

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, June 13th 1:30p.m.
Wm. A. Finney Memorial Garden Center
837 N. Oleander Ave., Daytona Beach 32118

June, 2010

Summer Has Arrived!

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

I know, according to the calendar Summer doesn’t *officially* begin until June 21st, but as far as I’m concerned, when I have to turn on the air conditioning in my car on the way to work in the morning...it’s here!

Last month’s meeting...

was not one for members of weight-watchers anonymous. Between the Mothers Day cake from Publix and Bill’s outstanding cheesecake, I think we all left the meeting a little heavier than when we arrived! Many thanks also to Sudi Hipsley for bringing in an great assortment of “spare” bromeliads for the members. Also last month we voted to offer to host the 2011 Extravaganza and the International Cryptanthus Show. A committee was formed of Jerry, Bill, and Jay to look into accommodations and I expect that we’ll have something to report at the next meeting.

This month’s meeting

Through a scheduling mix up we weren’t able to have Tom Wolfe join us last month, but Tom has assured us that he will be at our meeting place on the 13th and he will be bringing plants for sale, so be sure to bring your wallets and purses this month!

Tom and his wife Carole live in Lutz, Fl. in the Tampa area and have a long-term involvement with bromeliads. Tom owns a landscaping business and specializes in using bromeliads in the landscape. In his spare time he has been active in Florida bromeliad societies for many years, serving in various officer positions in the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay and in the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. At the international level Tom is a past president of the BSI and was instrumental in establishing a world headquarters for that organization at Selby Gardens in Sarasota.

The Halifax Council of Garden Clubs’

annual luncheon went very well last month. Each year one of the member clubs is asked to host this event and this year it fell on us. Many thanks to Jerry O’Keefe for arranging the luncheon with the LPGA restaurant “the Grill”. I recommend this restaurant to anyone looking to have a luncheon for a large group of people. The food is reasonably priced, excellent quality and the service staff could not be nicer! Jerry also manned a ‘money tree’ fund raiser that brought in some much needed cash for the Council of Garden Clubs. Congratulations also to our own Joan

Campbell who was elected 2nd Vice President during their business meeting.

Each year at this end-of-the-year Council of Garden Clubs business meeting the president of each club presents a report of their activities over the previous 12 months. The following is the report that was presented for FECBS and, I think, pretty well sums up what our group is all about:

2009-2010 Year End Summary -
FECBS

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society (FECBS) has enjoyed another productive year and its membership continues to be active and growing.

Meetings continue to be held on a monthly basis throughout the year at the Council building and follow the format of a short business meeting (there is always business to be taken care of) followed by a very popular "show and tell" period in which club members bring in their bromeliads to show the rest of the group and discuss either cultural problems encountered or successes achieved. This is usually followed by a raffle of donated plants prior to our monthly program – which may include a workshop, guest speaker (we had guest speakers nearly every month from other areas of Florida this past year), or field trip to a member's garden. This year along with two other bromeliad societies we rented a bus and traveled to Tropiflora, a commercial bromeliad nursery on the west coast. Although it was a rainy day, no one seemed to mind and, in fact, this trip was so well received that plans are being made to travel again this year to another nursery in Venice (Florida). We must be doing something right because membership is growing, attendance at meetings has been so high that we have run out of seats on several occasions...but that is a good problem to be faced with and one that I think we can deal with.

This year 4 of our club members committed to the series of schools spanning a two year period to become accredited bromeliad show judges. To date, they have successfully completed the first two schools and participated as student judges in at least one of the standard shows held in the state. Several of them have been invited to judge in the upcoming Bromeliad Society International World Conference in New Orleans this Summer and we wish them well in their training and judging experiences.

Our club's monthly newsletter keeps members abreast of shows and sales throughout the state in addition to providing culture information and growing tips helpful to this area. The newsletter is posted on-line at the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies website (fcbs.org) and has drawn comments from around the country and as far away as Australia and Singapore.

