

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



April 2006

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 20, 2006** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco

April Program

Bromeliads from the Jungle to the Laboratory

This month, our speaker will be **Jeffrey Kent** of Kent's Bromeliads in Vista, California. For those of you who do not know Jeffrey, he is in charge of the production and hybridizing at the Kent's Nursery in Vista, California. Jeffrey is an avid collector, especially in plants from Ecuador, and is a specialist on the Guzmanias.

He will talk about his adventures in the Americas specifically looking for certain types of Bromeliads. Then he will explore in detail what is involved presently in bringing the plants back to the United States compared to 30 years ago. He will talk briefly about hybridizing and the characteristics he is selecting for. Finally he will review the final selection process and speak briefly about the evolution of plant propagation from seed to tissue culture production.

Each of Jeffrey's visits to our society has been impressive – both in terms of his interesting topic and the fantastic plant table that he provides.

Some of the members ordered plants from Jeffrey that he will bring to the meeting. He has requested that we pay for these plants with a check made out to him (he'll probably take cash as well).

Bruce McCoy who has been working with Jeffrey on this plant order reminds us that some items are limited and he may not have enough of some items for all of us. In that case Bruce suggests we'll have to raffle off the plants that are limited.

Even if you did not order any plants, Jeffrey and the club will also be providing a plant table. That will be plants for the collector as well as some for beginners. There should be some small Puyas on the plant table that will do well outdoors.

April Refreshments

Harold Charns and **Bruce McCoy** signed up for refreshments this month.

March Meeting

Dennis Heckart was our speaker last month and he showed us the transition of his landscape from the time he moved to Hawaii and started planting bromeliads to the present. Dennis also showed us some of the wonderful hybrids that David Shigii is creating in Hawaii. David also has a *Hohenbergia* in spike that is huge (guess this is the reason we have to be selective in picking the *Hohenbergias* we can grow). Dennis also showed us some plants that John Arden has hybridized on a trip that Dennis and David made to the mainland.

Dennis contributed many plants that made the trip from Hawaii and some of his new *Billbergia* hybrids were in great demand at the plant table. Thanks, Dennis for a great show and we all be visiting you soon in Hawaii.

Fantastik Is a Household All-purpose Cleaner

This article by Kathy Dorr, who was editor of the *Bromeliad Hobbyist*, is taken from the March 2001 *Caloosahatchee Meristem*, newsletter of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society. Even though this is an old article, this product is still available in the grocery stores.

“**W**hat can I say?” After writing about Fantastik for last month’s *Hobbyist*, I searched for the most infested plant I could find. It turned out to be a *Vriesea saundersii* and it was loaded with scale. There wasn’t a leaf that wasn’t infested.

I took the plant out of the pot and shook all the dirt from the roots and removed all the dead and dying leaves from the base. Then I washed every leaf with Fantastik, dislodging every visible scale. I rinsed the plant thoroughly under the faucet, then repotted in a new pot and soil. The finished touch was to lightly spray the entire plant with Fantastik, leaving it on until the next day when I watered the plant well.

It has now been a month and I checked the plant. There is no perceptible scale. There is considerable damage throughout the plant, but it appears to be only the type acquired from the scale, not from the use of Fantastik. The plant definitely has a healthier appearance.

This was a plant that was so badly infested that I would normally have disposed of it rather than attempt to clean it up. This procedure was really quite easy and certainly easier than rubber gloves and insecticides such as I have been using (and not always with the rubber gloves!). It didn’t smell bad either.

This past week I hunted out some other plants and applied the same procedure. These had only very light infestations of scale and should quickly show whether this process is damaging in any way.

Of course I had to try this. The things I will try just to report to you. I only talk a lot, and may or may not know what I am talking about, but I try to pass on to you the experience to those that do not know more.

Fantastik does not list any ingredients on the label. The label does state that it “contains no phosphorus”. Webster says phosphorus as a chemical is a non-metallic, poisonous, active element of the nitrogen group.

I checked a couple of other all-purpose cleaners. 409 contains trisodium phosphate along with water, surfactants, builders, solvents, and dye. Top Job contains no phosphorus, but has cleaning agents (anionic surfactant and butyldiglycol), quality control agents, ammonia, color and perfume. This doesn’t mean a whole lot to me, but you should not spray it in your eyes. I don’t think I want to throw a lot of all-purpose cleaners around the plants unless someone else has tried them first.

I did treat 3 soft green-leafed tillandsias with the Fantastik. After three weeks, the plants looked fine, even better than before. There was a lot of

scale, but apparently it had not had time to do much damage to the plant. So far, I do not see any return of the scale. So, try Fantastik; you may find that it is fantastic.

Tillandsia hamaleana

This article by Chet Blackburn, is taken from the November 1997 The Bromeliad News, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Sacramento. **Marilyn Moyer** grows this plant quite easily, but she grows it in New Zealand moss rather than in a pot. It is a decent pupper and Marilyn often donates one to the plant table.

This highly prized Ecuadorian native is only occasionally seen in collections, and it has a reputation for being somewhat difficult to grow. Perhaps this is because it should not be grown as dryly as most other tillandsias. Coming from shady rainforests from sea level to 6,500 feet, it requires high humidity to thrive, and its foliage burns easily at high light levels. It may take a little extra effort on the grower's part to maintain it, but that effort will be well repaid.

This is one of the nicest tillandsias in bloom, bearing a compound inflorescence featuring lavender-blue flowers with white throats. The petals, which are large for a tillandsia and fade to a lilac color as they age, are not unlike those borne by *Tillandsia cyanea*. Flowering lasts for about a month and is supposed to produce a fragrance, but it apparently takes a more sensitive sense of smell than mine to detect it. Perhaps it is fragrant at night. I have never noticed even a hint of fragrance in mine, though it is a member of the subgenus *Phytarrhiza*, a subgenus in which fragrance is common.

