

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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## September 2006

# NEWSLETTER

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Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 21, 2006** 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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### September Program

#### Recent Bromeliad Expeditions to Venezuela

This month we are fortunate to have **Bruce Holst** from the Selby Botanical Gardens as our speaker where he is Interim Director for the Center for Tropical Plant Science and Conservation and Herbarium Curator. He also worked diligently for more than 20 years on a nine-volume set (*Flora of the Venezuelan Guyana*) cataloguing nearly 10,000 species of plants in Venezuela. He also has found time for many field trips into various plant habitats. He is probably the world's expert on the bromeliads of the Tapuis and he has had several plants named in his honor.

This month he will provide a digital slide show on recent expeditions to Venezuela. If this is the same show that he gave at the recent world conference in San Diego, you do not want to miss it. Bruce is also an outstanding photographer.

He will be bringing a few plants for our plant table from Selby and I am sure they will be unusual.

### August Refreshments

**Dan Arcos** and **George Nauyok** signed up for refreshments this month.



Here is **Bruce Holst** in the Selby Botanical Gardens where he is the Herbarium Curator. Photo is courtesy of Charles E. Dills

## July Meeting

**Betty Patterson** from Dallas, Texas gave us a slide show on the Aechmea genus last month. She has all of **John Anderson's** slides and has added more slides. Since the Aechmeas genus is so large we did not know what to expect, but she is assembling a group of slide shows on Aechmeas and this is her first show which included a group of unusual Aechmeas that we do not get to see – either because they are so large or they are very rare.

The Show-and-Tell plant selection was grand. Everyone must have brought something to show. **Dennis Westler** went above and beyond in his description of the show plants.

Betty also provided a wonderful plant table including some unusual Aechmeas. Speaking of plant tables, our plant table was huge and only got larger as many of the people who brought show-and-tell plants donated them for the plant table. Thanks to all who helped to make this one of the largest plant tables we have ever had.

## Refreshment Signup for Remainder of Year

At last month's meeting, your editor was asked to list who has signed up for refreshments for the remainder of the year:

OCTOBER 19	No one has signed up
NOVEMBER 16	Brian Ransom and Dennis Westler

## The San Francisco Home and Garden Show 2007

We will be showing at the 2007 San Francisco Home and Garden Show at the Cow Palace. (<http://www.gardenshow.com/sf/>) It runs from March 21st through March 25th, 2007. That's Wednesday 'till Saturday, 9:00am to 8:00pm and Sunday 9:00am to 6:30 pm. We will have 300 sq ft in the main display area. We need labor to grow nice showy plants, help setting up before, people to man the information table, and then clean-up afterwards. It's going to be a big project for us, but like all our events it will be rewarding and fun. Casper ([caspercurt@comcast.net](mailto:caspercurt@comcast.net)) is in charge. Casper, Dave Feix, Dan Arcos, and Tom V. are already involved. Mark your calendars and schedule a week of vacation now!

## October Bromeliad Show and Sale

Remember our October Sale in Golden Gate Park. This is the first time we have joined with the Orchid Society for a sale and this is the first time we have had a sale in October. We will have a non-judged show and sale in the Recreation Room (our monthly meeting room). **Set up is Friday Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 to 8 PM.** The sale is **Saturday and Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM to 5 PM.** We had a sign-up sheet at the last meeting and had a very good response for workers. (Carl will post the sign-up as a reminder). Additionally Roger, Marilyn and Tom V. are ordering plants and they will need help in pricing and labeling plants before the sale. If you can make it to the peninsula, consider getting dirty potting and pricing plants a few days before the sale.

These plant sales are such an important event for our society, we really need as much support as you can provide. You can help in three ways:

- Entering some of your premium plants in our Bromeliad Show. We really want a lot of plants for this sale/show
- Selling your own plants
- Working at the show/sale.

There will be signup sheets at this month's meeting for working at the sale and/or the show.

Remember if you plan to sell your plants, **25%** of the sales will be kept by the club. **Unlike our June sale we will need double-tags for the sale plants. One of the conditions of selling your plants is helping out at the sale for a minimum of 4 hours during Saturday or Sunday.** Let's try not to have everyone sign up only for the last 4 hours on Sunday.

If you are entering plants in the show and have any questions about the show, **Dan Arcos or Roger Lane** will answer them. If you have any unusual entries, please let us know so they can be properly staged.



