

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next meeting Sunday, June 12th, 1:30p.m.

Colony in the Wood – club house

4000 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange 32129

June, 2011

Water

President – Bradley Rauch – 386/767-8937

Vice President – Rick Ryals – 386/679-8700

Secretary – Eretta Morris – 386/677-9557

Treasurer – Eve Krauth – 386/763-2084

We're either faced with too much of it or not enough.

Springtime in our area is often a time of little or no rain and lots of wind – perfect conditions for wildfires and that's why Spring is "fire season" in Florida. Many of you will recall that 1998 was a particularly bad year for wildfires and the local news had an eye-catching promotion titled "Florida on Fire!" that appeared to be designed to frighten everyone. Calandra and I were on vacation in Arizona during the worst of it and we found it a bit un-nerving to see Daytona Beach headlined in the national news. Even more so when we boarded the plane to return and found many of the seats taken up by fire fighters in full gear, heading to Florida to help out! This year once again, as soon as Spring arrived, the rains disappeared and small fires broke out often enough and close enough that the smell of smoke in the morning has become a common-place occurrence. Hopefully, the rainy season will begin soon and we can shift mental gears from worrying about drought to worrying about too much rain. In the meantime, if you haven't already – pay close attention to your bromeliads' watering needs. Yes, bromeliads usually can and will survive extreme dry conditions, but that doesn't mean that they like it or that they will look

very nice as a result of being subjected to extreme dessication. The large Aechmeas or Neoregelias like *Neo. johannis* often can store significant amounts of water in the bases of their many leaves and that will carry them through periodic dry spells but the small rosettes of tightly held leaves that make the *Neo. ampulacea* group so attractive have little in the way of water storage potential and as a result, these plants suffer greatly in dry weather. Pay special attention to your *Cryptanthus* during these times – you certainly don't want to let their extensive, fibrous root system dry out if you are planning on entering them in the upcoming *Cryptanthus* show in November!

And while we're on the subject of water – what do you know about the water that you use on your bromeliads? Is it "city" water (water from a central, public utility provider) and, if so, is it from a deep well or a shallow well)? Is it rain water that you have collected and stored for the purpose of watering your plants? Or is it water that has passed through a home water treatment device? All of these possibilities have their own impacts on the quality of water that you are using – and by "quality" I don't necessarily mean that it is good or bad, but simply that the chemical constituents may be quite different for each of these water sources. "City" water in all of

Florida and in most parts of the U.S. means that the water has been disinfected to control bacterial growth. The most common disinfectant used is chlorine and the levels of chlorine present can vary considerably depending on where you live or even the time of year (amounts of chlorine added to water are usually increased in hot weather and decreased in the cooler months). High chlorine levels may have a detrimental effect on plants and animals – I can even remember an instance when the family cat backed away from a dish of water that had been freshly drawn from the tap because the smell of chlorine was so strong. Fortunately, chlorine dissipates with time and therefore, a simple remedy is to draw the water that you intend to use a day earlier and let it stand overnight – much of the chlorine will be gone. Check with your water supplier to learn more about the chemical quality of your water – most of them will be glad that you asked and only too happy to provide information regarding it.

Well waters in Florida are generally either pumped from deep aquifers that can be quite heavily mineralized and leave white deposits on leaves and pots (they also smell like rotten eggs due to trapped sulfur gases) or they are drawn from very shallow water sources that rarely have much in the way of gases and dissolved minerals (they smell much better) but tend to stain everything they touch (including the side of your white stucco house or new pearly white automobile) with a rusty brown color. This is due to dissolved iron.

Rain waters that are collected in barrels or other containers generally are not mineralized, but depending on how this water is collected and the amount of debris from fallen vegetation that comes with it in the form of leaves, pollen or dead insects, you may find that this water stimulates algae growth. Other difficulties to address include the potential for mosquitos that are attracted to any standing water as well as the sheer weight of large volumes of water. A typical barrel of water weighs nearly 500 pounds

when full which can place considerable stress on the ground under it and any water pipes or electrical lines that may be underground, beneath the barrel. Consider pouring a concrete slab under your barrel to better distribute the weight.

Many Florida homes are located in areas where city water is not available, and so, depend on a private well for their supply. We've already mentioned some of the concerns with well water, but if that water has passed through a home treatment device, the water quality changes again. Typical *ion-exchange* type water softeners remove minerals in water that pose problems for home plumbing like water heaters and hot water lines. These devices function by removing certain minerals and, in turn, adding sodium in their place. At some frequency they are recharged by using a concentrated brine solution. These devices can pose the potential of discharging relatively salty water. If you have one of these water softeners, keep in mind that some varieties of bromeliads are more sensitive to salt levels than others. Other home treatment devices, known as *reverse osmosis* units work by physically separating minerals from water. This type of treatment does not contribute sodium like the ion-exchange softeners, but instead generates a concentrated waste stream of all the minerals that have been removed. This isn't necessarily a problem as long as provisions are made for disposal of this material. On the positive side – the water produced from this type of treatment unit is nearly mineral free (like rain water, but without the mosquito problem). On the negative side – this water may not have a pH or level of alkalinity/acidity that is most beneficial to bromeliads.

