

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



June 2006

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 15, 2006** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco

June Program

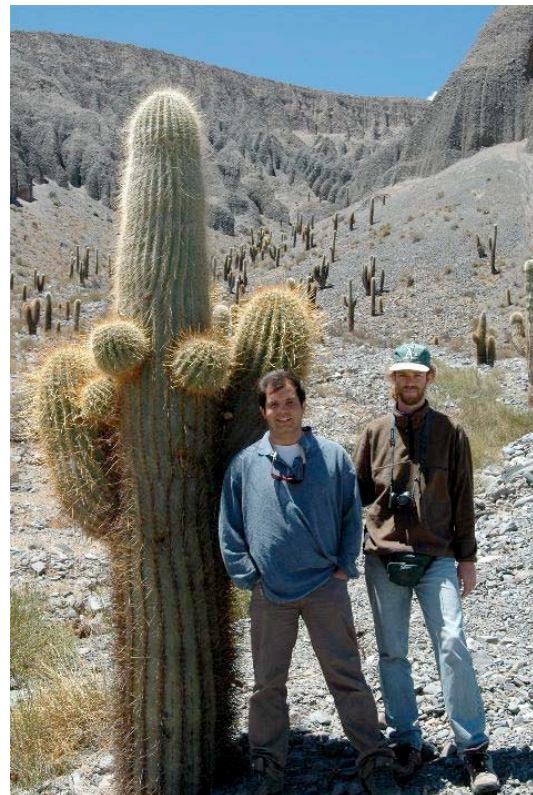
Guillermo Rivera

Some of us know **Guillermo Rivera** because he has been the guide on many of the trips some of our members have taken to Argentina over the last few years. Guillermo has a PhD in botany and has taken us on trips to northern Argentina which is rich in cactus and bromeliads. Most of the true miniature tillandsias are found here, such as *Tillandsia capillaris*, *T. bryoides*, *T. myosura*, *T. peiranoi* to name a few. We also discovered that *T. duratii* is not in any way endangered because we saw these plants for several days over great distances.

Guillermo has put together a show on some of the bromeliads that you can see in Northern Argentina so come to the meeting for a treat.

June Refreshments

Bruce McCoy and **Brian Ransom** signed up for refreshments this month.



Here are **Guillermo** and **Diego**, our guides for plant expeditions in Argentina. Photo is courtesy of Joe Quijada.

May Meeting

Dennis Cathcart was our speaker last month and we visited Mexico, Honduras, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia – all in less than an hour. His topic was “Lithophytic Bromeliads” which means bromeliads that grow on rock surfaces. Many of these rocks are cliffs which were extremely difficult to access - much less photograph the plants growing on the rocks. As usual, Dennis’ habitat photography is amazing. He also brought lots of plants for sale, so we all went home with plenty of material to mount or pot.



Tillandsia xiphioides v. *xiphioides* is a tough, dry growing tillandsia that is widespread in Argentina and its flowers are fragrant. Photo by Derek Butcher is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Why Do Some Bromeliads Never Flower?

This article by Kathy Dorr is taken from the May 1993 newsletter of the South Bay Bromeliad Associates.

This is a sixty-four dollar question from California. Actually, all bromeliads do flower, even if it takes them 150 years to attain that achievement, as in the case of *Puya raimondii*.

Most of us would prefer not to wait 150 years and so become a bit impatient when some of the species do not flower. One of the most provoking experiences is that certain species seem to flower regularly for one person or in one section of the country, yet that same species may rarely ever flower in another area. Of course, there is a reason but we may not be able to explain it. There are so many conditions that may enter into this problem that no one can give the specific reason in each case.

We do know, however, that some species are much more tolerant than others to different growing conditions, such as light and temperature and this problem becomes one of local conditions. Certainly, the water question is an important one and rain water is unquestionably the best although not always easily obtainable. Water on the neutral to acid side is best; however, many Aechmeas, Neoregelias, Billbergias, etc. will tolerate water slightly on the alkaline side.

Vrieseas certainly want acid water and the ones that do the best with me are those that I put outside in a shade house where they receive plenty of rain. Also, I always pot Vrieseas in osmunda alone and almost all other bromeliads in an acid medium such as leaf-mold, German peat, osmunda and sand. I think that osmunda could be used for practically all bromeliads but it should not be allowed to break down to a soggy ‘sweet’ mess.

