

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



February 2008

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 21, 2008** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco

February Program

The Billbergia Genus

Roger Lane will provide an overview of the Billbergia genus supplemented with a slide show of the species and many of the spectacular hybrids. We are trying to get a lot of billbergias on the plant raffle table this month so be sure to come and bring home an easy to grow bromeliad.

February Refreshments

Carl Carter signed up for refreshments this month. Can someone else help Carl out with refreshments?



Billbergia alfonsi-joannis - Mulford B. Foster Best of Show Award Shown by Joyce Brehm
17th World Bromeliad Conference, San Diego, California, June 6 - 11, 2006

Here is *Billbergia alfonsi-joannis*, Mulford Foster winner at the 2006 World Bromeliad Conference in San Diego. Grower is Joyce Brehm and the photo is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

January Meeting

Last month we were treated to the wonderful show that Dan Arcos and David Feix presented to the California Horticultural Society last year. If you missed the meeting or want to see this slide show, visit our website: www.sfbromeliad.org.

Thanks to all of the people who provided so many plants for our raffle last month. Everyone went home with several plants.

B.L.B.E.R.J.R

This article by Don Beadle appeared in the December 1987 issue of The Inflorescence, newsletter of the South Bay Bromeliad Associates and was originally printed in the November/December 1987 Journal of the Bromeliad Society. It has appeared in our newsletter before, but Don is such a humorous writer we are reprinting it.

Billbergias will inevitably seek out and occupy the darkest, deepest, and dreariest corners of your greenhouse. Once there, they will degenerate into large, dense masses of lanky, green, scale-infested foliage and will eat their tags. I do not expect you to take my word for this astonishing phenomenon. The proof lies in your own greenhouse. Notice the occupant of the lightest, brightest, and most desirable area. Does the genus on its tag begin with a "B"? I thought not. You are probably looking at the "N"-word, or the "T"-, or the "V"-words, but surely not a "B". Maybe even the "C"-word, but never a "B"-word. You will find most of your "B" tags, if indeed you find tags, in the dank, dark, dismal locations.

Billbergias behave this way because they are troubled by feelings of inferiority engendered and constantly reinforced by the callous and insensitive grower. A study of the psychological profiles of certain billbergias has revealed one problem to be a deep-seated envy of the longer blooming period of their more colorful cousins. The billbergia compensates for this shortcoming by prominently displaying its reproductive apparatus and thereby encouraging the promiscuous and indiscriminate creation of hordes of illegitimate offspring. The

consequence of this behavior in the bromeliad world is much the same as for other life forms. The billbergia suffers from a loss of self-respect, declines in social status to the lowest level, experiences growing discontent, and finally resorts to revolution.

Although hardly fashionable in this day and age, I confess to having barely repressed feelings of sympathy and empathy for the cause of the beleaguered billbergia. I know others of similar sensitivity must feel the same. In fact, I have recently observed a small but growing grassroots movement among the more radical billbergia sympathizers. Resentment has been skyrocketing since the recent plunge of the billbergia spot market coupled with the poor outlook in billbergia futures. Imports are off dramatically as is domestic production. A billbergloomly outlook, at best!

It was inevitable that an increasingly militant group of radical billbergia growers would tire of waiting for the government to do something about the billbergia crisis. It appears that, finally, relief is at hand. Last week I attended a clandestine meeting of radical fringe billbergia activists at a secret location. In attendance was the cream of internationally noted billbergia growers, hybridizers, and their ever-present groupies. Feelings ran high. As emotions flamed I became afire with billfever and willingly accepted the mandate thrust upon my shoulders to carry the message to the world that the day of justice and equality for the billbergia is finally at hand.

