

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



May 2006

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, May 18, 2006** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco

May Program

Dennis Cathcart

Most of us know **Dennis Cathcart** and some of us have even visited Tropiflora, the huge nursery in Sarasota, Florida that he and his wife Linda run. If you have not met Dennis, you probably have received or read the Cargo Report, issued each quarter and packed with a description of a variety of plants that will whet any plant lover's appetite. It has been 3 years since Dennis has visited our society. His topic will be on Terrestrial Bromeliads or lithophytic bromeliads in Brazil. (Don't know what lithophytic means? Come to the meeting!) You should not miss it this meeting. Dennis has done extensive traveling to bromeliad habitats and is a superb photographer.

As an additional incentive, Dennis will provide our plant table as well as bring plants that some of us pre-ordered.



Here is a picture of **Dennis and Linda Cathcart** with their baby. Photo is courtesy of the Tropiflora website.

May Refreshments

Roger Lane and **Tom Vincze** signed up for refreshments this month.

April Meeting

Jeffrey Kent was our speaker last month and he showed us slides of plants from habitats that have been used to create bromeliad hybrids that are commercially distributed around the country. Jeffrey said that he has made 60 trips to Central America and South America in the last 20 years. Over the last 20 years, bromeliad collecting has changed such that seed is collected now where plants used to be collected and often the plants did not survive. Among the *Guzmania* hybrids he is working on is trying to create one with a bright yellow scape. Apparently, yellow is the most difficult color to retain as he hybridizes. As a commercial grower, he is concerned in creating a plant that can withstand rugged treatment as it goes from the nursery to the store. His yellow-scaped plants are still too tender.

Jeffrey also provided a fine plant table as well as treating those of us who had pre-ordered plants some very unusual and uncommon species.

University of California, Berkeley Meet and Greet Event

Casper, Dan, David, Dennis, Gus, Marilyn, Peder, and Tom V. volunteered at our information table at Berkeley. The first day we were located above the sales area, behind a rope, separating motor traffic from the sale. The second day we were moved into the sales area, next to the gardens information table. We passed out Dan's new postcard and answered questions about our society, and bromeliad culture. A BSSF banner would be nice to have hanging from the table in the future.

As always it was a pleasure to visit with our members in a more relaxed setting than the rushed meetings. The public was welcoming and interested. And it's great to talk to the garden staff about their new plans for the garden. The bay bridge and traffic into the city is a real barrier

for most of the east bay plant community. A car pool or van pool might help out tremendously. We left the garden an 8 inch pot of *Aechmea recurvata* in full color (Bird Rock's Roundup-ready clone of var. *recurvata*).

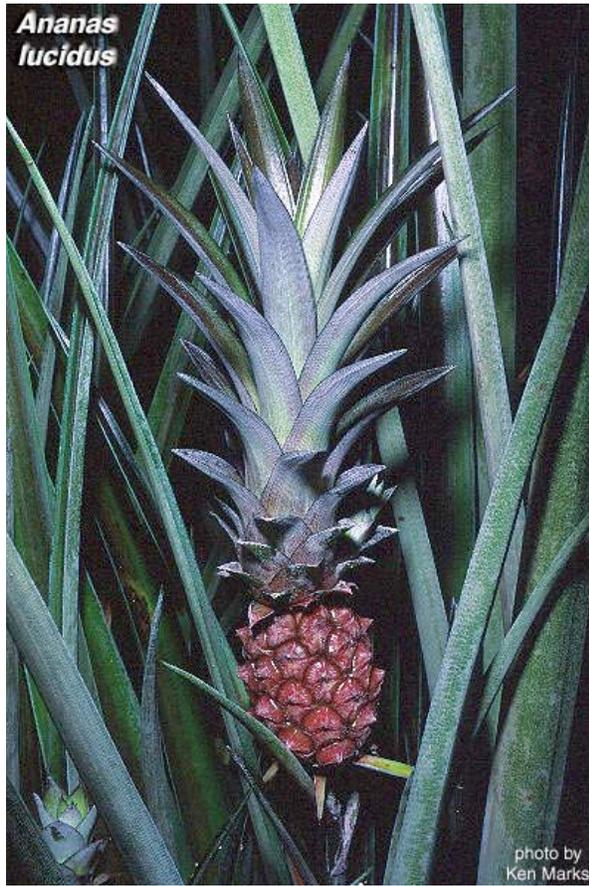
The Pineapple

This article by Bill Seaborn is taken from the April 1997 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida.

