

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

Next regularly scheduled business meeting Sunday, October 13, 2002 – 1:30p.m.

September, 2002

No Meeting This Month – We're all
recovering from the Extravaganza!
See you in October!

President - Jay Thurrott - 386/761-4804

Vice President - Bud Martin - 407/321-0838

Secretary - Bob Roberts - 386/586-6221

Treasurer - Ted Nuse - 386/673-2648

As much as we enjoy each other's company, we decided at the last meeting (August) that being together at the Extravaganza Fri. night and all day Saturday would probably be enough time to discuss all of the topics concerning bromeliads that we usually cover in a meeting...and so, we decided to forgo getting together on Sunday for our usual meeting. We'll see you all in October!

The Extravaganza probably hasn't occurred yet as you read this newsletter – and we will discuss how things turned out at our October meeting - but I feel confident in predicting that it will be a great success and that is due in no small part to your efforts. Thank you one and all for your help – we've got a great bunch of members in this club! Thank you, all of you gallant envelope stuffers who made what looked like a daunting task into a party at the last meeting - the mass mailing went out the next day. And thank you Mike F. for taking on the project of separating all of those plants that the club

purchased last Spring, tagging them and getting them ready for sale.

September is upon us...

I know, time flies when you're having fun(or time's fun when you're having flies-if you are a frog) but I still can't imagine where the Summer went. Here we are, starting into the Fall already – and that means that you need to start backing off on your fertilizing. Those Spring and Summer days when bromeliads benefit the most from fertilizing are behind us now and we need to start thinking about preparations for Winter. You should also (if you haven't already) begin reducing your watering frequency. We've had a wonderfully wet Summer (after too many years of drought), so you probably haven't been doing a lot of watering anyway, but keep in mind that beginning in the Fall, bromeliads are not in that active growth mode and can't tolerate sitting in wet potting media as well as they could just a month ago. Let that potting mix get a little on the

dry side between waterings from now until Spring.

If you haven't already finished separating your Neos. and potting up the pups, you need to get to it now! Neoregelia offsets separated too late into the Fall may not get as good a start on life as those separated in the Springtime. I can procrastinate along with the best of them, but when it comes to potting up Neo. offsets I make sure that this work takes place during Spring and Summer. Any Neo. pups in my collection that still need separating are just going to have to wait until Spring now.

If you haven't already noticed, the days are getting a little shorter now and the sun is in a little different position on the horizon...and that means if you have your plants in a good position to be protected from the most direct rays of the Summer sun, they might be showing signs of some sunburn on leaf tips as a result of the lower angle of the Fall sun. It drives you crazy doesn't it! It seems like you are constantly moving plants around to avoid too much light on them. How can you keep up with it? Look at your plants frequently. Not just now, but throughout the year. Sunburned leaves don't usually happen overnight as our seasons run through their cycles - it's a gradual thing and if you take the time to look at your plants throughout the day, you should be able to avoid problems. Stopping and smelling roses may work fine for rose enthusiasts, but bromeliad growers need to stop and look at their plants.

Viva la difference!

Tillandsia mallemonitii has got to be one of my favorite Tillandsias. This little plant looks an awful lot like Tillandsia recurvata or "ball moss" when it's not in bloom. In fact, I took some bell wire (that's the thin, plastic coated wire that telephone repairmen use), twisted it around the base of a little clump of ball moss and twisted the other end around a little clump of T. mallemonitii

and tossed them over a tree branch like an old pair of sneakers. They are growing under exactly the same conditions, the clumps are about the same size now and, until last month looked identicle. Last month, however, the T. mallemonitii produced a number of long stems ending in the most beautiful blue, fragrant flowers you ever saw! These two may look very similar when not in bloom, but once that inflorescence forms...it's a real attention-getter!

The Survey Results are in...

Remember the member survey that was in a recent newsletter? Secretary Roberts has tabulated the results - and here they are:

ANALYSIS OF MEMBER SURVEY

Results of the member survey were reported at the July meeting. They indicate the strengths of the society as well as areas that could be considered weaknesses.

Responses were received from 67 percent of the 24 members. The current meeting day and time were preferred by 81 percent of them. The location received 94 percent approval. Refreshments were wanted by 53 percent while 35 percent didn't want them and 12 percent didn't care.

Less than half of the members participated in the Zoorama (44%), the Seminole Holiday Party (24%) and the Ocala field trip (44%). Conversely, 88 percent worked at the sales booth at Everybody's Flower Show (EFS) and 75 percent have attended meetings during the first four months of this year. Only 25 percent attending EFS in 2001 and/or 2002 entered plants for judging.

Only three members are willing to serve as officers with two others willing to consider serving and 12 unwilling to serve. Nearly all of our members (88%) are 12-month residents and half of them are retired.

