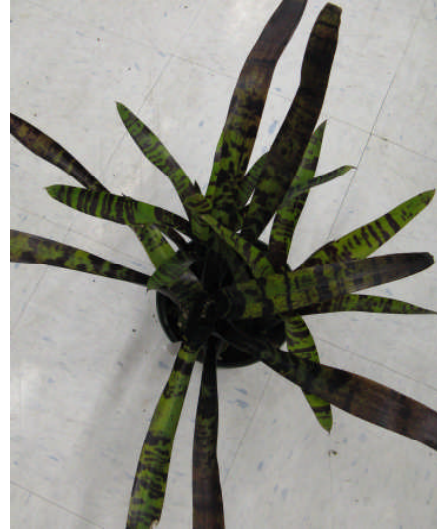
*Til.* 'Creation'



*Til.* hybrid (poss. *Til.* brachycaulos x fasciata)



*Neo.* 'Heart's Blood'



*Neo.* 'Blueberry Tiger'

#### THIS AND THAT

#### **Bromeliad Extravaganza® 2013, September 21 and 22**

Now only two months until the Bromeliad Extravaganza 2013. Have you sent in your registration form? Have you made your hotel reservations? Forms and information are available on our website, [floridabromelids.org](http://floridabromelids.org).

#### **New Members**

We welcome two new members John Orr and John Ventimiglia who joined at the July meeting. It is my understanding they were members of our society quite some time ago. We are pleased they have re-joined.

## Nominating Committee

This is the time of year we put together a Nominating Committee to present names in October for election of our officers and trustees for the next calendar year, 2014. Contact Susan Sousa if you are interested in serving on this committee and/or running for an office.

### UPCOMING EVENTS, 2013

#### August 10, Bromeliad Bash

University of South Florida Botanical Gardens, Tampa, FL ([cas.usf.edu/garden](http://cas.usf.edu/garden))

#### August 17-18, Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society Sale

The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL ([fcbs.org/events](http://fcbs.org/events))

#### **September 20-21, Bromeliad Extravaganza® 2013**

The Holiday Inn Harborside, Indian Rocks Beach, hosted by the FWCBS and sponsored by the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (contact Judy Lund at [glund@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:glund@tampabay.rr.com))

#### September 27-29, Sarasota Bromeliad Society Annual Show and Sale

Banquet and Rare Plant Auction on the 28<sup>th</sup>, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota (<http://sarasotabromeliadsociety.org>)

#### October 4-6, Tropiflora Fall Festival

Tropiflora Nursery, 3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267 ([tropiflora.com](http://tropiflora.com))

#### October 12-13, USF Fall Plant Sale

University of South Florida Botanical Gardens, Tampa, FL ([cas.usf.edu/garden](http://cas.usf.edu/garden))

#### December 6-8, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Show and Sale

Terrie Park, 3451 Marion Street, Fort Myers ([bpreattpcc@aol.com](mailto:bpreattpcc@aol.com))

### 2013 FWCBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Susan Sousa, <a href="mailto:susansousa1@yahoo.com">susansousa1@yahoo.com</a>
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Website: [floridabromeliads.org](http://floridabromeliads.org)

Contact: Judy Lund, 727-439-7782

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