Once again we were invited to participate in the Volusia County Master Gardeners Spring Sale. This has been our sole fundraiser each year and continues to be successful, adequate to fund club activities throughout the year, and a good deal of fun to participate in...and that continues to be the emphasis of FECBS. This is an organization dedicated to learning more about this unusual group of plants, protecting the Florida native bromeliads through donations, participating in state and international organizations and encouraging public interest in growing and enjoying bromeliads, but above all...FECBS is dedicated to having enjoyable meetings and events.

Incidentally, the new president of the Halifax Council of Garden Clubs has asked if we can help them out next month by moving a number of the flower show props and properties that are upstairs in the Council building where we meet. They are looking to have a few of us move wooden stands, boxes and etc. downstairs so, if you wouldn't mind,

please stick around after the July meeting and give us a hand.

Bromeliad Extravaganza

At the last Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies meeting it was decided to not have an Extravaganza this year. That will probably make people more anxious than ever to attend the next one in 2011 – and FECBS is volunteering to host that event. It should be a lot of fun, we're expecting very good attendance...and if we can combine that effort with the hosting of the International Cryptanthus Show, I think it will be a bromeliad event that people will talk about for many years after!

When is a bromeliad truly dead?

You hear it all the time: "after a bad Winter, don't be in a hurry to discard bromeliads that appear dead". I'm as guilty of it as anyone else though – when the leaves on my plants take on that papery, off-white appearance and the plant appears to be dead, I toss it into the discard pile. Sometimes, however there is still a spark of life left in that poor abused bromeliad that's just waiting for the opportunity to be fanned into flame.

8 years ago I had come across a fallen *Tillandsia balbisiana* in a parking lot in LaBelle, Fl. that had been run over enough times that the plant not only looked papery, but was the thickness of a sheet of paper as well. For some reason, I picked it up, put it in my pocket and set it aside in an empty pot when I got home. Many months later I noticed a tiny offset forming at the base of the plant which eventually matured, bloomed and the plant went on to produce numerous generations of healthy *T. balbisianas*. Maybe it's not the most spectacular plant in my collection, but the story associated with it, it's amazing tenaciousness to life, makes it particularly dear to me.

That should have been a lesson to me, but after this past Winter's unusually long spell of below-freezing weather I felt that

those bromeliads in my collection that looked dead, probably were. Now, over 6 months later I'm finally getting around to cleaning up some of the casualties and although I'm reasonably sure that the plants that rotted off at the base and scattered there leaves over the surrounding area are dead, I'm also finding signs of life in some surprising areas.

This first photo is of a Neo. 'indecora' (the name is incorrect, but that's another story altogether) that was in my front yard, a declining 'mother plant' that certainly appeared to be dead until I began pulling the dead leaves away and uncovered a strong, healthy offset with a good start on life. The photos below show a fine looking offset rising from the base of the old plant.



Neoregelia that was headed for the trash pile



Healthy offset rising from the dead leaves

This second set of photos shows a *Billbergia leptopoda* that I had inadvertently left out in the cold this past Winter. When I found the pot, the plant appeared to be too severely damaged to recover and I set it aside to dispose of later...promptly forgetting about it again until this past weekend when I noticed a pup that had formed at the base of the plant, barely several millimeters high but looking pretty good at this point. Once again, procrastination has paid off! Don't be in a hurry to discard those damaged or apparently dead bromeliads, they may still have some life left in them – even 6 months after the freeze!



A very sad looking *Billbergia leptopoda*!



Like a phoenix rising from the ashes – a *B. leptopoda* pup is sprouting from the base of the parent plant.

Gloves

If anyone needs additional pairs of garden gloves, we will have the large and extra large sizes available (think ‘*medium*’ and ‘*large*’, but still on the small size) at this month’s meeting. Any color you want (as long as it’s black) for only \$3/pair.

Upcoming Events:

July 10, 11

Tropical Plant Fair at USF Botanical Gardens. 4202 E. fowler Ave., Tampa 10a.m. to 3p.m.

July 10, 11

International Mango Festival at Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Coral Gables 9:30-4:30 each day.

July 28th – Aug. 10th, 2010

“Bromeliads in the Big Easy”

BSI World Conference in New Orleans.

It won't be long now! Miss this event and it will two years before you have another opportunity. For more information, check the following web site:

http://www.gnobromeliads.com/GNOBS_WBC2010.htm

