

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



September 2008

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 18, 2008** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,
San Francisco

September Program

**A Tillandsia Cornucopia: a tour
through the latest tilly
species, hybrids, and cultivars**

Our speaker this month will be **Paul Isley**. Paul is a partner with Jerry Robinson in Rainforest Flora, the tillandsia nursery in southern California. For those of you who have been involved in this hobby for many years, you are probably familiar with Paul's 1987 book Tillandsia that has an excellent overview of the Bromeliad family with an emphasis on the tillandsia genus.

Last year, Jerry Robinson gave us a fascinating story of the business end of running a bromeliad nursery. This year we get to learn about the plant end of the nursery.

At this point your editor is not sure whether Paul is providing the plant table and selling plants, but you can assume he probably will be bringing plants.

September Refreshments

Terry Martin, Michelle Derviss and Liam O'Flaherty signed up for refreshments this month.



This is one of the tillandsia hybrids that **Paul Isley** has made. Tina Parr has *seleriana* and *ionantha* as parents. Photo is by Paul Isley and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

August Meeting

Last month **Peder Samuelesen** showed us the beauty of Argentinean Patagonia and some of the bromeliads he found driving south from Cordoba. These bromeliads included tillandsias, dyckias, and deuterocohnias and they were seen only on the first few days heading south. The further south he went, the cooler it got and conditions became more inhospitable to bromeliads. During the trip, Peder experienced a bus breakdown in the middle of nowhere, an antique car rally, St. Bernard dogs, ski resorts, and many lakes. He ended his show with previews of his next show: the penguins of Patagonia and a trip north to Iguacu Falls. Thanks Peder for a fascinating trip to Patagonia.

September Bromeliad Sale

As you know, we are having our second autumn bromeliad sale and display of plants from **19-21 September**. We will be setting up the show and sale on Friday in the Recreation Room (our regular meeting room) from 3 to 8 PM. We had a number of people signing up at last month's meeting to help set up. **But we need more of you to bring display plants preferably on Friday, but we will accept more on Saturday morning.** Our members are good bromeliad growers as is evidenced by our monthly Show-and-Tell. The more display plants that we have, the better our sale will go.

The show and sale will be from 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday and Sunday. We could use some more help on these days. Remember, this is our own sale – we are not piggybacking on the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society. Our members are needed to make this event a success.

If you wish to sell plants and you have not spoken to **Harold Charms** with your barcode prices, contact him immediately. As in our June sale, the vendor-club breakdown is 75-25%.

We need boxes and bags for the customers. Bring these on Friday or Saturday morning

WE NEED HELP FROM ALL OF YOU TO MAKE THIS SALE A SUCCESS!!!!

The Male Species

This article by Anne Bartel from Australia is reprinted from the October 1999 Bromeliana, newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.

Will we ever understand them? These quaint characters seem to crack over absolutely nothing, performing like John Cleese in *Faulty Towers* over such trivial things. And worse – my male species vehemently hates bromeliads with a psychotic passion.

I think it all started when I, being a female, was allotted a space in our very large shed, about the size of a dunny toilet (a small outhouse shed – Ed.) As I started to collect and grow bromeliads; well, foam boxes came in, 10 or more bags of Quincan, more pots, peanut shell, and perhaps, lots of other little things. It was not deliberate, but before I knew it I had taken over half the shed. Analyzing our problem, I think this was the beginning of where the hate for my plants set in.

My male species has mechanical, woodworking and fencing tools in abundance. How was I to know that if you cannot find the ends of a roll of fencing wire, it is only natural to cut bits in between if you are in a hurry with a new project? The dramatic act he performed regarding this was horrific.

Taking pliers and losing them (not on purpose) caused lots of trouble. The day I discovered that his long nosed electrical pliers were perfect for cleaning up clumps of *Dyckias* had me enthusiastically telling him of my inventiveness. Apart from the aesthetic look of my arms, (after all, it stopped me from looking like a needle addict), I thought he would be pleased with my intuition. Sorry, **WRONG**. I had not put them back – temporarily mislaid.

