

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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April 2010

## NEWSLETTER

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Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 15, 2010** at 7:30 PM  
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,  
San Francisco

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### April Program

#### **Bromeliads of Brazil**

**Peter Wan** will be our speaker this month. In June of last year some of our society members visited Brazil on one of Guillermo Rivera's tours. We covered two of the very large states of Brazil: Minas Gerais and Bahia. Although the trip covered cacti, succulents, and bromeliads, I think we saw more varieties of bromeliads than cacti and succulents. In fact, we may have discovered 3 new bromeliad species: two Orthophytums and a Cryptanthus. Come to the meeting and we might see photos of the possible new species.

We might be a little short of plants for the plant table this month, so if you can contribute a few, it would be appreciated.

#### **April Refreshments**

**Roger Lane** and **Brian Ransom** signed up for refreshments this month.



**Peter Wan** got someone to take his picture posing with some Melocactus in Brazil. 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 check to Harold. See back page for details. **If you do not pay your dues for 2010 this month, you will no longer receive the newsletter.**

## March Meeting

Last month **Guillermo Rivera** from Argentina provided a slide show of the bromeliads of Ecuador. Many of the bromeliads we saw in the show were new to almost all of our members. There were many *Guzmania* species and most of our members do not grow *Guzmanias*. However, one of our members did bring a *Guzmania* for show-and-tell that was in the slide show. And your editor brought a *Racinaea spiculosa* in flower that was also in Guillermo's show. Guillermo has organized a tour to Ecuador in 2011 and if you are interested in joining the tour check out Guillermo's website: [www.cactusexpeditions.com.ar](http://www.cactusexpeditions.com.ar)

We had a huge turnout for the meeting and a massive group of beautiful show-and-tell plants. **Keith Anderson** also donated many BSI journals to our society that our club made available to the members. Thanks, Keith.

## Consider Growing Vrieseas

This article by Ervin Wurthmann is reprinted from the April 2003 newsletter of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society. That article included line drawings by various artists. We will substitute photographs where possible..

*Vrieseas* have enjoyed popularity in Europe for over 100 years. Demands for these plants have fostered many hybrids of which a considerable number are still in the trade today. *Vrieseas* vary in size from less than 6 inches in diameter to a size with a spread and height of over 5 feet. The smooth edged leaves might be spotted, blotched, or barred with eccentric markings. The inflorescence usually bears a flattened or distichous spike with yellow, red, green, or purple bracts while remaining in color for several months.

Nearly all of the Brazilian species and their hybrids possess considerable cold tolerance, many of which are tough as neoregelias and can be grown outdoors in this area. *Vriesea carinata*, *V. incurvata*, *V. ensiformis*, *V. rodigasiana*, *V.*

*erythodactylon*, and *V. simplex* are all predominately types with green leaves, but are the most cold tolerant. Species with more decorative foliage are *V. gigantea*, *V. imperialis*, *V. fenestralis*, *V. saundersii*, *V. hieroglyphica*, *V. fosteriana*, *V. fosteriana* Red Chestnut, and *V. heterostachys* are reasonable cold hardy, but should be protected from frost and subfreezing temperatures.



Here is a group of flowering *Vriesea ensiformis*. Photo is by Bromeliario Imperialis and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Central American and Northern South American *Vrieseas* are for the most part cold tender. Included in this group are all varieties of *V. splendens*, *V. heliconioides*, *V. glutinosa*, *V. chrystostachys*, *V. malzinei*, and *V. rubra*. These will require greenhouse protection during the colder months. Another group, the *Vrieseas* with gray leaves somewhat resembling tillandsias in appearance, are infrequently xerophytic in their habitat. *Vriesea apenii*, *V. barclayana*, *V. chontalensis*, *V. cylindrica*, *V. espinosea*, *V. hitchcockiana*, and *V. rauhii* are in this group. Unfortunately, there is no track record on cold hardiness in this locality.



Here is a group of flowering *Vriesea rodigasiana*. Photo is by Reginaldo Baiao and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Still another group which were once referred to as the genus *Thecophyllum*, occur in the higher rain belt of Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, and the Caribbean Islands. Species such as *Vriesea sintenisii*, *V. ororiensis*, and *V. leucophylla* all have spectacular inflorescences. *Vriesea montana* and *V. irazuensis* have sensationally colored foliage. *Vriesea sintenisii* is the only one that has successfully established itself outside of its native environment.



Here is *Vriesea glutinosa*. Photo is by Frank Sherman and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Culturally, Vrieseas are not difficult. They do not require as much light as the neoregelias but will thrive under higher light conditions than once supposed. Some of the Vrieseas with thin green leaves will take on a rose or dark purple hue at the base of the plant if grown as bright as 65% shade on an all-day basis.