Given the high humidity it needs to maintain the turgid pressure of its foliage, the plant has a pleasant form in the vegetative state, resembling an apple-green *Vriesea*.

Without the humidity it requires, or grown in too bright light, it wilts readily and looks like it is on its last legs, which, if the situation isn't rectified,

it may be. Though it grows as an epiphyte in the wild, it does better in a pot under cultivation. Try growing it more like a guzmania than a tillandsia and you should be able to bring it in to bloom.

It is frequently available from well-stocked tillandsia nurseries, though at a higher price than other species. Pay the price; you won't regret it.



Here is a photo by Shigeko Matsuse of *Tillandsia hamaleana*, courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

World Bromeliad Conference 2006

This is another reminder of the upcoming conference that will be held in San Diego from **June 6 through June 10**. Registration to the conference for a member of the Bromeliad Society International (BSI) is \$165 (\$195 for non-BSI members but registration makes you a BSI member) through April 30th. After this, the rates go up to \$200 and \$230, so it behooves you to register now. Registration gives you admission to all the activities except some of the tours. There are a great number of seminars of interest to the hobbyist as well as a day of technical seminars about revision of the *Tillandsia* genus. **Peter Wan** is one of the seminar speakers. Your registration also includes a free tour to see some members' collections in the San Diego area, attendance at the Rare Plant Auction, and the Banquet that closes the Conference. Of course,

you can't attend the conference without checking out the plant sales and plant show.

Some of our members will be entering plants in the Plant Show and we encourage you to enter plants as well. If you are not able to attend, one of our members who is driving can bring your plants. San Diego needs as many plants as possible because the current plant count is low for a World Conference.

Go to the BSI website (Events/San Diego 2006) for specifics on the conference and to register: www.bsi.org.



This is the flower spike of *Tillandsia platyrrhachis*, one of the plants that Jeffrey Kent is bringing to our meeting this month. Photo is by Peter Tristram and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Strybing Annual Spring Plant Sale

We will be selling bromeliads at the 39th Strybing Arboretum Spring Plant Sale on Friday evening, **May 5th** from 5-8 PM and Saturday, **May 6th** 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). Dan Arcos will be helping Marilyn, so you may contact Dan (phone 415-821-7377 or e-mail darcos@pacbell.net). We will have a signup sheet for volunteers at this month's meeting. 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.

University of California, Berkeley Plant Sale

We have a new opportunity to 'meet and greet' the public at the Berkeley Botanical Garden Sales, **Friday, April 28th**, 5-7 pm and **Saturday, April 29th** 10-2pm. Here's our chance to wow the East Bay public with our great society and our great members. (We'll set up about 3 on Friday). We'll have a couple books, some plants, and newsletters, our newspaper article, membership forms and several smiling faces. And this years postcards too. Ideally we need a couple people at the table at all times. (This will allow us the opportunity to shop while we're there too.) All you East Bay members have a chance to 'meet and greet' and avoid the commute to San Francisco's Strybing Spring Sale in May. If you'd like to help, please e-mail Carl Carter (carl.carter@ekit.com). And Carl will be signing up you volunteers during our April meeting.

Plant Expedition to Western and Southern Bolivia

There will be a 16 day tour to Bolivia from October 28th - November 12th led by Dr. Guillermo Rivera who will be our speaker this June. It leaves from La Paz and is a small tour traveling in 4x4 vehicles. There are 4 spots left on

the tour. This is really more an exploratory trip than a tour. It is being advertised as a search for flowering cactus, but based on two previous trips with Guillermo, where there are cacti, there are also bromeliads. And there are many bromeliads in Bolivia. Dr. Pierre Ibisch, a bromeliad taxonomist has assembled a CD that shows where all the known bromeliads from Bolivia can be found and Guillermo will have a copy of this disc to help find and identify the bromeliads. Since Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in South America, roads and hotels will not be as upscale as on most of Guillermo's tours. **Peter Wan** has already signed up for the trip and perhaps some of our members can help fill some of the remaining spots. If you want more information on this trip, go to Guillermo's website: www.cactusexpeditions.com.ar.

	Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Texas
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The Other Native Americans

This article by Gene McKenzie is taken from the July 1995 issue of Caloosahatchee Meristem, newsletter of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society.

In the May 1995 Meristem, we published the list from Harry Luther's office of bromeliads that reside in Florida. So, we thought it would be interesting for you to know the other states that can boast a population of bromeliads. My research was confirmed by Harry Luther and Edna Sieff at the *Bromeliad Identification Center of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens* in Sarasota. The following is the list of the distribution of bromeliads other than Florida.



Tillandsia lotteae is one of the many bromeliads endemic to Bolivia. Photograph is by Derek Butcher and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

HECHTIA	
<i>H. texensis</i>	Texas
<i>H. glomerata</i>	Texas
TILLANDSIA	
<i>T. baileyi</i>	Texas
<i>T. bartramii</i>	Georgia
<i>T. recurvata</i>	Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas
<i>T. usneoides</i>	Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana,

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.

BSSF 2006 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	Carl Carter	510-661-0568	carl.carter@ekit.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Bruce McCoy	510-835-3311	bruce.mccoy@gmail.com
SECRETARY	Dorothy Dewing	650-856-1441	
TREASURER	Harold Charns	415-861-6043	Harold@States-Street.com
DIRECTORS:	Keith Anderson	650-529-1278	e2keith@comcast.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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OF
SAN FRANCISCO

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

Go to WBC 2006. You will have a great time!
