

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



## APRIL 2011

# NEWSLETTER

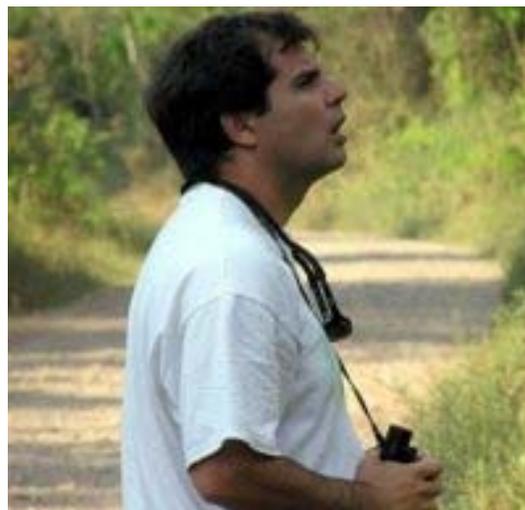
Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 21, 2011** at 7:30 PM  
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

### April Program

#### Bromeliads from Argentina

**T**his month Dr. **Guillermo Rivera** will be visiting us again. He has been the tour guide for many of our members' travels to South American countries. His talk will emphasize the habitats in which bromeliads are found in Argentina. We will explore abundant species of large and small Tillandsias as well as many of the terrestrial Dyckias, Puyas and Deuterocohnias.

Guillermo usually schedules an annual trip to northern Argentina where most of the bromeliads from Argentina can be found. For additional information, please visit [www.cactusexpeditions.com.ar](http://www.cactusexpeditions.com.ar)



Here is **Guillermo** checking out the area for bromeliads. Photo is courtesy of Joe Quijada.

#### Dues are Due

**T**his will be your last newsletter if you have not paid your dues for 2011

#### April Refreshments

**T**om Vincze and Peter Wan signed up for refreshments this month.

## March Meeting

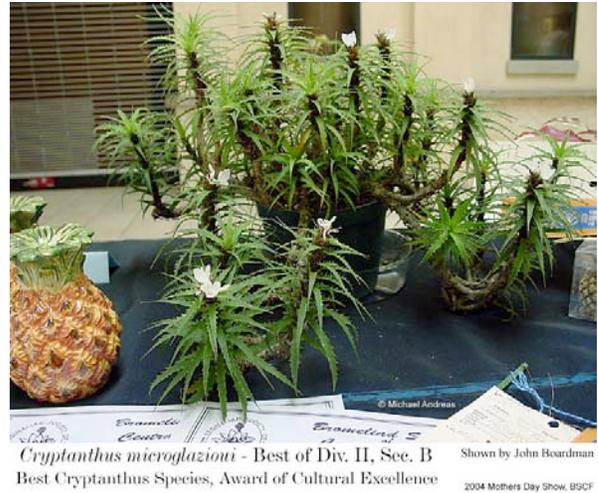
Last month we had a field trip to the Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco. For some of us, this was our first visit and it was a wonderful experience. The plant material is vast and displayed in diverse ways. You may be surprised how well tillandsias grow on a bicycle and Vrieseas grow in the front seat of and old Edsel. Our host was **Clarke de Mornay** who is a full time professional working at Flora Grubb Gardens. He described how adaptable bromeliads are in the landscape and home and how they have become a staple plant family for customers at the nursery. Many of us went home with a new bromeliad from the nursery.

## Cryptanthus – Terrestrial Jewels

This article by Karen Andreas is reprinted from the August 2004 Orlandiana, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida

Commonly known as “Earth Stars,” the members of the genus *Cryptanthus* are true terrestrials; these bromeliads need soil to grow. *Cryptanthus* species are found in eastern Brazil where they grow in sun and shade, wet conditions and, sometimes dry, on the coast and in forests. First described in 1836, the name *Cryptanthus* comes from *crypt*, meaning “hidden” and “*anthos*” which means flower. *Cryptanthus* do not have inflorescences that extend above the leaves; the white flowers bloom from the center of the plant.