Many of us know that Columbus discovered America, but few of us know that he also discovered the pineapple on his second voyage to the New World. However, it was almost 300 years later that explorers carried pineapples probably from Tahiti to their present home of Hawaii. They were once so rare and costly that they could only be afforded by kings. In 1901 James Dole started raising and packaging pineapples on a twelve acre plantation in Hawaii. Through hard work and mechanization, this fruit is now available world wide and at a reasonable price. The Dole cannery in Hawaii, on Oahu, is the largest fruit cannery in the world. They grow 16,000 acres of pineapples on the island of Lanai in addition to extensive plantations on the main island of Oahu. From the original 16,000 acres plantation, Dole's plantations now exceed 30,000 acres.

Most fruits start as a single flower, but the pineapple is a multiple fruit which grows from approximately 150 individual flowers. These flowers eventually fuse together and become the "eyes" in the pineapple fruit. The pineapple is commercially propagated by three methods: crowns from the top of the fruit, slips from the base of the fruit, and underground stolons. After the soil has been plowed, polyethylene strips are laid across the fields to prepare for a new crop. The plastic helps to retain moisture and insecticides. Slips from mature plants are hand planted to start the new crop. However, most plantations are now using the crown of the fruit as it is less expensive to obtain. Controlled flowering is initiated by hormone applications. It

requires 7 to 8 months from flowering to fruit harvesting. The fruit is picked when it develops some yellow color which results from the loss of chlorophyll and indicates that internal ripening is occurring. The fruit is soon harvested and quickly transported to the cannery or to fresh fruit packing sheds.



This is a photo of *Ananas lucidus* – not the type of plant we buy in our grocery stores, but a gentler plant with spineless leaves. Photo is by Ken Marks and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

How to Shop for a Pineapple

This article Barbara Ostmann is taken from the March 1997 Better Homes and Gardens magazine as reprinted in the April 1997 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida.

Think of it as the friendly fruit. In the Caribbean West Indies, pineapples dangling in door ways have long been a sign of welcome. Using this fruit as a sign of hospitality spread to Europe and parts of the United States, where its familiar shape often is found on gateposts, in doorways, or on tableware.

There's nothing more hospitable than serving up sweet wedges of pineapple. Come spring, fresh pineapples appear in greater numbers in markets, although they're available year round. A trip through the produce section reveals rows of whole fruit alongside ready-to-eat fresh pineapple that is peeled, cut, and packaged. This year, you'll find new hybrid pineapples which are twice as sweet as most pineapples and contain four times the vitamin C.

Squeeze and sniff. Don't be shy when shopping for pineapple. Look for the ones that are plump; the larger the fruit, the greater the amount of edible meat. The leaves (the crown) should be bright and fresh, with a deep green color. Contrary to popular lore, the ease with which a leaf can be pulled out is not a sign of ripeness. Gently squeeze the fruit; it should be slightly soft to the touch, yet firm, with no leaks. Sniff the base of the fruit, too; it should have a sweet, fragrant aroma. The peel color is an indication not of ripeness or maturity, but of variety. Avoid fruit that looks old or bruised, has brown leaves, or has brown spots on the peel, or black spots on the base.

The new golden variety of pineapple is larger, plumper, and heavier than most varieties, and the exterior shell and interior flesh have a rich golden tone.

Serving – the sooner, the better. Unlike most fruits, a pineapple does not continue to ripen or sweeten after it is picked. Use pineapple as soon as possible after purchase. You can store the whole pineapple at cool room temperature for three or four days, but for best results, refrigerate it. Chill cut fruit, covered, for up to three days. A medium pineapple weighs about 3 pounds and yields about 3 cups of cut-up, peeled fruit. Go

ahead, dig in! One cup of pineapple contains only about 50 calories.

Peeling is a snap. To peel a pineapple, start by twisting or cutting off the top. Using a sharp knife, cut off stem and bottom ends on a cutting board. Stand the fruit upright and slice off the prickly outer peel from top to bottom.

The peeled pineapple will be studded with “eyes” that lie in diagonal spirals around the fruit. Make V-shaped cuts along rows of eyes, then lift out and discard the strips, removing a row of eyes at a time. Halve or quarter the fruit vertically, or cut it horizontally into thin or thick slices. In modern varieties of pineapples, the cores are only a little harder than the surrounding flesh and can be eaten, especially if thinly sliced. However, if you think the core is too hard, remove it.