Look at and feel the texture of your plants. If the leaves are stiff, spiny, spotted or covered with gray tomentose scales they will most likely need much light and air. If the leaves are glossy and thin as with most Vrieseas they will need more syringing, shade, and protection from too many air currents.

Light hours, cool temperatures, dry spells, rainy moist seasons are all natural causes for having normal flowering seasons for the different species. However,

any one of these conditions along with the improper chemical content of water or food may cause the plant to continue to grow year after year, produce offsets and otherwise appear healthy but it may not produce flowers. These problems are generally local and may or may not be solved by the grower.

I, myself, for years have been unsuccessful in even growing *Guzmania musaica* in my greenhouses. This species just doesn't like our conditions, water, or situation. I thought it might be the altitude but when I found it growing natively in Columbia at 4000 feet above sea level and then in another area ten feet above sea level, I decided that elevation was not the cause, but unfortunately, I have not yet found the answer for its happiness in my location; it grows happily and flowers in St. Louis, Baltimore, Washington, and New York.

I have some *Vrieseas* which I collected in Brazil eleven years ago. They continue to grow but do not increase in size nor do they bloom.

As a corrective suggestion I would say to try different potting media than you are using now, different light, a new location in your greenhouse, a different procedure on watering, or a different feeding mix. A change in any one or more of these conditions may be the reason that will bring out flowers on your bromeliads. Flowering of bromeliads can be induced in many cases by the use of certain bases and chemicals.

I have been working on this problem for several years. This past winter, I made a startling observation and I am hoping to give some definite information on this subject in the near future but first, certain planned experiments will have to be made.

Window Sill Size Bromeliads

This article by Herb Plever is taken from the November 1995 BROMELIANA, newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.

Good growing light is not easy to come by in a New York area apartment or house, so many indoor growers grow their bromeliads right on their window sills. Since most window sills are only 3 or 4 inches wide, a space which can accommodate only small potted plants (or many small, epiphytic *Tillandsias* mounted on cork bark), the leaves of even small potted plants will be pressed against the window panes. That

becomes somewhat uncomfortable for the plants when the panes are ice cold during the winter months.

You can easily widen this space by mounting a shelf flush with the sill, using right-angle brackets. With a 10" to 12" wide shelf you can grow most medium size bromels on your window sills. Of course, your choice of plants to grow there should take into account the quality and quantity of available light coming into the window. You must consider the exposure (east, south, north, or west), whether it is free or obstructed, if the window is high up or at a low level and how many hours of sunlight it receives.

You may recall the article in the February 1994 issue of BROMELIANA by Carol Johnson entitled "The (Very) Small *Vrieseas*". She listed only a few of the many small or medium-small window sill plants to choose from. What brought this topic to mind was the flowering of my *Vriesea triligulata* (?).

I bought 4 or 5 small *Vrieseas* from her on our 1994 spring order, including *V. modesta* (which flowered with an appropriately too modest bloom) and *V. triligulata*. The latter plant has discolored leaves (green on top and purple below) and has a diameter of only eleven inches. The inflorescence sports eleven branch spikes (oh the power of high strength fertilizer!) and it is already 15" tall and the spikes are still growing. The scape and primary bracts are maroon but the floral bracts are still bright green which I suspect will turn out to be their color. Red would have been preferable yet it's still a very nice plant.

The flowers on my plant have not yet emerged, but it is already appears that this plant does not conform to the description for *V. triligulata* in Dr. Lyman Smith's Monograph which bears his parenthetical notation "(! Mez – dubious)". I will have to pursue the question of its identification after anthesis.



Here is *Vriesea triligulata* in spike. Photo is by Bromeliário Imperialis and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

We will try to offer many window sill plants in our next order. Obviously, there are literally several hundred small Tillandsia species which can be grown epiphytically on your window sill. For potted broms try:

Aechmeas: *A. brevicollis*, *A. nudicaulis*. These need at least medium to strong light.

Billbergias: most non-spreading Bills will fit a window sill, but will want good to strong light. Examples: *B. nutans*, *B. Windii*.

Catopsis: *C. morreniana*, *C. nutans*, *C. sessiliflora*, *C. subulata*. These will grow well in low to moderate light.

