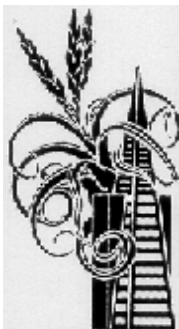


BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



February 2005

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 17, 2005** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco

February Program

Bromeliads of Northern Argentina

This month, our president **Carl Carter** will present a slide show on the bromeliads of northern Argentina. A group of our members went on a tour of northern Argentina last November and we saw several bromeliads. On our trip, we visited Iguazu Falls which borders Argentina and Brazil. Your editor had made a list of the bromeliads we could expect to see on the trip, but he had neglected to consider the plants from Brazil that also overlap into Argentina (plants do not abide by the borders) so we saw some extra goodies. We also saw the type plant for one genus in a tropical rainforest.

Do not miss our first meeting of the year and Carl's show on the bromeliads of Argentina.



Peder Samuelsen and **George Bosworth** are engaged in vigorous discussion at our December Holiday dinner.



Ben Franklin, **Daniel Arcos**, **Peter Wan**, **Marilyn Moyer**, and **Peder Samuelsen** at our December meeting. **Carl Carter** is in background.

Plant of the Month

This article by Dale Williams is reprinted from January 1980 newsletter of the Bromeliads Study Group of Northern California. When this article was originally written this plant was named *Nidularium regelioides*. The currently accepted name is *Nidularium rutilans*.

Nidularium rutilans (Like a Regelia – an early name for Neoregelia)

Nidulariums, and in particular this one, are a must for all collectors – beginners as well as the advanced. Now, before too much more, let me provide a slight explanation on the differences between Neoregelia and Nidularium. Neoregelias at blooming time will have color in the center of the rosette with the flowers sunk deep in the cup. Nidulariums will color in the center, but only on the bracts with the flowers emerging at different levels. Sometimes the bract will rise up and out of the center. That is the distinctive difference.

Nidularium rutilans, like all nidulariums, is from Eastern Brazil, is a terrestrial, and grows at quite high elevations. Since nidulariums are terrestrials, it is normal that they are low light lovers and like it to be humid. However, most nidulariums in cultivation can be hardened to take quite a bit of high light as long as the humidity is high. *N. rutilans* is a relatively small plant that seldom attains a diameter of 55 cm and a height of approximately 25 cm. The leaves, as with most nidulariums, are quite glossy. The flowers when first open are orange turning with age to a bright rose. *N. rutilans* usually produces two to five offsets and when cared for can bloom annually. My *N. rutilans* are usually grown under benches and brought out into brighter light only at the first indication of blooming so that I can obtain brighter coloration. I've had this plant take temperatures as low as 4° C with no damage and during heat spells take temperatures of 39° C in the shade. So no matter what your location, with proper care there is no reason why you cannot grow this plant.



This photo of *Nidularium rutilans* (formally *N. regelioides*) is by Derek Butcher and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

The Rightful King – the Monarch and the Supreme Sovereign of Bromeliads

The following article is taken from the December 2002 The BSGC News, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago. The article originally appeared in the September 1989 newsletter of the San Diego Bromeliad Society.

The Vriesea is the rightful King – the Monarch, and the Supreme Sovereign of bromeliads. Now, to the superior qualities of the Real King. No other genus can compare or even come close to the lovely and varied foliage and the gorgeous bract (modified leaf on the stalk), scape (stalk), and flower. The leaf is truly varied: banded, mottled (marked with spots or streaks of different colors), variegated or just plain green, drooping or erect. Likewise, the inflorescence (the flowering part of the plant) is varied: fish-shaped singly or multiple-branched; spike erect, pendant (hanging down) or reflexed (bent back); flower is yellow, green or white; and the growth-size pattern ranges from plain tiny to gigantic. It may grow on the ground or in a tree. The foliage is beautiful; the flower is outstanding. What variety – nothing monotonous about the Real King! Now to the interesting and very “telling” comparisons of the Real King and the Big Five.

The TILLANDSIA. Let's face it; the foliage while interesting is not as colorful. The flower



Here is a representative of the Real King: *Vriesea philippo-coburgii*. Your editor has one in flower right now and it has been flowering for about 3 months. Photo is by Peter Franklin and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

can't hold a candle to the beauty of the Real King and does not last as long. Some Tillandsias look like dead twigs or a bunch of dried weeds.

The NEOREGELIA. Its tank becomes the collection center for the mosquito, frog, worm, scorpion, twig, and leaf. The water in the tank becomes stagnant and presents the inquisitor a pronounced violation of the nostril. To appreciate the minute flower, the viewer must have on hand two items: a pad to kneel on for a close look and a strong magnifying glass.

The AECHMEA. This is the warrior genus as anyone with cut or scratched fingers, arms and

elbows (sometimes nose, forehead, ear, etc.) will testify. One has to admit, the spines are lethal. The record shows some have caused infection and some poor souls are actually allergic to this creature. Even its berries carry protective weapons. This plant one cannot very easily clean, cannot pet, and in fact, cannot trust.