*Cryptanthus* come in surprising variety of colors and forms. Colors include brown, rose, green, chartreuse, gray, copper, pink, and red. Scurf – that dusty looking substance on the leaves – appears as silver or white stripes, chevrons or other markings. Examples of its various forms include *Cryptanthus microglazioui*, which we saw on the head table at this year’s show. *C. beuckeri* with its spoon shaped leaves, *C. lutherianus* which has long narrow leaves, *C. Elaine* with its broad long leaves. There are small forms, long forms, cascading forms, and twisted forms like *C. Whirlygig*.



*Cryptanthus microglazioui* is a very popular species to grow. Photo is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



Photo of *Cryptanthus beuckeri* is by Ken Marks and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

These terrestrials like to be on or near the ground. From our own growing experience, we’ve seen major improvements in *Cryptanthus* when we plant them in the ground or sink the pot or simply place the pot on the ground. Provide them bright

light such as morning light or filtered sunlight and you will be rewarded with strong color and good form. Cryptanthus do not have water tanks as their epiphytic cousins do. Consequently, Cryptanthus depends on moisture from the potting media as well as from watering the leaves. Do use a potting media that drains well but does not stay soggy wet. Recently we started using capillary mats on the Cryptanthus bench in the shade house and have seen good results from providing a constant source of moisture.



*Cryptanthus Elaine* is a hybrid with *C. fosterianus* parentage. Photo is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Do not under-pot these bromeliads. “If grown in pots, the pot should be wider than it is deep, as the root systems prefer to spread out rather than go downwards,” notes Andrew Steens in *Bromeliads for the Contemporary Garden*. Use a slow release fertilizer such as Nutricote in the soil mix when potting *Cryptanthus*. As true terrestrials, they absorb nutrition from their roots. Frost and cold winds are damaging, as you would expect in bromeliads from the forest floor. However, the canopy of trees or other over-story such as shrubs or a *Philodendron selloum* often provide enough *Cryptanthus lutherianus* protection. To be safe, be prepared to provide cover or move the *Cryptanthus* to a protected place in case of hard frost or freeze.

Removing pups from *Cryptanthus* is very easy. The pups will come from the base of the mother plant as well as from between the leaves. After the pup reaches about half the size of the mother plant, tug gently on one of its leaves. If the pup resists, do not force it to release. When it is ready, it will release easily. You may need to peel off the very small lower leaves so it will plant easily. Use a root stimulator such as RootTone to provide fungus protection and encourage root growth. You

may need to stake the *Cryptanthus* until its roots grow, often a slow process.



*Cryptanthus lutherianus* is named after Harry Luther. Photo is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

*Cryptanthus* used as accent and companion plants in the landscape can have quite an impact. Their colors and low growth habit provide a dramatic look in any garden.

If you would like to learn more about *Cryptanthus*, consider joining the *Cryptanthus* Society which publishes a journal four times a year. The Photo Index of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies has many pictures of this terrestrial genus (<http://fcbs.org>).

### U. C. Berkeley Spring Plant Sale

**T**he University of California, Berkeley is having their annual Spring Sale on the **April 29-30** weekend. The member Sale & Auction is on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 5-7:30 PM. The Public Sale is on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 10AM-2PM. Our society will have an information table both days. East Bay Members invited to attend. There will be a Sign-up sheet at April meeting.

## Strybing 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Plant Sale

**W**e will be selling bromeliads at the Strybing Arboretum Spring Plant Sale on Friday evening, **May 6<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 PM** and Saturday, **May 7<sup>th</sup> from 10AM-2PM**. **If you are able to donate plants (bromeliads for the landscape are always in demand) or work at the sale, please sign up at this month's meeting or notify Marilyn Moyer (phone 650-365-5560 or e-mail [marilynmoeyer@comcast.net](mailto:marilynmoeyer@comcast.net)).**

This sale exposes others in the plant world to bromeliads and exposes us to other plant families. It should be a fun event for a worthy cause and you can add to your collection at a very reasonable cost. This sale also provides us the opportunity to promote our society, our June sale, and other activities that we have planned.