Cryptanthus: any of the many Crypts you will see at the November meeting. They need at least moderate light to color up, but too strong light will wash out the color and markings.

Guzmanias: *G. angustifolia*, *G. sanguinea* var. *brevipedicellata*. They will do well in low to moderate light.

Neoregelias: *N. ampullacea*, *N. lilliputiana*, *N. olens*, *N. paucifolia*, *N. punctatissima*, *N. tigrina*. These cute small mostly stoloniferous plants need medium to strong light. They will quickly multiply and form clusters in a small pot.

Nidulariums: *N. billbergioides*, *N. microps* var. *bicense*. These plants will take medium to strong light.

Tillandsias: *T. cyanea*, *T. dyeriana*, *T. leiboldiana*. These plants will do best in moderate to medium light.

Vrieseas: The following plants will do well in low to medium light but will prefer the latter exposure: *V. bleheri*, *V. carinata*, *V. Fire* (a mini *splendens*), *V. flammea*, *V. guttata*, *V. heliconioides*, *V. lubbersii*, *V. racinae*, *V. rodigasiana*, *V. simplex*, *V. sucrei*, *V. triligulata*.

Some of these bromels can also be grown epiphytically. For instance, I have gotten good results epiphytically growing and flowering *Catopsis morreniana*, *C. nutans*, *C. subulata*, and *Tillandsia dyeriana*. I soak them bi-weekly with my Tillandsias.

Get Your Priorities Right: Bromeliads First

This amusing article is by Keith Ryde and is reprinted from the July/Aug 2000 BROMELETTER, Journal of the Australian Bromeliad Society.

Ruby and I were privileged to have a close friendship with one of the true “Ladies” of the Bromeliad world and one of its finest collectors – the late Glad Lawrence.

Glad lived on a triple block at Baulkham Hills, and, as well as a most extensive bromeliad and other rare plant collect, she also looked after and nurtured several aviaries on her spacious grounds. Whenever the general monthly meetings became a little boring or a little too acrimonious, Glad would turn to Ruby and say: “Wouldn’t you rather be home potting?”

Her husband, Ed, was one of Nature’s gentlemen and was a fine leather worker, mailing whips, etc. for leading equestrians. When Ed died, her son-in-law, who was quite wealthy, insisted she come and live with him and his wife in Wahroonga and purchased a cottage for her in Turramura. The only drawback was that her collection there was not as large as of old. However, this was probably just as well, as Glad was now in her eighties.

Following Glad’s invitation to afternoon tea, Ruby and I found ourselves sitting down to a gentle tea with Glad, the ever gracious lady. The tea cups were of such fine manufacture my main concern was that my clumsy male hands might snap off a handle.

Suddenly there was a sound which I recognized as a pistol shot. This was not hard, after having worked many years in a bank and encountering such situations on more than a few occasions (pistol practice, etc.). I was amazed when I turned in the direction of the shot to witness a bloodstained figure appear over the back fence, crash to the ground, leap to his feet, race across the yard and out the front gate.

Next appeared a puffing policeman who barked: “That your car out front?” Struck dumb, I could only nod. “Keys” was the curt command. Awestruck, I obediently obeyed and handed them over. Suffice it to say that in all the time I had driven our old Holden, I had never spun the windows. Well, this day they sure were spun and the policeman disappeared in a shower of gravel and dust up the road in hot pursuit. I turned to Glad to reassure her that there was no danger.

The reply: **AND HE FELL ON MY BEST CANISTRUM!...**

You just have to get your priorities right: **BROMELIADS FIRST!**

P.S. I got my keys back with grateful thanks for my “cooperation” but they never did catch the escapee who had disappeared up a gully.

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**

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.

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 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.



Here is one of the many forms of *Tillandsia capillaris* that is found in Argentina. This photo by Ken Marks 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.

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

The Journal is published bimonthly at Orlando, Florida by the Bromeliad Society International. Subscription price (in U.S. \$) is included in the 12-month membership dues: single (\$28.), dual (2 members at one address receiving one Journal -\$30). Address all membership and subscription correspondence to: Membership Secretary, John Atlee, 1608 Cardenas Drive NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110-6628

BROMELIAD SOCIETY
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!