The GUZMANIA. Here we have the “softie” of the bunch. Its leaves while lovely to look at, are not to be touched unless kid gloves are handy. The slightest mismove and BINGO – the leaf is broken. This plant is temperamental and is easily irritated.

The CRYPTANTHUS. This earth-hugger has two strikes against it. One has great difficulty pronouncing it correctly and has further problems trying to remember how to spell it. The plant is fair game for the critic. Its foliage has a tendency to accrue brown tips on the leaves. Its flowers are akin to the flowers of the neos: small and not great on color. It really does not have much going for it and perhaps it should be relegated to a crypt.

From these not so gentle and critical observations, one must not think unkindly of this writer, but certainly one has to conclude that the Big Five cannot be in the same class as the Real King: the Vriesea. In summation, let us review the splendiferous properties of the Real King by use of the negative. It does not resemble dry weeds (compared to what?), does not smell (compared to what?), does not wound (compared to what?), does not get easily irritated (compared to what?), and does not resemble an injured starfish out of water (guess the comparison?).

So I rest my case. My candidate is the magnificent Vriesea. It deserves the crown as King and may I say meekly – the flourish of trumpets.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Care to write a rebuttal? I will be glad to print it.

Everglades Wetlands in Danger of Destruction

This article is reprinted from the November 2002 *BROMELIANA*, newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.

The Florida Everglades are the home of all of the bromeliads indigenous to Florida. Over the past few decades they have been beset by damage and destruction from depletion of water, population incursions, etc. The following material was excerpted from the Sept./Oct 2002 issue of *Biogems*, published by the National Resources Defense Council, a leading defender of the environment, which has sued to block further destruction.

“The Army Corps of Engineers, charged with protecting our nation’s vanishing wetlands, has signed off on a mining industry plan that will destroy more than 5,000 acres of America’s most famous wetland: the Everglades. It’s the first phase of a gargantuan project that ultimately will bulldoze and dynamite 30 square miles of the Everglades” fragile wetland habitat in order to extract 1.7 billion tons of limestone rock that lie underneath. The crushed limestone, a primary ingredient of Florida’s burgeoning construction industry, will be used to build roads, bridges and parking lots.

“It was only two years ago that Congress placed the Army Corps in charge of the world’s most ambitious environmental project: an \$8 billion program to protect and restore the Everglades, half of which have already been drained, filled and otherwise obliterated. If unleashing bulldozers and dynamite in the remaining Everglades sounds like a strange way to protect and restore them, then you’re not thinking like the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps is actually billing the ‘Lake Belt’ mining plan as a boon to the environment and critical to the long term health of the Everglades. ‘They’re going to destroy the Everglades in order to save them,’ says NRDC Senior Attorney Brad Sewell. ‘Unfortunately, we can only be certain of the destruction. What, if anything, gets saved is pure conjecture.’

“The method behind this engineering madness is the limestone quarries themselves. Three decades from now, when those 80 foot-deep rock pits are mined out, the Army Corps will spend \$1 billion of taxpayer money trying to convert two sets of them into water storage reservoirs. One is supposed to provide drinking water for Miami and the other to send much-needed fresh water into Everglades and Biscayne Bay National Parks. Theoretically, the gigantic man-made lakes will preserve Everglades’s habitat by containing the sprawl on Miami’s western boundary and by rehydrating the famous saw grass prairies.

“The Corps is calling it a ‘win-win’ solution for Florida’s economy and environment. But virtually everyone else except the mining industry is openly incredulous. For starters, no one can know if the untested engineering scheme will work at all. Hydrologists are uncertain the reservoirs will even hold water – their walls might collapse or their bottoms may leak. What *is* certain, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, is that the mining pits will actually encourage seepage of fresh water *out* of the Everglades through underground aquifers – the very thing that the \$8 billion restoration plan is supposed to reverse.

“Studies are already underway to determine just how feasible and just how dangerous the Lake Belt project really is. But those studies won’t be completed for a decade or more. In the meantime, the Everglades will be mined and scarred forever by humongous pits visible from outer space. ‘The Corps decision to mine first and study later makes it clear this entire scheme is a gift to the mining companies at the expense of one of our greatest national treasures,’ says Sewell. NRDC is suing the Army Corps in Federal Court for violating the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

“Whether or not the Lake Belt project can ever work, there is little argument that it will extinguish what National Park Service scientists have called the ‘last remnant of the short hydro period marshes that are critical to the proper functioning of the Everglades ecosystem.’ This vital habitat will be replaced by non-natural habitat – deep, open-water lakes – that is ‘of little or no value to

the Everglades ecosystem' according to the Park Service. The drastic loss of wetlands will further threaten the survival...of wading birds like the...wood stork whose population have plummeted, along with other endangered and threatened species.

