

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



FEBRUARY 2011

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 17, 2010** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

February Program

Eye Candy from Florida

As you will see later in this newsletter, our society is participating in this year's Pacific Orchid Exhibition. **Peter Wan** made a trip to Florida to select specific plants for us to sell at this event. He visited Tropiflora nursery and Michael Kiehl's nursery. The few people who have seen the plants he picked have used adjectives like outstanding, beautiful, etc. to describe them. Fortunately you can get a preview of these plants because Peter has a slide show of these and other plants at these nurseries. Peter says there is also a surprise topic in his show. Don't miss this meeting!



Here is **Peter Wan** on one of his many adventures. You will have to ask Peter what this plant is.

February Refreshments

Armin Lindegger and Patrick Aaron signed up for refreshments this month.

Dues are Due

A new year has begun and dues are due: \$15 for a single membership and \$20 for a family. Pay Harold at the meeting or mail to Harold. See back page for details.

January Meeting

Last month **Peder Samuelson** gave us a show on the New Orleans Bromeliad Society International 2010 World Conference. Since he and **Marilyn Moyer** were the only people from our society who attended the conference, we were able to experience New Orleans vicariously through Peder's wonderful photography with an appropriate musical background. Thanks, Peder for a great show.

Lost Bromeliad

Last month, **Marilyn Moyer** received a *Neoregelia* pup from Dan Arcos. When she got home she could not find it. If anyone has seen this plant, please return it to Marilyn. It was about 7" long, dark green, no tag, and neo pup shape. It was from a blue centered *neoregelia* mother plant.

Pacific Orchid Exhibition

Our society will be selling plants at this year's Pacific Orchid Exhibition that takes place from 3 March through 6 March. We need help in staffing the sales tables. If you did not sign up at last month's meeting please contact Carl Carter to see what vacancies you may be able to fill.

Why is it called that?

This information is taken from August 2005 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago.

In order to understand better and appreciate the plants one grows or studies, it is often useful to determine where their names came from and what they mean. The name "bromeliad" can be traced directly to a Swede who likely never saw a living plant of the family that bears his name.

In 1703, Charles Plumier, French missionary, botanist and renowned explorer of the West Indies, proposed the name *Bromelia* in his Nove Plantarum Americanum Genera in honor of his contemporary, the prominent Swedish medical doctor and botanist, Olaf Ole Bromell. The names that Plumier published, including *Bromelia*, became invalid when the International Botanical Congress fixed 1753, the publication date of Linnaeus's Species Plantarum as the starting point of binomial nomenclature. The

result was that Linnaeus is credited with the naming of *Bromelias* instead of Plumier.

Derivation of the names of the genera in the bromeliad family can be interesting and sometimes provide additional insight into the genus. Genus names for bromeliads have been created in three ways:

- Names honoring botanists, patrons, discoverers or other persons (36 genera)
 - *Billbergia* – for Olaf Bromelius, Swedish botanist
 - *Guzmania* – for Anastasio Guzman, Spanish Pharmacist and naturalist
 - *Hechtia* – for Julius Gottfried Conrad Hecht, German consular to the King of Prussia
 - *Tillandsia* – for Dr. Elias Tillandz (originally Tillander), Swedish physician and botanist
 - *Vriesea* – for William Henrik de Vriese, Dutch botanist and physician
- Descriptions composed of Greek or Latin components (18 genera)
 - *Canistrum* – from the Greek "kanistron" (a kind of basket carried on the head)
 - *Catopsis* – from the Greek "kata" (hanging down) and "opsis" appearance
 - *Cryptanthus* – from the Greek "cryptos" (hidden) and "anthos" (flower)
 - *Nidularium* – from the Latin "nidus" (nest) and "arius" (pertaining to)
 - *Orthophytum* – from the Greek "othos" (straight) and "phyton" (plant)
- Common names used for the plants by the indigenous people (2 genera)
 - *Ananas* – from the Guarani Indian name for the pineapple (Brazil and Paraguay)
 - *Puya* – from the Mapuche Indian (Chile) word meaning "point"

Neoregelias The Blushing Hearts of the Bromeliad Family

This article by Paul Dunning is reprinted from the February 2005 newsletter of the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society

Sunlight is one of the most important aspects to consider when growing neoregelias. Leaf color and growth are determined to a great extent by the light factor. In their natural state, they grow under diverse conditions. Tough leathery-leaved forms can take full sun; others with softer foliage dwell under dappled light; green-leaved forms take shade. When grown in too strong light, the plant becomes bleached and loses its rich appearance; too little light and its color never truly reaches its optimum and leaves can become spindly.



Neoregelia 'Angel Face'

Photo by Shirley Grills-Konefal

Neoregelia Angel Face is certainly a brilliant blushing neo. Photo is by Shirley Grills-Konefal and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Avoid extremes of light, heat, and cold. Mist frequently. There seems to be a majority of judgment among neoregelia growers that fertilizers with nitrogen should be avoided or at least applied sparingly. Neos obtain most of their nutrition from the soup in their cups. Bird droppings and leaves all contribute to feed the plant. Their cups should not be allowed to dry out, although they can be flushed to avoid the buildup of too many leaves or even mosquito larvae.

When neos are used as landscaping subjects, it is much easier to change their positions if they are in containers. A change in light conditions may necessitate a change in plant location; it might not be thriving well in its present location, or it may have grown too large for its location in your landscape and moving it is much easier if in a container. Pot culture also tends to keep the leaves off the ground where they are susceptible to rot and insects. With a container you can also tilt the pot so the plant faces towards you and you

can get the full beauty of it; or you might want to remove it from your landscape to bring inside to enjoy, or perhaps to the club brag table. Hanging baskets bring out the best in miniature neoregelias. They seem to do best when grown with a minimum amount of soil, bright light, and light watering.