An alternative method is to cut off the crown and base, slice the pineapple into wedges, then cut away the peel. Of course, there is also the option of buying the pineapple already peeled and cut.

Try it with cinnamon. In Hawaii, you’ll find pineapple in almost every dish, from curries and salsas to sandwiches, seafood, and desserts. At home slip some pineapple cubes onto seafood skewers before grilling or broiling, or grill thick wedges alongside chicken. Good flavor matches include brown sugar, mint, cinnamon, cloves, and allspice. In Asia, it is common to sprinkle a little salt on fresh pineapple. Fresh pineapple contains a natural enzyme which prevents gelatin from setting. For gelatin salads with a taste of pineapple, use canned pineapple instead.

Strybing Annual Spring Plant Sale

This is a “Thank-You” from **Marilyn Moyer** for our members who worked and contributed plants for the 39th Strybing Arboretum Spring Plant Sale on **May 5th** and **May 6th**.

I want you to know that we had a very successful sale take place. Of course we didn’t make a dime on this, but we are finding out that people are stampeding to our tables and emptying us of our

beautiful and not-so-beautiful bromeliads. We ran out of Tillandsias on the first day. All of the colorful ones like Billbergias went in just a few minutes! We have adopted one of the plant men from down below in the nursery, David, who takes what is left over and grows it on to huge multiples. He performs magic on the Billbergias. Each year he saves some of his stock so he won’t run out. When I arrived Friday the table already was full of huge plants.

We want to thank **Dan Arcos**, who organized the volunteers and designed the postcard advertising our society and **Dennis Westler**, **Brian Ransom**, **Stacey Michaels**, **George Nauyok**, **David Feix**, **Harold Charms**, and **Tom Vincze** who helped at the sale.

June Plant Sale

Our combined plant sale with the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society will be on June 17th and 18th this year at the County Fair Building. Setup will be on Friday, June 16th from 3 PM to 8 PM. Sale schedule is

- Saturday - Setup: 8 AM to 9 AM, Sale: 9 AM to 5 PM
- Sunday - Setup: 8 AM to 9 AM, Sale: 9 AM to 4:30 PM, Clean-up: 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM

This is our **only annual event that brings in money to support** the society. Start setting aside your plants for the sale and save these dates to help on the sale.

Since this is 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 display area
- Selling your own plants
- Working at the show/sale.

Remember if you plan to sell your plants, **25%** of the sales will be kept by the club. We are using the bar code system again. If you are selling plants, you must determine in advance how many bar codes you want made for each sale price (for example, 10 plants @ \$5.50, 15 @ \$10.00, etc.).

You do not need to use all of the priced bar codes, but they **all must be made in advance of the sale** and placed on the plant or pot before the sale. You will be able to change the prices during the sale as long as you have a replacement priced bar code, so determine all prices you will need in advance. Because **Keith Anderson** is very busy working on the sale for WBC 2006, at this point we do not know who will be making the bar codes. Notify **Roger Lane** of the price and quantity of bar codes you need and we will get them made.. **We need as much advance warning as you can provide on making the bar codes.** If you can not make our May meeting, call Roger at 650-949-4831 or e-mail at rdodger@pacbell.net.

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.

Even if you are not selling plants or entering plants in the show, we need your help. The more workers we have, the less time each of us has to put in – and we have more time to shop for some of those plants we just have to own. If you have never worked at one of these sales, it is really fun. There will be sign-up forms at the May meeting, but even if you do not sign up try to come to the sale.

Please **start saving your boxes and bags** for the sale. We never seem to have enough by the second day of the sale.

One of the Sticky Bromeliads that You Should Grow

Many of you are reluctant to grow any of the sticky/spiny bromeliads such as Dyckias, Hechtias, and Puyas. Since they are terrestrials, they need a large pot or should be grown in the ground. *Dyckia choristaminea* is an exception. The plant is endemic to Brazil where it grows on open rocky ground at about 80 meters altitude.

The spines on the plant are very fine as shown in the photograph below. A 4 ½ to 5 inch pot will hold six to ten individual plants although you wouldn't know there are so many plants in the pot because the dark green leaves of the plants overlap one another. Its bright yellow flowers are larger than on most Dyckias. And an additional bonus is that the flowers are fragrant.



This photo of *Dyckia choristaminea* by Derek Butcher 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 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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Go to WBC 2006. You will have a great time!