"Given that the Army Corps of Engineers approves 99% of all applications to drain or fill wetlands, it may not be surprising that the agency has green lighted rock mining in the Everglades. But the sheer scale of the project dwarfs all others. As The Washington Post points out, the Lake Belt Plan will destroy more wetlands in the Everglades than the Corps permitted to be destroyed nationwide last year. And the sheer audacity of promoting this massive destruction under the guise of 'restoration' surely marks a new low in bureaucratic double-speak. 'We're paying the Army Corps \$8 billion to save the Everglades, not destroy them,' says Sewell. 'If they don't know the difference, then we'll ask the federal courts to explain it to them.'

Editor's Note: Although this article was written in 2002, examining various web sites suggest that the project has begun and the administration has been attempting to place obstacles in the way of all legal actions against the Lake Belt mining plan. The following data is dated February 2005 and comes from the Wilderness Society web site.

Handicapping Everglades Restoration Campaign. Just as implementation was about to begin on the \$7.8 billion Everglades restoration plan approved by Congress, Interior Secretary Norton closed the Interior Department's coordination office in West Palm Beach. She also moved the director of the effort, Michael Davis, to non-Everglades work. Norton said she was simply trying to eliminate "bureaucratic overhead," but U.S. Rep. Mark Foley (R-FL), told The Washington Post he considered the closure "penny-wise and pound-foolish." Save Our Everglades called it "a huge step backwards." In April 2002 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved permits for the 50-year Lake Belt mining plan, which would destroy 15,000 acres of Everglades wetlands. Conservation groups have gone to court to challenge that mining. With the restoration project

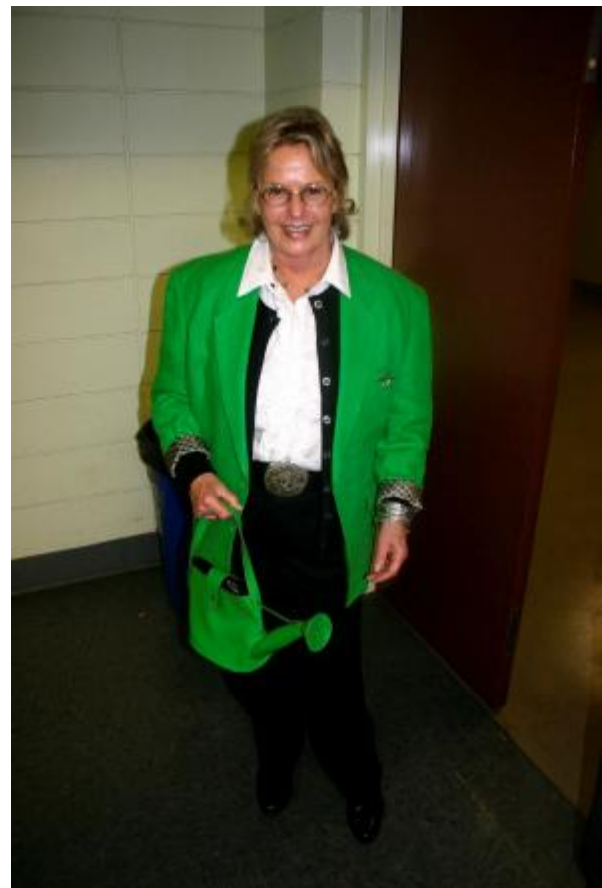
having fallen two years behind over the past four years, the state of Florida announced a plan in October 2004 to take steps on its own to reenergize the project.

Dues for Membership Have Gone Up

After at least 25 years, our club has voted to raise the annual dues from \$12 to \$15. **Dues for next year are now due.** Please pay at the meeting or by mail to Harold Charns.

Slate of Officers and Directors for 2005

At this month's meeting we will have nomination of officers and board of directors for next year.



Here is **Francine Henderson** dressed in her gardening best at our December holiday get-together. Note the watering can purse.

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 \$15. To join the BSSF, mail your name(s), address, telephone number, and check made payable to the BSSF to:
Harold Charns, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

BSSF 2004 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	Carl Carter	510-661-0568	carl.carter@varianinc.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Bruce McCoy	415-641-7511	bmccoy@inreach.com
SECRETARY	Dorothy Dewing	650-856-1441	
TREASURER	Harold Charns	415-861-6043	Harold@States-Street.com
DIRECTORS:	Keith Anderson	650-529-1278	e2keith@earthlink.net
	Roger Lane	650-949-4831	rdodger@pacbell.net
	Marilyn Moyer	650-365-5560	MarilynMoyer@comcast.net
	Peder Samuelsen	650-365-5560	Pedersam@comcast.net
	Peter Wan	408-605-2637	peterkwan@earthlink.net

BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

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SAN FRANCISCO

Roger Lane
Newsletter Editor
551 Hawthorne Court
Los Altos, CA 94024-3121

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