As chairman of the Action Committee for the newly organized BILLBERGIA LOVERS BROTHERHOOD FOR EQUAL RIGHTS AND JUSTICE RIGHT NOW (BLBERJR) I have, accordingly, prepared a preliminary list of demands to be presented to an emergency meeting of the BSI board. A synopsis of this list is as follows:

1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY HOUSING. Effective immediately, billbergias shall be fully integrated into the "Country Club" areas of the greenhouse. No more tenement and barrio living under the benches and behind the trash cans. No more overcrowding, high

carbohydrate diets, and scale bugs. Billbergias are naturally friendly and gregarious and prefer to live in neat, single-family dwellings in a nice neighborhood.

2. **EQUAL HEALTH AND SANITATION SERVICES.** Billbergias are by nature a clean and tidy group, but require assistance to stay varmint-free and well groomed. Billbergias shall, therefore, be examined at least once a week for various varmints and groomed until they say, "Quit". Further, billbergias should not have to occupy the same pot with their long-dead ancestors. Periodic removal and prompt disposal of billcorpses will begin immediately.
3. **THE ENVIRONMENT.** Billbergias like clean water and fresh air just as well as the next bromeliad. They are primarily nonsmokers, preferring fully functional trichomes. Billbergias shall, therefore, be provided at all times with climatic conditions equivalent to those on any hilltop in Vista, California, or a reasonable facsimile thereof. Further, the watering of the billbergias shall be on a plant-by-plant basis and must be performed in accordance with minimum standards as established by the Brother Beadle Watering and Meditation Institute of Corpus Christi, Texas.
4. **BIRTH CONTROL.** The immediate imposition of stringent birth control procedures is imperative. Recently, the media disclosed the details of a sordid and shameful incident where pollination was attempted for no other reason than that the two parties were in bloom at the same time. Really! This has got to stop before all billbergias look as much alike as do neoregelias.
5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EXHIBITION.** A study group empowered to develop and implement a system for handicapping show plants of all genera other than billbergia must be formed now. This system should allow billbergias to win top awards at least 50 percent of the time until compensation is made for the prejudiced and

discriminatory judging which has victimized the billbergia in the past.

Deliverance for the billbergia is at hand! Billbergia growers of the world, UNITE! Down with the nasty neo, the vile Vriesea, and the deceitful Dyckia!

Remember, we are watching you. Billbergia hot lines are being organized. BLBERJR is now hiring out-of-work revenue agents to conduct covert spot checks of your greenhouses.

You have one month for voluntary compliance before we undertake drastic steps.



This is *Billbergia* Bunniss Factor, a very colorful hybrid with Domingos Martins and Strawberry as parents. Photo is by Jim Irwin and is reprinted from the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Mis-Information

This article by Brom Spider is reprinted from the July/August 2000 issue of the Journal of the Gold Coast Bromeliad Society, Queensland, Australia.

Most bromeliad growers or collectors who have been growing these plants do not often take notice of plant tags for care purposes. These are just an overall view of what you should do, but when it comes to the general public this is where it can and does strike terror into the very heart of the novice.

The one care note that really gets up my nose is the one that states these are air plants, especially tillandsias. As soon as the normal person reads this they have an immediate assumption THAT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE WATERED!!!

How wrong could they be. Just because these guys grown on trees and do not appear to hold water, they still need to be misted or hosed just like a normal garden plant. I think if they were meant never to be showered, they would have a hump on their leaves like camels have so they can store water. It's OK to tell people that these plants are easy to look after and that you don't have to water them as often as other plants, but they always give this dumb surprised look of "Really, I didn't know that." A classic case of this is *Tillandsia usneoides* (Spanish Moss or Grandfather's Beard). People often say to me that their bunch of this has died and when I asked them did they water it they usually say: "But it is an air plant and you don't have to water it".

This is what I mean about mis-information. I think it is up to us to really inform the public and the novice growers how much or little watering is required of particular plants.



Tillandsia usneoides is one of the bromeliads that the general public often does not water. If you do water it, it will reward you with a green fragrant flower. Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



Billbergia eloiseae is a beautiful species that one does not see very often. Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Welcome, New Members

- Michelle Derviss and Liam O'Flaherty
- Miloanne Hecathorn
- Yolanda Huang

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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OF
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Our dues for 2008 are due!!!!