Things got worse. The male species' camping and fishing trips were postponed for two years running, as he had to build two extra shade houses on his holidays and I heard his explanation to mates on the phone when canceling. "No

alternatives mate, we are being overrun with the bloody things.”

After a few minor disruptions, like blunting the pruning saws and the woodworking screwdrivers, taking over the wheelbarrows and his spraying rig, and a few other odds and ends, the impatient MALE species totally banned me from one corner of the shed and she obeyed!

There had been no major marital disruptions or shed conflicts for nearly a month (apart from my losing his home brew marker pen) how petty! And I did leave the portable phone in the shade house overnight. Just my luck it rained! Gee, I put up with a lot of swearing over that episode.

Being a kind female species, I forgave all the tantrums about the above and proceeded on to my next exciting venture. I was right into collecting wood, and decided to use the Male species drop-saw (which was in an unbanned area of the shed). I was so proud as a female species to have proficiently sawn up my different shapes of wood without losing a finger that I just had to report what I had done. I now know that “Silence is Golden” has true meaning. Would I knowingly have wrecked his precious saw? How was I to know that the dirt inside old wood wrecks the saw blade?

Just as I am trying to write this last paragraph, the female species has to sign off and run, to find out why the male species is yelling out hysterically. Something about using the Toyota Celica as a ute instead of a car (A ute is a purely Australian invention with the back seat and roof of the car lopped off to create a small pickup – Ed.) Am I supposed to walk to my destination with the plants, so that they do not tip over?

I know it is unbelievable with all the persecution I suffer, but there are some other male aliens that actually feel sorry for this male! To create peace and love of these special plants, I even, out of desperation, tried calling him “Derek” occasionally (as of Derek Butcher fame) hoping that some brom fanaticism and scientific vibes might occur in his brain from the airwaves, but the connotations of his new Christian name had me drop the idea very quickly, for the sake of Derek’s life, and poor Derek does not even know

us! I will admit Derek is one male species worth saving, just for the sake of our plants, even if he did turn around at Townsville! (A needle about a planned visit that Derek cut short because it was too hot. Still it did not stop her from anointing Derek to be included among the few non-male supremacists. – Ed.)

Yes, I am still married, and I will repeat the CAIRNS STUDY GROUP’s advertising motto: BROMELIADS ARE VERY EASY TO GROW!!! I have been to hell and back, without actually putting one plant in a pot.

(Signed) – A female species

Puya

This article by Karen Andreas is reprinted from the October 2005 [Orlandiana](#), newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida.

There are more than 170 species in this genus. They are, for the most part, high altitude bromeliads, growing terrestrially (in the ground) and saxicolously (on rock) in the highlands of the Andes where the days are hot and the nights are cool. Some even grow in snow and in drought conditions. Their leaves usually are green, grey, or blue-green in color. Flower petals are blue, green, red, or purple with the bracts pink, red, brown, and green colors. The inflorescence can be simple or branching. They are often regarded as quite hardy and virtually indestructible.

The largest known bromeliad is *Puya raimondii*; it takes 80-100 years to mature and bloom and often reaches a height of 35 feet. Among the more dramatic Puyas, *Puya alpestris* stands out for its metallic teal-blue flowers with brilliant orange pollen. Puyas range in size from 1 to 30 feet and they are known for their clumping growth habit, so space is necessary to cultivate these bromeliads.

Grow them in very sunny areas in soil that drains well. These bromeliads grow on the rocky slopes of the Andean highlands and do not like wet feet.

Puya alpestris is found on the dry slopes of south central Chile. Its leaves are 2-3 feet with hooked

spines and a sharp point. It takes 5-10 years to flower, with one clump having more than one inflorescence.

Puya berteroniana also is found in Chile. This species is larger than *alpestris* for which it is sometimes mistaken. The leaves of *berteroniana* are covered in white scurf, making them look gray-green in color. The flowers are denser than *alpestris* and their color is green.

