

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2020

*Celebrating over 66 Years in Bromeliads*

*fwcbs.org*



## August 2020 Newsletter

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### NEXT MEETING

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**Date:** ~~Tuesday, August 4~~ CANCELLED

Once again, our monthly meeting has been cancelled due to the ongoing health concerns associated with the COVID-19 epidemic. In addition, the church where we meet continues to keep their campus closed, which includes the rooms and facilities that groups such as ours use. Monthly meetings appear unlikely until the church opens their campus and it is safe for our group to meet.

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### LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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#### LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM

There is no program to report for the previous meeting that was cancelled due the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. This issue of our monthly newsletter features summaries of two previous presentations that are related, both on the subject of the genus *Cryptanthus*.

#### October 2012 Program

Carole Richtmyer's presentation titled *The Earth Stars* was a well-organized and comprehensive talk about the genus *Cryptanthus*, on which she had vast experience gleaned from many years of growing and hybridizing them. Prior to her talk, Carole and her husband Rick, who are from Texas, had been in Florida to attend a World Bromeliad Conference in Orlando. We were fortunate they graciously remained in the area afterward and gave us their time to visit our group. Her are some items from the presentation.



Carole Richtmyer

- *Cryptanthus* are primarily terrestrial in nature and prefer to be in soil. As such, they should be grown as potted plants. Some *Cryptanthus* are saxicolous (i.e., grow on rocks).
- They are genetically related to the genus *Orthophytum*.
- *Cryptanthus* native habitats are found within limited areas in Brazil including the Atlantic rainforest and drier rocky areas.
- While their ideal temperature range is within 60 to 80°F and they are typically damaged below 50°F, some can adapt to a wider temperature range.
- *Cryptanthus* like a lot of water but they do not like to sit in it. Use a potting mix that has good drainage and contains coarse sand, tree fern, perlite, and/or orchid bark. Having said that, there are some varieties that like hot and dry conditions.

- Pups grow at the leaf axils (Ex: *Cryptanthus bivittatus*, below), on stolons (Ex: *Cryptanthus* 'Cascade', below), or at the base on the parent plant and should not be removed unless they are at least 1/3 the size of the mother plant. Some varieties release pups by themselves when the pups are sufficiently mature.



*Cryptanthus* 'Cascade'



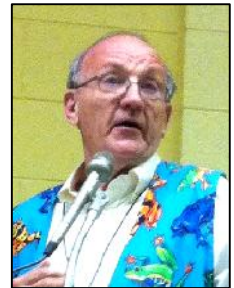
*Cryptanthus bivittatus*

- When planting a pup, remove the small leaves at the bottom of the plant to allow for root formation. Be sure to stabilize the plant in the pot to keep it from wobbling about and to allow for proper root development.

For more information about *Cryptanthus*, be sure to visit the Cryptanthus Society website at [cryptanthussociety.org](http://cryptanthussociety.org).

### January 2019 Program

In his presentation *Cryptanthus: Wonderful, Overlooked Bromeliads*, Alton Lee discussed how this genus is often dismissed among bromeliads lovers because it is so different from other genera, but that it is their difference that makes them appealing to true *Cryptanthus* lovers. Below is a summary of the presentation.



- Nurseries often sell *Cryptanthus* erroneously as succulents.
- *Cryptanthus* are also called 'earth stars' because of the star-like shape typical of most of them, which is different from most other bromeliads.
- The name '*Cryptanthus*' comes from the Greek words *cryptos* meaning 'hidden' and *anthos* meaning 'flower'.
- They come in a variety of shapes, colors, and patterns, as seen in the photographs below.
- They usually have serrated leaves, with wavy margins, that are from 3 to 6 inches in length. Some can be up to 12 inches.
- They can have sharp zigzag patterns and are usually strongly banded or frosted with gray, white, or bronze, and many have pink to red background color.
- They do not have a bloom stalk but rather small white, light green or pink flowers in the center of the plant.
- They are a terrestrial plant and the growing medium should be one that drains well but retains some moisture.