Here is *Vriesea rauhii*. Photo is by Pam Koide and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies



*Weruehia ororiensis* in Parque Nacional Irazu, Costa Rica photo by H Sachs

Pests are few. Soft brown scale can be controlled with Diazinon, Cygon, or Orthene. Occasional fungus can be handled with Dithan M-45, Captan or Banrot. Read label thoroughly as dosages will vary according to the material used. Soil mix should be well drained to permit frequent watering which Vrieseas prefer. I am not an advocate of over potting, having flowered *V. hieroglyphica* in a 5-inch pot. It is well to add turkey grit or fly ash if you wish to grow *V. gigantea*, *V. hieroglyphica*, or *V. imperialis* in a situation where ample watering occurs.

Most Vriesea require a higher fertilizer level than neoregelias to grow a top quality plant. This can be accomplished by top feeding on the media with osmocote or Sure Gro, both of which are slow release fertilizers which provide long time feeding. Soluble fertilizer can be used when watering vrieseas.

Growing good vrieseas can be rewarding whether growing for foliage or for inflorescence.



Here is *Alcantarea imperialis*. Photo is by Peter Franklin and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

(Editor's note: This article was written over 20 years ago and taxonomists have had their way with the genera. The major change relevant to this article is the elevation of the subgenus *Alcantarea* of the genus *Vriesea* to genus status. Of the plants listed by Ervin, *Vriesea imperialis* has been changed to *Alcantarea imperialis*. In addition *Vriesea ororiensis* has been changed to *Werahuhia ororiensis*, *V. sintenisii* to *W. sintenisii*, *V. montana* to *W. nephrolepis*, *V. irazuensis* to *W. ororiensis* and *V. leucophylla* to *W. leucophylla*. As far as the insecticides are concerned, check your garden center for availability of

recommended products; some have been withdrawn for retail sale. I found out that "turkey grit" is finely ground up granite, like sand and "fly ash" is a product of burning coal for fuel.)

### U. C. Berkeley Spring Plant Sale

The University of California, Berkeley is having their annual Spring Sale on the **April 23-24** weekend. The member Sale & Auction is on Friday, April 23, 5-7:30 PM. The Public Sale is on Saturday, April 24, 10AM-2PM. Our society will have an information table both days. We are donating two specimen plants for their auction! East Bay Members invited to attend. There will be a Sign-up sheet at April meeting.

### Strybing 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spring Plant Sale

We will be selling bromeliads at the Strybing Arboretum Spring Plant Sale on Friday evening, **April 30<sup>th</sup>** from 5-8 PM and Saturday, **May 1<sup>st</sup>** from 10AM-2PM. **If you are able to donate plants (bromeliads for the landscape are always in demand) or work at the sale, please sign up at this month's meeting or notify Marilyn Moyer (phone 650-365-5560 or e-mail [marilynmoyer@comcast.net](mailto:marilynmoyer@comcast.net)).**

This sale exposes others in the plant world to bromeliads and exposes us to other plant families. It should be a fun event for a worthy cause and you can add to your collection at a very reasonable cost. This sale also provides us the opportunity to promote our society, our June sale, and other activities that we have planned.

The Annual Spring sale is pretty much signed up for volunteers. The more the merrier and it is a fun fast paced event. Marilyn has submitted the names for Friday evening to be put on the list for free entry. The Friday signups are

- **Ford Greene, Nick Soumie, Jon Dixon, Dennis Westler, Brian Ransom, Dan Arcos, David Feix, Marilyn and Peder.**

There is no need for Saturday sign up. We have **Nick Soumie**, and **Bruce McCoy**. That is fine, because we are usually pretty much sold out of

material. Anything left over is left for David from the SFBGS to grow on for next year. The earlier you arrive to work Friday the better. We have to price each plant with double tags. Although they frown on schlepping plants under our table for buying before hand, it doesn't hurt to scope some out ahead of time to nab just as the doors open. Last year I found some amazing ferns that I had never seen before. They are thriving.

Although David, from the Botanical Garden Nursery brings up lots of great looking plants that they have grown on, we still like to have some from the members. Bare root ones that can grow outside are so easy to bring in and are very popular. Just go outside and snip some and bring them along. Thank you for such a great response.

### **Palm Society Tour**

**Darold Petty** has invited members of our society to an open house to view his palm collection. It is on Sunday, **April 18th** from 10:00AM until 1:30PM. He is located at 2563 33rd Avenue, SF

My invitation to the Bromeliad Society is to attend an open house event where people just arrive and leave on their own schedule. I will leave up my garage door and people just walk through the garage to the rear yard. This is an event for our Palm Society, and I would welcome Brom people as well. I have many palms that are unique and never seen locally. (and I have a LOT of positions where I need recommendations for epiphytes.)

I must depart about 2:00PM for our continuing Palm Society meeting at the Flora Grubb nursery. Please visit our website for more complete info. <http://www.palmsnc.org/pages/events.php>

### **Welcome New Members**

**Naomi, Frank & Lisa Bloss**

134 Trabing Road  
Watsonville, CA 95076  
831-722-1446  
[FRANK.BLOSS@SBCGLOBAL.NET](mailto:FRANK.BLOSS@SBCGLOBAL.NET)



Here is *Werauhia hygrometrica*. Photo is by Wally Berg and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

## **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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

## **BSSF 2010 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

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## **BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL**

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
OF  
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**Forget about Tax Day and Go To Brazil!**