

# FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2022

*Celebrating over 68 Years in Bromeliads*

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## November 2022 Newsletter

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### NEXT MEETING

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

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### PROGRAM

There will be two speakers at the November meeting, husband and wife Tom and Carol Wolfe. Their presentation titled *Bromeliad in Paradise* is a humorous, light-hearted and fun PowerPoint program featuring beautiful, brightly colored specimen bromeliads photographed by Carol and grown by Tom. The photographs also include pictures taken at various gardens, bromeliad shows and venues around the country. For the first time, Tom and Carol are teaming up on the narration to present interesting and humorous stories and experiences with bromeliads and the people that love them.

Tom joined the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay (BGTB) in 1965 and became an accredited BSI Bromeliad Judge in 1982 and is now a Master Judge. He served on the BSI Board of Directors for 14 years as Director, Secretary, Vice President, and two terms as President. Between them, Tom and Carol have held every office in the BGTB, and Tom is currently serving as a Director and Carol as Vice President. Carol was editor of the monthly BGTB Newsletter for eight years. She has been editor of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies Newsletter since 2014.

### 2023 Officers and Trustees Election

At the November meeting, we will be electing our officers and trustees for 2023. The slate of nominees is as follows.

President: Molly Mines  
Vice President: Karen Mills  
Secretary: Suzanne Bogacki  
Treasurer: Gary Lund  
Trustee: Dennis Hoffman, to serve a three-year term, thru 2025  
Trustee: Judy Lund, to serve the last year of Sandy Holloway's term, thru 2023

Other members can also be nominated for one of these positions if they would like. Note: If you wish to nominate someone other than yourself, the other person must be aware of and consent to the nomination.

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## LAST MONTH'S MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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### PROGRAM

The speaker at last month's meeting was **Dennis Cathcart**, owner of Tropiflora Nursery in Sarasota, FL. His presentation, titled *A Naturalist Visits Cuba*, was a collection of images from the three trips he and his wife Linda made to Cuba this year. While general tourism is still prohibited in Cuba, Dennis was able to visit under one of the sanctioned trips Cuba allows such as educational and scientific. In his case, the purpose was to study the island's herpetology, i.e., amphibians and reptiles. Despite the major thrust of the expeditions being reptiles, and to a lesser degree, birds, while there he also worked on compiling a checklist of Cuban bromeliads he saw. To date, in Cuba there are 63 species of bromeliads in three subfamilies and 11 genera, and it will take time and more trips there before they can be more fully identified.

According to Dennis, Cuba has nearly half the landmass of the entire Caribbean and is, by far, the richest in biodiversity, with close to 7,000 plant species, half of which are endemic, found nowhere else in the world. There are nearly 250 reptile and amphibian species, 398 birds, and only a few land mammals, but some interesting ones. Sadly, nearly half of all Cuban animals are endangered, and many have gone extinct.

They did non-stop day and night explorations during their eight-day stay, and some parts of the trip, such as the hinterlands of the del Rio and Cienfuegos provinces, were grueling. They met the Cuban people, stayed with families, and ate at their tables. While they came back a little battered and bruised, they enjoyed their Cuban experience, and are energized to continue their fascinating work there with plants and animals.

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## THIS AND THAT

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### Zap

Barb Gardner reports that she brought her basket of *Neoregelia compacta* into her house to protect them from approaching Hurricane Ian, and a day or so later returned the basket to its original outside location. A few days after that she noticed what appeared to be 'burn' spots on some of the leaves (pictures on right).



*Neoregelia compacta* with leaf burns

Dennis Cathcart said they had probably been ‘zapped’, the result of a sudden change in temperature and/or other atmospheric conditions during a storm. He said he had seen that phenomenon over the years in his Tropiflora Nursery greenhouses, most commonly with *Neoregelia* and *Aechmea*. He added that bromeliads that grew outside the greenhouses seemed to escape this type of damage.

A search of the internet turned up only one reference to bromeliad ‘zap’ and that was on a web page called ‘Dendroboard’. It said it is not a common occurrence, was due to an atmospheric anomaly, and the mechanism for the ‘burn’ was yet unexplained.

### **Albinism and Bromeliads**

Occasionally a bromeliad will have a pup that is an albino, that is, it did not produce chlorophyll due to a genetic mutation. If they are fully albino, they will have no hint of green pigment (i.e., chlorophyll), and if only partially albino, they can create a variegated plant. The process of photosynthesis requires chlorophyll for the plant to produce its own food and if it is not present, the plant is unable to absorb and produce energy for growth from sunlight.

Albino pups left on the mother plant can mature and stay healthy, because they can get nutrition from the mother, but they will eventually die as the mother plant gets closer to flowering. If they are removed from the mother plant, their source of nutrition, they will not thrive and will die.

Curiously, I have an albino *Neoregelia* ‘Magali’ that I retrieved from a trash pile at Grant Groves’ nursery in 2016 as a single plant that is still thriving today. Grant is stunned that it is still alive. Below is a picture of this albino ‘Magali’ and a picture of one in normal coloration.



*Neoregelia* ‘Magali’ albino



*Neoregelia* ‘Magali’ with normal color

### **Sun Light and Bromeliads**

Many bromeliads can thrive in both partial sun/shade and full sun with the difference in light conditions displayed in leaf coloration. Barb Gardner sent in a picture of her *Tillandsia* ‘Sparkler’ (picture below on the left) that she grows in part shade/part sun to show the contrast between it and the same plant shown in the September newsletter that is grown in full sun (picture below on the right).



*Tillandsia* 'Sparkler' grown in part shade/part sun



*Tillandsia* 'Sparkler' grown in full sun

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### IN THE GARDEN

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Below are pictures of a *Tillandsia krukoffiana* that I acquired from Grant Groves in 2011 that has finally put out an inflorescence, 11 years later. It can be bittersweet for me when some of my bromeliads bloom, especially if the stalk is not very spectacular and the plant is a lovely specimen without one because I know that once they bloom, they will die. (In expectation of this, I often buy a younger specimen of the same plant as a replacement for the soon-to-expire one.)



*Tillandsia krukoffiana*



*Tillandsia krukoffiana* resembles an *Alcantarea* in both size and soft broad leaves. It is endemic to Northwest Bolivia where it is found growing as a terrestrial in rich open places at elevation of about 6,000 feet.

The inflorescence on my plant, while stunning, was a bit of a disappointment because it chose to grow horizontally and not vertically. On the right is a picture of the *Tillandsia krukoffiana* that Grant Groves displayed at the 2012 World Bromeliad Conference in Orlando with its vertical inflorescence that is at least 6 feet tall.



*Tillandsia krukoffiana*

## **BROMELIAD AND OTHER PLANT EVENTS, 2022**

November 4-5, Mead Botanical Garden Plant Sale and Fall Fest  
Mead Botanical Garden, 1300 South Denning Drive, Winter Park  
(<https://www.bromeliadorslando.com/activities>)

November 19-20, Annual Edison Ford Fall Plant Festival  
Edison and Ford Winter Estates, Ft. Myers  
(<https://www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/events/garden-festival/>)

December 3-4, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Annual Sale  
Edison and Ford Winter Estates, Ft. Myers  
(<https://www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/events/bromeliad-sale/>)

### **2022 FWCBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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