- They have a shallow root system and are best grown in a shallow pot with a wide mouth. Do not under-pot.
- They are endemic to the Brazilian rain forest where they grow on the forest floor, protected from the sun by the canopy.
- They like bright light, but not full sun. Ideal light would be indirect, such as a north-facing window.
- Fertilize as needed, typically February to November, with a 14-14-14 fertilizer.
- They need good air circulation in their habitat. When they are grown in a well ventilated area they are seldom bothered by disease or insects. Otherwise, common pests are scale and mealy bugs.

Below are pictures of some of the varieties of *Cryptanthus*.



*Crypt. 'Key Lime'*



*Crypt. 'Maggie Lee'*



*Cryptanthus argyrophyllus*



*Cryptanthus glaziovii*



*Cryptanthus 'Red Eye Gravy'*

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## THIS AND THAT

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### **Bromeliad Trees with Plant Rings**

Need more space for your bromeliad collection and other plants you collect? You can achieve that by going vertical with a 'plant tree' made with plant rings for branches like those pictured below. These allow you to stack your plants and save ground space. To make the trees, secure a length of PVC or metal pipe in the ground or a bucket of concrete, slip the rings onto the pipe and arrange them about the pipe as desired or suitable for the plant size. The trees can be moved around as needed, and the plants are easy to remove and replace. It is hard to find the rings commercially and when you do they can be a little pricey. The good news is that member Marty Baxley has made the rings in the past and currently has about 100 of them left over. Contact Marty at 727-504-8951 or at [susiebaxley@verizon.net](mailto:susiebaxley@verizon.net) for more information.



Examples of bromeliad trees made with plant rings for branches

### Clone vs. Sport

At one of our meetings sometime ago, Kathy Risley showed us her *Neoregelia* 'Red Eye' with two different pups (offsets) from the same mother plant (picture on the right). The subsequent FWC newsletter described both the pups as 'clones'. Derek Butcher (editor of the *South Australia Bromeliad Gazette*) provided the following correct terminology for the mutated pup. "Your puzzle regarding the two different sorts of offsets is best explained by using the word 'sport' rather than 'clone'. A clone is an offset but when you get a mutation like this, it is a sport." Derek suggests the use of the word 'sport' as a temporary measure to cover aberrant offsets. Definitions for these terms when used to describe offsets as provided at the website [thefreelibrary.com/Terminology](http://thefreelibrary.com/Terminology) are below.



*Neoregelia* "Red Eye"

- clone: two or more individuals, originally derived from one plant by asexual propagation (for example, as an offset), which remain genetically identical.
- sport: an apparent mutation which has occurred on part of a plant (for example, a variegated offset)

## IN THE GARDEN THIS MONTH



*Tillandsia* 'Purple Passion'



*Neoregelia* 'Strawberry Jamboree'



*Tillandsia juncifolia*

On the right is a picture of a cluster of one of the several cultivars of *Goudaea* (formerly *Vriesea*) *ospinae* v. *gruberi*. They are similar to each other for the most part and have names that include 'Smudge Grub', 'Ocean Mist', 'White Form', and 'Hawaiian Magic'.



*Goudaea ospinae* var *gruberi*  
'Smudge Grub'



Hohenbergia 'Purple Majesty'

### UPCOMING EVENTS, 2020

Plant events such as shows and sales typically scheduled for summer and fall have been cancelled or postponed. This section will be updated as more information becomes available. If you hear of any plant events, please let me know. Here are two that are scheduled to take place.

August 8, Edison-Ford Winter Estates Plant Sale, Ft. Myers, FL  
([www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/calendar](http://www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/calendar))

August 15-16, Seminole Bromeliad Society and Tropical Plant Society Semi-Annual Sale, The Garden Club of Sanford, Sanford, FL ([www.sanfordgardenclub.com/sbtps](http://www.sanfordgardenclub.com/sbtps))

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