The relationship between the substantial participation in activities in Daytona Beach compared with other venues, and the respondents' comments on the surveys, indicate that the members are unwilling to substitute joint meetings and field trips for regular meetings. Given that both retired and working members have other interests and responsibilities, we may wish to modify the current schedule and activities.

In response to members comments, future minutes will be presented in the newsletter or meeting notices to minimize the amount of meeting time devoted to administrative matters.

R. L. Roberts
Secretary

More business...

Another item of business from a past meeting was that of developing a policy concerning reimbursement of expenses that could be incurred by representatives of FECBS while attending meetings at other locations in the state. We can discuss this at the next business meeting. Our secretary has drafted the following proposal for your consideration:

REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

The Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society (FECBS) will reimburse assigned delegates and/or representatives for expenses incurred when representing FECBS at meetings of horticultural organizations within the state. Expenses for meals, lodging, and travel are to be paid upon presentation of receipts. Meals will be reimbursed up to \$30.00 per person per day. Lodging will be reimbursed up to \$70.00 per night. Travel will be reimbursed on a mileage basis at the current rate permitted by the IRS.

It is the objective of this policy that no delegate or representative should incur financial burdens because of services performed for FECBS.

FECBS is represented by two delegates at the quarterly meeting of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, and two delegates at the monthly meeting of the Council of Garden Clubs of the Halifax District. These expenses will be included in the budget for 2003.

R. L. Roberts, Secretary

Miscellany – I had the pleasure of attending the Seminole Society's sale recently. This is always a great event with a wonderful variety of plants for sale and very interesting conversations with the folks present. If you haven't been to one of these sales you are really missing out – look for it next year and mark it on your calendar. One of the topics of conversation at virtually every sale that I've been to has been "is that the right name for that plant?" This always seems to generate heated debate and results in tags with the names stricken out several times over before a consensus is reached. The August, 1999 issue of the Caloosahatchee Society's 'Meristem' contained an interesting article, written by editors Gene McKinzie and Larry Giroux that I would like to pass along concerning adding to your collection of bromeliads:

...Knowing the name of the plant is pretty basic, but with that knowledge you can inquire about the facts concerning the bromeliad. Serious efforts have been made to identify all

species and results of all crosses or hybrids. Even if a plant does not have a name, the parentage will tell us a lot about the plant. Try to keep the name with the plant.

That's the key: try to keep that name tag with the plant! Don't mark it with black marker – you'll find that one day you have a blank tag in your pot! Use a #2 pencil and if it starts to fade away, replace it with a new tag. If the squirrels have run off with your name tags again, try to replace them as soon as possible while your memory of the proper name is still fresh.

Did 'ya ever wonder...?

“This may seem like a silly question, but how can I tell if my bromeliad has produced seeds – and, how do I know when they are ripe?”

First of all, the only silly questions are the ones that don't get asked! You would be surprised at how many people who have been growing bromeliads for years don't know the answer to this. Anyway, consider the three subgroups in the family of Bromeliads – the Bromelioideae, the Tillandsioideae, and the Pitcairnioideae? These three groups produce three markedly different types of seed that we (or maybe its just me...) can generally describe as seeds in berries, parachute type seed, and papery seed. The berries in the first group form at the base of the flowers (the ovaries). Look for these on Aechmeas, Billbergias, Neoregelias, and Nidulariums. They all have the potential to form seeds in the berries, but seeds will only develop if pollination has occurred. How do you know if this has occurred? Generally you can look for the

berries to swell compared to those that have not been pollinated. Both the Tillandsioideae and Pitcairnioideas form seed capsules if pollination has taken place. The former are often seen protruding from sites on the inflorescence where flowering took place like small string beans and the latter being less conspicuous and much shorter in form.

Now, for the second part of your question – berries containing seeds generally ripen within several weeks to several months and often signal to waiting birds and other wild creatures waiting to eat them by changing in color. Berries on Aechmeas often change from white to blue or from blue to nearly black while those on Billbergias may develop an orange tint or simply soften (like a fig) as they ripen. When ripe, these berries can be plucked from the inflorescence and squeezed to release the seeds inside. Seed pods on Tillandsioideae take much longer (up to one year in some species) to ripen and change in appearance from a green pod, to a brown or black one as the pod ages. When ripe the pod splits and peels backward in three pieces to release white or brown plumed seeds that are then carried off in the wind, much like dandelion seeds. Pitcairnioids ripen in much the same way, however once the pod splits, the seeds inside simply fall to the ground or are carried a short distance away if winds are causing the infl. to sway at the time.

Growing bromeliads from seed can be a very interesting and satisfying project. For hints on how to best germinate the seed and nurture the tiny seedlings to maturity consult our club's

library, the Bromeliad Society International's web site (<http://www.bsi.org/>), the Florida Council of Bromeliad Society's web page (<http://www.fcbs.org/>), or talk to some of our members who have had some successes (and some failures) in this area.