Puya mirabilis is found on rocky slopes, from central Bolivia to northwestern Argentina. Its leaves have heavy scurf, giving them a gray-green color. The flowers are greenish white and scented.

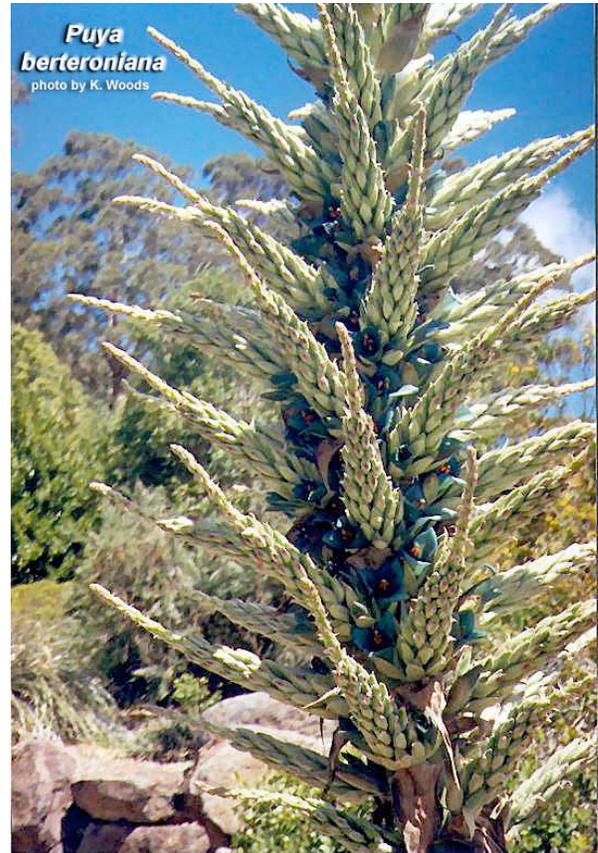
Puya raimondii, the largest known bromeliad, grows at high altitudes on shrubby rocky slopes in Peru and eastern Bolivia.

Puya spathacea comes from Argentina. Padilla referred to this as a “robust bushy plant, soon forming a clump 5 to 15 feet wide, with flowering stalks about 4 feet high.” The inflorescence is bright red with tubular flowers that have blue petals.

Puya venusta grows on coastal rocks and in sand in Chile. This small species is heavily armed and its branched inflorescence is less than two feet high. Its flowers are purple. Padilla regarded it as a “highly ornamental” bromeliad, well suited to the landscape.

Welcome New Members

- Paul Leong
- Steven C. Provost
- Steven R. Studer



Flower spike of *Puya berteroniana* is designed as a perch for the bird pollinators. Photo is by K. Woods and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Some Interesting Puya Facts

This article is reprinted from the October 2005 Orlandiana, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida.

The name Puya is from the Mapuche word meaning “point”. Mapuche are the Pre-Hispanic Amerindian inhabitants of central and southern Chile and southern Argentina. Mapuche people speak Mapudungun. Mapuche means “People of the Land.”

Many Puya species are monocarpic. A monocarpic bromeliad dies after flowering and producing seed, without ever producing offsets or pups.

Speckled Bears living in the Peruvian Andes eat Puyas.



Flower spike of the *Puya mirabilis*. Your editor's plants are now in flower. Photo is by Derek Butcher and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



Photo of the *Puya spathacea* flower spike is by Derek Butcher and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



This is the beautiful flower spike of *Puya alpestris*. Digital cameras do a better job of capturing the true color than film cameras. Photo is by S. Carter and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



Photo of the gigantic *Puya raimondii* is by Jamie Bush and 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

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, Dan Kinard, 6901 Kellyn Lane, Vista, CA 92084, USA, membership@bsi.org

BROMELIAD SOCIETY
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Come to meeting this month to learn about Tillandsias!
