

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



## MARCH 2011

# NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 17, 2011** at 7:00 PM  
1634 Jerrold Avenue, San Francisco

### March Program

#### Field Trip to Flora Grub

**T**his month we will be visiting the Flora Grub Gardens instead of meeting at our regular location. Our meeting will also be starting earlier than usual. **We can enter the nursery at 6:15 PM, but you must be there by 7:00 PM.** Our host is **Clarke de Mornay** who is a full time professional plant geek, working at Flora Grubb Gardens, Howard Langton Community Garden, and his own SOMA back 40. (feet not acres) His areas of expertise include edible gardening, Mediterranean climate plants, succulents, epiphytes, and beach, rooftop, and container gardening. He is currently working on a book about crazy plant collectors. This is an exceptional nursery and we will be able to visit after it is closed, so do not miss this opportunity.

#### March Refreshments

**H**elen Lindqvist and Marilyn Moyer signed up for refreshments this month.



Here is some of the crowd at the Pacific Orchid Exposition. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**.

#### 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.**

## February Meeting

**L**ast month **Peter Wan** gave us a slide show on his trip to Florida bromeliad nurseries to purchase plants for our sale at the Pacific Orchid Exhibition. The plants he purchased looked better in person than the slides conveyed. Peter advised us that there was a surprise stop in his show! This stop was Disneyworld which is one of Peter's favorite places to visit while in Florida. For those of us who have never been to Disneyworld, Peter provided a great overview. Now you just have to hop on a plane and visit.

## Flora Grub Gardens

**F**lora Grubb Gardens is located at **1634 Jerrold Avenue** in San Francisco. There is parking at the nursery. Go to their website to learn about the nursery and get a map. 415.626.7256  
 Map: <http://www.floragrubb.com/idx/location.php>



## Dinner Spots before Meeting

Dan Arcos has researched a few restaurants near Flora Grub. If you are interested in dinner before the meeting it will have to be an early dinner because we have to be in the nursery at 6:15 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

- Hard Knox Café 2526 3<sup>rd</sup> Street – specializes in Southern dishes



- Las Isletas 4508 3<sup>rd</sup> Street – specializes in Salvadoran food
- The Ramp 855 Terry Francois St (between Illinois St & Mariposa St)- American Traditional food



## Pacific Orchid Exposition Message from Our President

**T**hank you all very much for working so long and hard to make our display and sale at this year's Pacific Orchid Exposition so successful. We had an outstanding table display. As we all know bromeliads can be very attractive even when not blooming and our show plants were a collection of very colorful and interesting plants. Our display really stood out as the only non orchid plant display. The public enjoyed our sales plants. And our volunteers enjoyed speaking with all the visitors. The sales plant selection was world class and sales were brisk. We made enough profit to consider it a success and even have a few plants left over for our raffle table and

silent auction. Our club got great exposure with this venue and the large crowds. Combined with our new Face book account and web site we are continuing our outreach to the public.

Warm Regards,  
Carl Carter

## Pacific Orchid Exposition

**A**s you can tell by now, our society did participate in the recent Pacific Orchid Exposition (POE). We tackled this sale quite differently than most of our previous sales. Although the customers coming to the POE are different than those who come to our June sale, we thought we knew which types of plants would be good sellers. And we tried to be careful to omit plants that have not been successful at our June sales. Additionally, we had the luxury of Peter Wan volunteering to personally select plants from two nurseries in Florida. Peter went to Michael Kiehl's and Tropicflora. Peter got beautiful plants and great prices from Dennis and Michael.

Marilyn Moyer selected plants from our normal vendor in Hawaii that she has established a rapport with over many sales. And we got wonderful plants at very reasonable prices. Marilyn also ordered some plants from Rainforest Flora.

Roger Lane ordered tillandsias from Tillandsia International and received a wonderful set of plants as always. Many more tillandsias were in flower that was expected.

Peter Wan volunteered to prepare the display. He built a mockup of the display at Marilyn's house, so it was very easy to assemble at the POE. The plant material came from the personal collections of Marilyn, Peter, and Roger. Some of the sales plants were also incorporated into the display.

Since our sale space was much smaller than we usually have, Peder Samuelsen made very decorative shelves to stage our plants. Fortunately, we were able to stock all our plants in the sales area, rather than moving new material in daily.

We had help from many members to help pot and price the sales plants. Certain plants were bare root to save table space. Using baskets to display these plants helped to make our sales area more attractive.

As for the sale itself, we learned which plants are popular for this particular crowd. *Tillandsia cyanea* in flower seemed to be the biggest hit. Almost all the tillandsias went over well but it seems that *Tillandsia bulbosa* disappeared somewhere because this is always a popular plant and at the end of the sale all our plants were unsold. Larger neoregelias (6 inch pot) were ignored by the customers. Miniature bare root neoregelias were popular. A big surprise was how our beautiful Vriesea hybrids did not sell.