This is *Tillandsia australis* in bloom at George Nauyok's home. We saw this plant on our tour of the San Francisco gardens in July. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**.

## Grooming Plants for Show

This article by Odean Head of Houston, former president of the BSI and a master bromeliad grower, is taken from the May 2005 newsletter of the Houston Bromeliad Society. Even though **our show will not be judged**, this article provides useful information for showing our plants in their best light. After all, we

want the orchid growers to fall in love with bromeliads.

**Our** show is a little later this year but all of a sudden time is running short for getting ready for it. This is our best opportunity each year to show the public how beautiful our bromeliads can be when grown in this area. I know how easy and tempting it is to come up with all kinds of excuses for not entering plants. However, we all have something that will add beauty to the show and our best effort will not be attained unless we all participate. So group – let's get motivated and start getting our plants ready.

Remember, they do not have to be worthy of top show awards in order to add beauty to the show. We will be discussing some of the criteria for selecting potential entries and grooming procedures that can add beauty and judging credits to the entry.

### SELECTING PLANTS

Sometimes we have a problem getting started in our selection process because we are looking for a plant that is ready to be on the head table. I usually have to make several trips through my collection before I get very many plants to consider. I can move on faster with this process when I decide to defer making the final evaluations and selections until after the grooming has been attempted. This will allow me to be a little more lenient in my initial evaluation. We should also familiarize ourselves with the show schedule and try to get entries in as many of the categories as we can to make it a better balanced show.

My grooming procedures do not change that much from year to year but I usually learn something new each year that helps me. So share with us at the meeting any points you may have that has not been covered. You are already aware of some of these procedures but it could still be helpful to review them.

### CLEANING PLANTS

I use a water hose with a spray nozzle that will furnish a good solid stream without too much pressure to wash out dirt, tree leaves and other

debris. After the first wash, look deep into the plant for tree leaves and dirt that did not come out. Be careful about digging too much with your fingers because you may break or tear a leaf. It is best to use some long tweezers or a surgical hemostat to pull out the debris. You can loosen the stubborn dirt inside the base of the outer leaves with a small artist brush. Rinse the plant again to remove loosened dirt and debris. Clean the surfaces of leaves individually. The cleaning intensity will vary from plant to plant depending on how delicate the leaf is and whether it has scurf or not. If it has scurf, be careful not to remove any of it because it may not regenerate and will be obvious to the judges. On most of my plants I will suds each leaf with ivory soap and a heavy artist brush. If the leaves are not too treacherous I will pull each leaf through my fingers to loosen the more stubborn dirt. This should also remove any dead scale that might be attached to the leaf. If the scale does not rub right off it may still be alive and the plant should be treated with Safer Soap. Scale on show plants is a big NO. Next, I rinse the plant with clean water again using the spray nozzle.

I then set this plant to one side and work on the next plant while that one is drying. You really can't tell whether some plants are clean or not until they dry. You may have to go back and touch up some spots that you missed and rinse again (be sure to get all of the soap out). If you have any salt problems, which I do, you will need to take some additional steps to remove the salt deposits. Sometimes, another soaping of the salt area will do the job. I will usually let soap stay on for a little while and work on another plant. Then I will rub the salt area lightly with the brush or my thumb. Be very careful – some plants bruise easily and you will damage the leaf. I have been successful using pineapple juice on some of the stubborn salt deposits. Some of our members use club soda for this purpose successfully. When you use the pineapple juice or any citric juice, be sure and rinse it well or it may leave a sticky shiny film on the plant and be penalized by the judges. The club soda will not leave a sticky residue. Again, I will have to wait until it dries before I know for sure that the salt deposits are

gone. Some of the procedures may have to be repeated. It is almost impossible to completely remove the residue from some of the darker leaved plants and I will usually go ahead and enter them when only faint traces are visible. Fortunately, most of the Houston area has converted their water supply to surface water that corrected most of this problem.

### **REPOTTING**

It is usually easier to repot a plant than it is to clean the pot. This is also a good time to select a pot size that is in proper proportion to the plant. Also, be aware of what constitutes a standard pot. A pretty pot will probably be classified as decorative and be placed in the Artistic, Decorative Container Division under a different set of judging rules (If you have some pretty or unusual pots, you should consider entering this division). Pot the plant at the proper depth. This means putting the plant into a slightly larger pot. Do not pot it too deep unless you have something to hide because the judges may assume you are hiding something and take off points accordingly. Be sure to center the plant in the pot as near as possible (you may need a larger pot in order to do this) and check to be sure it is upright. It is very important for the plant to be sitting straight. Set the plant down and look at its conformation from both the top and from the side. Straighten the plant if needed and firm the soil around it so that it will stay straight. Be sure the mix on top is neat. Some use a special top dressing, but I don't think it's necessary so long as it is neat.