What type of water do you use on your bromeliad collection? If you don't already know, it's probably worth looking into. There isn't necessarily a "best" source of water to use, but you should be aware of potential problems that are associated with

each different water source. A little time spent on researching this may time well spent!

This month's meeting

Our own president, Bradley Rauch will be leading a workshop on mounting bromeliads this month so, come prepared with all those questions on everything you wanted to now about mounting plants, but were afraid to ask!

This is also the month that we will be visiting the Genus – Guzmania, so if you have any representative Guzmanias in bloom or even if they're not in bloom and you would just like to show them off, bring them in for our Show and Tell feature this month.

Bromeliads for sale –

Carol Webb from the Central Florida Bromeliad Society is selling her collection of beautiful bromeliads. Every thing must go! Wholesale prices!

Date:

Saturday, June 4th, 9:00am to 4:00pm

4 Oak Lane

Deland, FL 32724

Off 1-4 at exit 118, if you need directions call 386.740.7918

Bromeliad Garden Ramble

Garden Ramble

by Rick Ryals

Well, we've talked about it long enough! It's time to put a little action into this great member idea. Since this is a first for many of us, let me briefly explain what we'll be looking for. The garden ramble will re-place one of our monthly meetings, currently looking at November. This will enable us to avoid the hottest Florida weather in July, August and September. While October may have been ideal, it's our last meeting before our Bromeliad Extravaganza at the Plaza Hotel on Daytona Beach, plus we already have a fun meeting planned. This event would be open to members and guests. Maps

and driving directions would be distributed prior to the event date via our monthly newsletter. Car pooling would be encouraged in order to provide proper and safe parking at each site.

So, what we need now is, some folks to open their yards. It looks like we may have a tour on each side of the county. Members Michele Kelley, Alan Bennett and Bud Martin of Blossom World Bromeliads have agreed to host us in West Volusia and Seminole Counties. Brad and Marilyn Rauch, Jay and Calandra Thurrott and Rick Ryals have already agreed in East Volusia County. If your interested in opening your yard please let me know as soon possible. Many of you have spoken about Dunlawton Sugar Mill Gardens in Port Orange and it will be one of our east Volusia County stops. They have a large collection of bromeliads displayed over a 13 acre site highlighting the most intact sugar mill ruins in all of Florida, with significant Indian and early settler historical value. We may even be able to get a local famous historian to discuss the area. The garden provides a lot of shade opportunities and easy walking access.



Eve Krauth at the recent Bromeliad Society of the Palm Beaches garden ramble.

Its estimated that we'll spend forty (residential yard) to ninety minutes (Sugar Mill and Blossom World) at each stop. Plant sales may be available at some stops. So how about a few more members to volunteer their yards for this great event?



Neoregelias in the landscape at the recent garden ramble in the Palm Beach area.

It will be lots of fun and educational too. It's amazing just how many different bromeliads can be grown in our area and this ramble will show you just how easy it is. Not to mention everyone grows things just a little different and that is always fun to see.

Upcoming Events:

June 24th and 25th

Tropiflora Summer Sale
Tropiflora Nursery
3530 Tallavast Road, Sarasota, 941-351-2267

<http://www.tropiflora.com/festival.cfm>

July 10th

Quarterly meeting of the Florida Council –
hosted by the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad
Society

August 20th and 21st

Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Sale
The Garden Club of Sanford (on 17-92, one
block south of Lake Mary Blvd)
9:00 – 4:00 Call 407-539-4314

November 4th, 5th, 2011

Bromeliad Extravaganza “The Art of
Bromeliads” hosted by FECBS! The Plaza
hotel in Daytona Beach

December 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2011

Caloosahatchee Show and Sale
Terry Park, Fort Myers
For information, contact Dr. Larry Giroux at
DrLarry@comcast.net

...and, looking even farther ahead – make plans now for the 2012 Bromeliad Society International World Bromeliad Conference September 24th-30th

hosted by Florida Council of Bromeliad
Societies

The Caribe Royal, 8101 World Center,
Orlando, FL 32821

Betsy McCrory

FCBS World Conference Chairman

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(407) 348-2139

Watch for details in the future!