Thanks to all of you who helped and a special thanks to Harold Charns who had to deal with the money and processing the credit cards. I think that we did well at this sale, but I do not know how much was made after expenses.

## Boost Your Humidity

This article by Herb Plever is extracted from the February 2005 Bromeliana, newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society

**W**hen we are subjected to prolonged frigid temperatures as has occurred in the past few winters I become very conscious about the drop in humidity in my apartment. The above title and this article are taken from the January 2000 BROMELIANA; I think they are pertinent and warrant repetition.

Bromeliads are found growing in a range from southern United States through Central and South America. Besides the Hechtias and Puyas which are often found in dry desert-like areas, the rest of the genera grow in high humidity, whether it is at the seashore, the Amazon basin or in the rain and cloud forests. The cloud forests may be at very high altitudes where it can get cold, but the plants growing there are bathed in the moisture of thick clouds which roll in about 3 P.M. and do not dissipate until they are burned off by the sun the next day.

It is axiomatic that without such special cloud conditions, cold air cannot hold much moisture. Bromeliad growers in the South don't have the problem of too little humidity – sometimes perhaps they get too much for themselves as well as their plants. But in the northern climes, indoor growers face the problem of living in very dry air when the cold winter weather sets in.

This condition is exacerbated when you have to heat your homes or apartments to stay comfortable in the winter. The heat further

reduces what little relative humidity you get from your plant trays and bromeliad reservoirs. Your usually adaptable plants become unhappy in the dry air and so do your nasal tissues and your pianos. The glue in the joints of your furniture dries and you may find the legs of your tables and chairs have loosened.

If your home remains heated and dry, you will find that this condition has also promoted the growth of mites and mealy bugs. When it is really cold outside, the air may hold only 10% to 15% relative humidity and the heated air inside your apartment or home may hold even less than that. It therefore behooves you to take at least some steps to boost the relative humidity in your home. I try to keep my rooms at between 50% to 65% relative humidity. Even if you can't reach these levels, it will help if you use as many of the following devices as you and your budget can manage:

1. Keep your heating at the lowest level you can maintain without being uncomfortable. It is better to put on a sweater if you feel cold than to raise the heat.
2. Fill the cups of your bromeliads as frequently as is convenient. These reservoirs of water will constantly evaporate moisture into your rooms, especially if they are hot. The use of pebble trays will also add to the relative humidity.
3. The most effective way to maintain good humidity is to use cold water humidifiers. If you can afford it, run one in each plant room and in your bedroom. I used to use a big console humidifier with a 10 gallon reservoir. It had a big rotating drum with a foam pad on the circumference which dipped into the water reservoir and stayed wet. A motorized fan blew moisture off the pad into the room. It was a very effective device with several drawbacks. It required filling a small pail 3 or 4 times, carrying it from the sink to the humidifier. The reservoir and the foam pad got gunky very fast, with algae and with brown fungus, slimes, and molds and the required constant cleaning was a major job. I also feared the possibility of Legionnaire's disease from the large standing reservoir of dirty water.

The hard work and fears caused me to abandon the humidifier, and I relied just on trays of water and bromeliad reservoirs for humidity. But that is when I started having trouble with mites, so I

resumed the use of humidifiers, this time with a number of small, 3 gallon cold water appliances which worked the same way as the large console I had abandoned. The reservoirs quickly collect slimes, molds, etc/ and have to be cleaned often, Even more burdensome is the fact that the filters had to be replaced often, and their considerable expense offsets the relatively low cost of the units.

Last year I tested the new Venta Air washers which both humidify and clean the air. I bought rebuilt 2-gallon units which can blow all of the water into a large room in 1 to 2 days depending on the setting of the 3-speed fan. They do not require any filters and are designed so that the water in the reservoir acts as a filter. The units are light and the reservoir and its rotating device can easily be carried to the sink every 10 to 14 days to clean them out. The fan is very quiet (almost inaudible at low speed) so you can keep the unit operating without disturbing your sleep. The downside to these units is that the initial cost is high -\$200 for the rebuilt units, but they come with a ten year full warranty.



Here is the empty display table with the plants in boxes ready to be set up. **Roger Lane** and **Dan Arcos** are guarding the plants. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**



**Peter Wan** arranged the display and is making final adjustments. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**



**Dan Arcos** and **Harold Charns** have helped to arrange our sale plants. Now where are the customers? Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**.



Display is almost ready and the plants get their initial misting from **Dennis Westler**. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**



Our sales table is ready to go. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**.



**Marilyn Moyer**, **Peder Samuelsen**, and **Harold Charns** have the task of squeezing all of our wonderful sale plants into a small space. Photo is courtesy of **Peter Wan**.

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Charms, 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 Kelly Lane, Vista, CA 92084, USA, membership@bsi.org

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**Field Trip to Flora Grubb this month!**