

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



January 2010

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 21, 2010** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco

January Program

World Bromeliad Conference 2008
in
Cairns, Australia

This month we will have one of our own members: **Peder Samuelson** giving us an overview of the last world bromeliad conference held in Cairns, Australia in 2008. Peder and **Marilyn Moyer** were the only members of our society to attend this conference. In fact, only one other northern California bromeliad fancier was in attendance: Rodney Kline. As you know, Peder is very interested in photography and is a superb photographer, so we will be getting a magnificent picture of what we missed by not going to Australia. If you want an entertaining show, do not miss this meeting.

This show was scheduled for last year but had to be re-scheduled.

November Refreshments

Roger Lane signed up for refreshments this month.



Peder is making some major point to **Bruce McCoy**. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**.

Dues are Due

A new year has begun and dues are due: \$15 for a single membership and \$20 for a family. Pay **Harold** at the meeting or mail to **Harold**. See back page for details.

Letter from Our President

As president the last five or six years I've been trying new activities and pushing for changes for our club. Dan Arcos has done a great job expanding and updating our internet site. This has been very helpful getting many new visitors and members. The holiday gift plants from Michael's, purchased by the club, have been popular. And we've had some success with a second plant sale. Bruce has done a fabulous job getting us on TV and in major print. Casper and David put together an amazing garden at the Cow Palace. Also, we had a very nice time this summer seeing the rain forest exhibit in the CAS, thanks to Tuan. Some of our garden tours have included gardens that were not BSSF members. Some gardens even have had few or no bromeliads. Also we've invited visitors from other clubs to join our tour. I am excited to announce that we will include a new region for our garden tour next summer. Casper has arranged a visit to two Mill Valley gardens, about fifteen minutes apart, and twenty minutes away in San Rafael, two more gardens (again fifteen minutes apart). One garden is that of late Don Worth, a real treat. A second stop, an expansive hilltop garden, is featured in a landscape book. It will be a great addition to our summer tours to include this new area and these new gardens.

Warm Regards, Carl

Quesnelia

This article by Karen Andreas is reprinted from the March 2005 *Orlandiana*, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida.

Quesnelia is a great bromeliad for the Florida landscape. Its various sizes, variation in inflorescences, and stoloniferous growth add interest to a collection even when the bromeliad is not in bloom. There are approximately 16 species in this genus; *Quesnelia* is definitely a bromeliad that deserves a closer look.

The genus was named for M. Quesnel, the French consul to French Guyana who first introduced this bromeliad to Europe. It is found in the central coastal regions of Brazil where it grows up to the ocean, on rocks, in pastureland, and in coastal mountains. Coastal *Quesnelias* tend to be medium to large in size with brilliant pink inflorescences. Species that grow epiphytically (as air plants) in coastal mountains tend to be small, tubular species that often resemble *Billbergias*. The inflorescence is short-lived – about two weeks. While *Quesnelia* grows best in bright light to full sun, it can tolerate lower light conditions.

Generally, members of this genus have spiny leaves, although the severity of those spines varies. Use spines to identify *Quesnelia testudo*: the true *testudo* will have spines on its lower scape leaves. If those spines are not present, it is not *testudo*. It may be *Q. quesneliana*.

Give the larger varieties such as *Q. testudo* plenty of room. They grow vigorously and you will have a clump in no time. The smaller *Quesnelias* do quite well mounted, grown in baskets, or planted at a base of a tree, which it will climb.



Quesnelia testudo is one of the tougher *Quesnelias*. Photo is by Jay Thurrott and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Q. humilis is a smaller member of this genus (8-10 inches high). Its bright red inflorescence holds flowers that Steens describes as “orange at the base, shading to bright red and then tipped with purple.” It is a vigorous grower, growing

stoloniferously (the new pup is on a stem-like growth – or stolon).



This is *Quesnelia humilis*, one of the smaller plants in the genus. Photo is by Dorothy Berg and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

Q. imbricata, in habitat, is epiphytic (an “air plant”), saxicolous (grows on rocks) and terrestrial (grows in soil or on the ground). Its orange-red inflorescence stays in color for up to a month. When grown in full sun, its leaves turn a bronze color.

Q. liboniana grows on trees and rocks. Its flowers are dramatic – navy blue and orange-red.



Quesnelia liboniana is one of the smaller Quesnelias. Photo is by Ken Marks and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Q. marmorata pups with short stolons, making it ideal for mounting or cascading out of a pot. Its leaves are green with brown or deep maroon

blotches. Padilla reports a fruity scent emanating from the center of the plant prior to blooming.

Q. quesneliana grows mainly as a terrestrial bromeliad in sand by the edge of the ocean but is also found on trees in open pastureland. Grow in bright filtered light for compact growth. Williams reports that it is one of those bromeliads that needs to throw a couple of pups before it will bloom, so do not remove the pups right away.

Q. Tim Plowman is a popular cultivar of *Q. marmorata*. It is known for its tall, upright leaves that curl at the top. Do not overwater this *Quesnelia* and make sure it is not in wet or soggy soil – its curls will straighten.



Quesnelia marmorata

Entered by Cynthia Johnson

13th World Bromeliad Conference, Houston, Texas July 1 - 5, 1998

This is *Quesnelia marmorata* cultivar *Tim Plowman*, Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



Here is the inflorescence of *Quesnelia quesneliana*. Photo is by Herb Plever and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

More pictures are available at the Bromeliad Encyclopedia, the web site of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. Go to <http://fcbs.org>, then to the Photo Index.

Some Bromeliad Basics

This article by the late Gene McKenzie is taken from the September 2005 Caloosahatchee Meristem, newsletter of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society.