Neoregelia 'Catlan's Leopard' photo by Carol Morris

This photo of *Neoregelia* Catlan's Leopard by Carol Morris is one of the many blushing neoregelias. Photo is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Only in America...

The following article is taken from the January 2003 newsletter of the Greater New Orleans Bromeliad Society.

- ...do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front
- ...do people order double cheeseburgers, extra fries and a diet coke
- ...do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and fill our garages with worthless junk
- ...do we use answering machines to screen calls and then we have call waiting so we won't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place
- ...do we have drive-up ATM machines with Braille lettering
- ...do we buy hotdogs in packages of ten and buns in packages of eight
- ...do banks leave both doors open and chain their pens to the counters.

Ageotropic

The following article is taken from the January 2003 newsletter of the Greater New Orleans Bromeliad Society. The article is by Kenneth Quinn

At the November meeting, I showed how I mounted some *Tillandsias* such as *T. pseudobaileyi* upside down, and used the above word to describe how they grow in nature – a word that means they grow without regard to the direction of gravity. Paul Isley in his book on this genus describes several species as growing in this manner, in particular *T. bulbosa* and *T. magnusiana*, and remarks that in cultivation growing them in a horizontal or upside down fashion can be beneficial by preventing rot. Certainly, I have found this to be the case; previously I had trouble getting *T. bulbosa* to survive even a year but now I have a clump of second generation plants coming into bloom. I suspect that any of the pseudo bulb or dry-growing species would like this treatment.

When in Florida, I noticed something related. Nearly all the *Tillandsia bartramii*, *T. simulata* and *T. fasciculata* plants growing on horizontal tree limbs were rooted on the bottom half of the limb, although the mature rosette pointed upward. This indicates to me that something discourages seedlings from becoming established on the upper half of the limb. I have thought quite a bit on this and suspect that the drying effect of direct sunlight may be the problem. I have also seen an article in a botanical journal on *T. recurvata* on oak limbs in Florida; about 87% of all colonies on horizontal limbs were on the side or bottom. So being upside down is no problem for many *Tillandsias*!



Here is *Tillandsia pseudobaileyi* that demonstrate the Ageotropic characteristic. Photo is by Ken Marks and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

A Good Peat is Hard to Find

This article by Herb Plevier is reprinted from the November 1996 newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society, Inc.

A good potting mix for bromeliads should have the following characteristics:

1. It should be well-draining and friable so that the water immediately and rapidly drops down and out through the drain holes and the pieces of the mix should be large and irregular enough to make air space for maximum aeration and oxygenation.
2. The ingredients should have an acid pH of between 5.5 and 6.
3. Yet it still must be able to retain moisture so that the mix is evenly damp but not real wet.

Growers may have different preferences for what ingredients should go into a mix and in what proportions, but the resulting medium must conform to these characteristics if it is to be successful. Ingredients with an acid pH usually used in mixes include peat moss, redwood, pine and fir bark, tree fern (haapu), osmunda fiber, etc.

What you use may depend on availability and price. Over the years I have experimented with and changed my formulas many times, but I seem to have stayed with my current recipe for at least several years. I have been using 25% to 30% **fibrous** peat moss, 20% shredded redwood bark, 20% giant perlite, 20% shredded tree fern and 10% cork bits. I am quick to admit that at current prices this is a pretty expensive formula, because the prices for tree fern and cork bits have gone out of sight. I use them because I still have a goodly supply. You probably will do almost as well with just peat and giant perlite.

It is important to note that I wick-water my potted plants, so that the medium is kept evenly and consistently moist. If you top-water indoors without wicks, such a formula will likely dry out quickly and you will have to water either once or twice a week.

All of which finally leads me to the title of this article. Depending on where it comes from, peat moss varies radically in texture. Michigan peat is very powdery; much of it washes out and what doesn't packs down after repeated watering so

that it chokes aeration. Canadian peat moss comes in standard, semi-fibrous and chunk forms.

I used to purchase “fibrous” Canadian peat moss from OFE in Miami. The quotation marks around the word are apt because it is not at all like German peat we used to get. It has both fibrous and powdery material. I used to eliminate the powder by run running the peat through a sieve I made by overlapping two pieces of small-holed chicken wire. I then discarded the stuff that passed through and kept only the fibrous material. I wound up with 50% of the package, but fortunately I can afford this hobby. Suddenly however, OFE no longer sells the fibrous Canadian peat moss, and it is very hard to find anywhere else. The chunk style peat moss that they sell comes in discs larger than a quarter. As the peat is the primary moisture-retaining ingredient, it should be evenly dispersed throughout the medium, and I fear you would have to use too many chunks to do this and the medium would become too wet.

I suspect that fibrous peat moss has become scarce because of lower demand by nurseries who now buy from manufacturers like Fafard who make formulas to the specifications of the commercial growers. Almost all the bromels nurseries I know are using Fafard mixes. I find these mixes to be too heavy, though they seem to work for the big growers. In any event, we don't buy mixes in large enough quantity to be able to buy from Fafard.

In our society we are indeed lucky that we have Pete Palgrave, an expert who knows how to find supplies in the relatively small quantities we need. He has been getting us insecticides, fertilizer and perlite, and he now has a source for fibrous peat. In the interim, I have been using shredded redwood bark as a substitute and it works well when I soak it with hot water for 3-5 minutes. I find that by using a wick, the redwood stays fairly damp. It is still available by mail order at OFE.

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:

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY
OF
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You can see some of the plants we will be selling at the POE