### **TRIMMING LEAVES**

Leaf damage is a common cultural problem in growing bromeliads and you can bet money that the judges will see any that exist. They can also usually see when you have trimmed leaves. If you have done a good trimming job they may not take off any points at all unless too much was required. Before you start cutting try to visualize what effect the cut will have on the plant's appearance. If you have to cut a leaf tip back too far it could change the overall shape of the leaf as well as its conformation. Normally, you should trim a leaf tip to its natural shape but how should you treat a fingernail tip? Analyze the damage and the effect of the trim before you act. You



may want to only trim the brown, changing its shape rather than take off the color. You may decide not to trim at all if it will do more harm than good. In those cases, the judges can usually see your dilemma and be lenient if there is little else wrong with the plant. Some trimming of leaf edges close to the base can also be done when there are no spines but try to keep a smooth leaf edge.

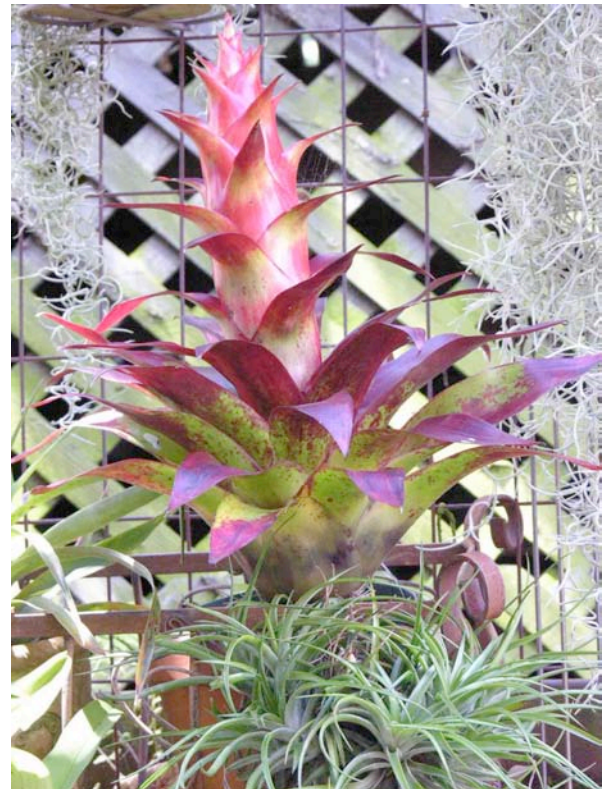
#### **FINAL EVALUATION FOR SHOW ENTRY**

Look at the overall appearance of the plant. Does it appear healthy and well grown? Does its foliage have the good sheen or scurf appropriate for the plant? Are the colors rich and the markings clear? How about its symmetry; is it appropriate? Is the size close to maturity? Check the leaf damage. Is it too severe? Does it need more grooming? CAUTION – Do not be over-critical. You can expect to be short in one or more of these areas since there are few if any perfect plants.

#### **TRANSPORTING PLANTS**

Getting all your plants groomed for show can be frustrating enough without any trauma on the way to the show. Take some extra time in packing your plants to make sure they do not damage each other or topple over. You would be smart to take some of your cleaning tools and maybe some extra mix with you for a last minute check just in case you have a little mishap on the way.

a member of our society for several years. She never lost her enthusiasm for Bromeliads. They were one of her passions.



This is *Tillandsia imperialis* at Brian Ransom's house. We saw this plant on our tour of the San Francisco member's gardens. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**.

### **Marge Laney Passes Away**

A celebration of the life of Marge Laney will take place on Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup> 2006. It will take place at St. Nicholas Parish, 437 Lincoln Ave. Los Altos, CA. 94022 It is at 3PM. Directions will be provided at the Bromeliad meeting on Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Marge had been in an assisted living apartment for a number of years in Auburn and she had been

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**BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO (BSSF)**

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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.

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**BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL**

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

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<b>Next month, Tom Vincze will be our speaker!</b>
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