The following is just an outline and you can use it as you see fit or not at all. Information is from Werner Rauh's Bromeliads for Home and Garden (our library) and Victoria Padilla's Bromeliads (library).

When someone asks you, "What is a bromeliad?", be very courteous and reply "bro-meel-i-ad" Bromeliad. Then ask them if they like pineapple and tell them a pineapple is a bromeliad and Spanish moss is a bromeliad. Then you are off and running.

Be proud, like you are of the flag. This family and the Cactus family are exclusively of the new world (our world), with the exception of one species of Pitcairnia (*feliciana*) and one species of cactus (*Rhipsalis cassytha*) found in Africa. No

one knows for sure why these two are in Africa when all their relatives are in the Americas. Some theory is that when the land masses separated only these two missed the boat and continued to live in their native land.

Bromeliads live and thrive from Virginia in the north (Spanish moss and *Tillandsia recurvata*) to southern Argentina. Brazil is said to have the most concentration of Bromeliads, but they live in Florida along the southern coast from Florida through Texas, Mexico, Central and South America and all the islands in between.

Bromeliads come to us in all sizes and textures. The largest: *Puya raimondii*, grows high in the Andes and takes as long as 50 to 70 years to bloom. It only produces seeds – no pups. Many of our smallest bromeliads are in the Tillandsia genus. Except for a few plants, all bromeliads produce ONE branched or unbranched inflorescence. Distinguishing characteristics are

- scales that cover the leaves
- flowers are of three parts different from the sepals
- the three sepals combine as a unit
- there are six stamens.

The flowers are short lived in comparison to their primary bracts (bracts surrounding the flowers). The bloom period is from a few hours to several days, but flowers don't open all at the same time.

Most bromeliads are epiphytic, but some are truly terrestrials. They are not parasites. Most collectors force epiphytic bromeliads into pots and the plants have adapted to their new environment.

Since Christopher Columbus discovered and brought back the pineapple to his Queen, other bromeliads were found and introduced. Some of the earliest discovered and described are still prized plants in collections around the world: *Billbergia pyramidalis* (1815), *Billbergia zebrina*, *Aechmea fasciata*, and *Aechmea pectinata* (1836), *Cryptanthus bromelioides* (1831), *Vriesea splendens* and *Aechmea fulgens* (1840).

Over potted?

This article by Kathy Dorr is reprinted in part from the December 1983 newsletter of the Study Group of Northern California.

Since time beginning, we have been told that Bromeliads don't need anything larger than a four inch pot. Did anyone ever ask the bromeliads their opinion? For the past several years (since I started growing on poles and six inch or larger pots work better for this), I have been asking the viewpoint of the plants concerning this and find they don't necessarily agree with this conclusion.

When listening to the judges in action, it is not uncommon to hear the remark 'that plant is over potted,' but I seldom hear the remark 'that plant is under potted!' It may be time for ALL to take notice, particularly in regard to some genus.

Probably the most vital of these are the members of the Pitcairnioideae group. It has been my experience that the Dyckias, Hechtias, Puyas, Pitcairnias, Deuterocohnias, Ochagavias prefer lots of foot room. Their first preference is to be grown in the ground where they can let the 'corset stays' out to the extreme and enjoy themselves. If this is not to be their good fortune, then their next choice is LARGE (according to size: 1,2,5,10,15 gallon) pots – not little four inch pots. The questions are often asked why these plants have brown tips and brown leaves and aren't doing as well as expected? The size of the pot could well answer these questions in a majority of cases, along with the growing conditions. This doesn't mean they won't grow in the small pots, flower and offset, but if you want the plants to be their happiest and show their maximum beauty, they need plenty of root space. Dyckias, even when small can completely fill a gallon size pot with roots.

An example of this – I planted two *Dyckia platyphylla* plants of equal size and age: one in a four inch pot and the other in an eight inch pot. This was about two years ago. The one in the four inch pot has grown very little and has not produced an offset as yet. The one planted in the eight inch pot has grown beautifully and produced one offset that is equal in size to the original plant as well as five smaller ones. When

this plant was shown last year, the comment from the judges was 'that plant is over potted.' [Accredited bromeliad judges now recognize that these plants should be displayed in larger pots. – Ed.] Another example is two *Dyckia fosteriana* plants potted in the same manner. The one in the four inch pot has two offsets and has stayed quite small in comparison to the plant potted in the large pot. The one in the larger pot has a minimum of six plants and possibly more, entirely filling the pot. When I turned the pot up and took the plant out, the entire pot was filled with roots and obviously needed repotting in a larger pot. The four inch pot was also filled with roots and there was little soil remaining. The ends of some of the leaves of the plant were brown and these plants did not have the lush look of the plants grown in the larger container.

Welcome New Members

Welcome to new members **Nick Soumie, John Kaufman** and **Kaye Rosso**.

Welcome back to old member **Jon Dixon**

Welcome to new family member **Bill Lindqvist**

Halogen Lamp

George Bosworth has been a member of our society for several years but has dropped out of the bromeliad hobby and he does not have any plants now. Several years ago he bought a Hydro Farm halogen light, and used it for about a year. It consists of a large hanging reflector, a large transformer, and a 400W halogen bulb. He is happy to give this to anyone who wants it. You can contact George at 650-566-0608.

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO (BSSF)

The BSSF is a non-profit educational organization promoting the study and cultivation of bromeliads. The BSSF meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 PM in the Recreation room of the San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Meetings feature educational lectures and displays of plants. Go to the affiliate section of the BSI webpage for information about our meetings.

The BSSF publishes a monthly newsletter that comes with the membership. Annual dues are single (\$15), dual (\$20). To join the BSSF, mail your name(s), address, telephone number, e-mail address, and check made payable to the BSSF to:

Harold Charns, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

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Did you know there are bromeliads in Australia?
