

# The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, January 9th, 1:30p.m.  
Wm. A. Finney Memorial Garden Center  
837 N. Oleander Ave., Daytona Beach 32118

January, 2011

## Brrrrrrrrrr!

**President – Jay Thurrott – 386/761-4804**  
**Vice President – Jerry O’Keefe – 407/767-2442**  
**Secretary – Audrey Hayes – 407/421-4026**  
**Treasurer – Eve Krauth – 386/763-2084**

December has finally found the exit and we can start fresh with January! What a December it’s been – the coldest on record for Volusia County. According to my tally, there were 8 days where my thermometer in Port Orange registered temperatures below freezing. Perhaps more important than the number of days below freezing is the number of hours on each of those days when the temperature was below 32. That’s what really causes the vegetative damage and I’m afraid that this “Pre-New Year’s” cold persisted for quite a few hours.



12/15/10 temperature in Port Orange at 7a.m.

It’s too soon to tell, but I’m guessing that some of us have either lost bromeliads to the cold or our plants have suffered some leaf damage as a result of it. There are still a few more months of potential cold weather to this

Winter (after all, Winter only started a few weeks ago!), so don’t let your guard down – we may have to protect our plants again when the jet stream dips south and the next arctic air mass heads our way.

A secondary danger to your plants occurs now after you remove the coverings that kept frost off their leaves or when you move your bromeliads from the garage to go back outside. A sudden increase in light levels can damage these plants almost as badly as the cold temperatures that you have been trying so hard to protect them from - so try to be aware of the amount of sunlight they will be receiving any time that bromeliads are moved to a new location. I don’t want to suggest more work for any of you, but you may wish to consider moving your plants in several steps, gradually increasing their exposure to strong light and giving them an opportunity to acclimate with each step....and, as if dealing with cold and changing light levels isn’t enough for us to worry about – give them a little water. They’re beginning to look pretty dry about now. Terrestrials like the Cryptanthus have a particularly hard time of it at this time of year when the humidity drops off to levels we only dream of reaching in the hot, steamy Summer months so be sure to give them a bit of a drink of water as soon as possible. And while

you are at it, hang around long enough to observe whether that water is being retained in the potting mix or is just running out of the drain holes in the bottom of the pot. If that's the case, you will either need to set the pot in a saucer of water until the mix picks it up or consider repotting with some fresh mix. Most potting mixes don't hold up forever, particularly after a warm, wet Summer (the organics decompose fairly quickly) so this is a good time to think about repotting your bromeliads to give them a fresh start when Spring arrives. Notice that I said to *think* about repotting – this isn't the best time of the year for this activity, but a little effort spent on planning can make this chore less unpleasant.

What type of mix will you use? Do you need more pots? Should you add some time release fertilizer to the mix? How are your plant tags holding up(it may be time to replace them)? Do you have a comfortable area where you can pot up your plants? These are all things to consider before you begin repotting.

It's also not the best time for separating offsets since growing conditions around this part of Florida are probably the worst of any time of the year. Instead, decide which plants you intend to separate and which ones you wish to encourage to grow into clumps (ok – 'multiple specimens' is probably a more acceptable term). Do you have an appropriate pair of garden shears for separating bromeliads? Now is a good time to acquire a pair and if you already have a nice pair of shears, see that they are sharpened before you put them to work.

What should you be doing for your bromeliads this month? Give them a drink of water, keep them from getting sun-burned, and keep them from freezing. Other than that, throw another log on the fire and settle in with a good book – you may as well be comfortable while you're waiting for Spring to arrive!

### Last month's meeting

We had our annual party in December and thank you Jean for making the arrangements for our Christmas party to be held at the clubhouse at Colony in the Wood! I expected this to be another in our series of wonderful Christmas parties, but this one set a new standard! It turned out to be a bit of a rainy day (as I recall, it rained the last time that we met at Colony in the Wood also – what's up with that?), but we need the rain and nobody complained.



Lots and lots of good food ready for lunch

Wonderful facilities, great food, great entertainment (thank you Eretta for your film production!) and great plants to share.



Jean won the prize for best wrapped gift with her basket on the left. The kitty litter bag was actually a gift wrapped plant as well!

I think everyone had a terrific time – I know I did! In fact, everyone enjoyed meeting at

Colony in the Wood so much that we've asked Jean about the possibility of having our meetings there on a regular basis. I am pleased to announce that we have now been offered the use of the Colony in the Wood clubhouse each month from 1-4pm! Of course, we will have to put things in order after each meeting so, if this is something the club would like to pursue, we will need to establish a "clean-up" committee to make sure that we leave everything as spotless as when we found it.



Cleaning up the left-overs. There weren't a lot of left-overs!

### **This month's meeting**

It's time once again to elect officers for the coming year. Our nominating committee has a slate of officers that they will be recommending for consideration, but that's not saying that nominations can't be made from the floor. Want to serve in an officer position? This is your opportunity.

Many of you didn't have an opportunity to see all of Eretta's video of some of our members' collections and those that did, probably couldn't hear the narration on the puny laptop computer speakers, so we'll try showing this again this month – with some louder speakers.

Don't forget "Show and Tell". This is a great opportunity to bring in a plant that you're especially proud of, or even one that you're just plain disgusted with and share your experience with the rest of the group. We have a wealth of knowledge in our members – this is your chance to ask questions about

plant names, best growing conditions, concerns or any other questions that may arise.

### **What's in Bloom**

In a word – *Billbergias*. This is the time of year that *Billbergias* usually put on their show and what showy blooms they can produce! Unfortunately, one of the distinguishing characteristics of this Genus is that their blooms are quite short lived...at least for a bromeliad. This is also the time of year when there are few bromeliad shows, so it's not common to see a *Billbergia* in bloom at a judged show. That's really too bad because these blooms are usually quite beautiful. The *Helicoides* may be the most remarkable of the *Billbergias* with their spiraling flower petals that give the name to this sub-group. Great blooms, but the *Helicoides* also tend to be the most cold-sensitive, so if you are growing any of these you should keep a close watch on the weather!

### **Upcoming Events:**

#### **March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

The Bromeliad Society of Broward County and the GFWC Plantation Woman's Club – Bromeliad show and sale. 9-5 Sat., 9-4 Sun. at Volunteer Park Community Center, 12050 W. Sunrise Blvd., Plantation, Fl. 33323

#### **April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011**

Spring Master Gardener's sale at the Volusia County Fairgrounds. Be sure to mark this on your calendars – it's a ½ day sale and FECBS's sole fundraiser for the year!

#### **April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay Show and Sale in conjunction with Tampa Federation of Garden Clubs Show  
2629 Bayshore Boulevard, Tampa, Florida.

#### **April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

South Florida Bromeliad Society show and sale at Fairchild Gardens in Miami

**April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Sarasota Bromeliad Society show and sale at  
Selby Gardens in Sarasota