## Board Meeting

**T**here will be a board meeting this Thursday evening before the monthly meeting. **All board members should try to attend from 6 PM to 7 PM at our regular meeting room.** Any regular members are welcome to attend. Topics to be addressed include our June sale, sale publicity, and speakers for remainder of this year.

## The Orange-Flowered *Tillandsia crocata*

**D**uring the last few months, our members have brought the standard *Tillandsia crocata* with yellow flowers and an orange-flowered tillandsia to the meetings for show-and-tell. This orange-flowered plant was purchased from Rainforest Flora Nursery and identified as *Tillandsia crocata* (orange-flowered form). The plant does resemble *T. crocata* but is much larger in form and flower and the flower spike is somewhat different. Some of our members felt this might be a hybrid with *T. crocata* as one of the parents. A search for this plant on the internet and examination of the photos in *The Tillandsia Handbook* by Hiroyuki Takizawa suggest that this plant is actually

*Tillandsia caliginosa*. Some descriptions state that this plant is a synonym of *T. crocata* var. *tristis*; others say this is a synonym of *T. crocata* var. *major*. Both of these plants are found at high altitudes (1000-3000 meters) in Argentina and Bolivia. Some descriptions state that the plant has brownish-yellow flowers; others say the flowers are orange. The Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies has photos with both color ranges. The plants we purchased from Rainforest Flora have orange flowers.

## Greenhouses for Sale

**K**aye Rosso informed us that Gary Ware, a member of the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society is selling two greenhouses. Each greenhouse is 10 feet by 24 feet. They are located at Nice, California. He would like these greenhouses to go to a true plant hobbyist. I think that the price is approximately \$1000 per greenhouse and you are responsible for tear down and moving the greenhouse to your home. I believe he wants these greenhouses removed from the property by 30 April. If you are interested, please contact Gary at 707-274-2499.



The photo of the *Tillandsia caliginosa* flower is

courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

## What's In a Name?

This article is by Dean Fairchild and is reprinted from the August 2003 Caloosahatchee Meristem, newsletter of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society.

**M**any of our members have expressed concern on the correct pronunciation of bromeliad names. Taxonomists have recognized an international group who set up the rules for naming plants. They state that plants found in nature should be named using Latin forms. This allows everyone in the world to recognize the name in print. Some root names are for characteristics of the plant, others are for people or places. There are rules on how the name is constructed but there is little on how to pronounce it.

We in the English-speaking world find it difficult (or we are too lazy) to twist our tongues enough to pronounce some of these words formed from other languages, so we tend to change them. In addition, the English-speaking taxonomists have developed their own way of distinguishing spoken names. An example is the ii ending. In the Latin language and the rest of Europe they pronounce this diphthong as e, but the English-speaking botanists want it pronounced e-i as in the way we pronounce eek-me'a chan-tin'-e-i. By the way, ae is another diphthong pronounced as e. Remember ol' Aesop.

Some rules of thumb are

1. If named for a person, use the pronunciation of that person (usually these have endings of "ii", but sometimes "an" plus the ending of the genus, e.g. *Aechmea fosteriana*)
2. If named for a place, then pronounce it like the place.
3. Botanical Latin would usually have you place the accent on the second to the last syllable of long words. The a is usually long in Latin, but we don't like that, so we pronounce it soft as in ah. Try pronouncing *fasciata* with a long a and you'll see what it means. The i is usually pronounced as e.

We don't always know what the root word was, so we can only guess on the correct pronunciation. Some botanical names just don't sound right if you follow the rules – like the genus *Neoregelia*. This was originally *Regelia*

and named for a man Regel. Dr. Lyman Smith changed it to *Neoregelia* (new regalia) because of a conflict in another plant family. If we pronounce it as the man's name we would say nee-o-re-gel-e a; however, I will still call it nee-o-ree-jeel' e a. Note that Kalmbacher pronounced the ending as ya which does not meet the rules. To each his own, but you do understand. Before we get too politically correct, we should remember that the reason for all of this is to communicate with each other. If we accomplish that, it doesn't matter how we pronounce it. Don't be embarrassed or inhibited. Call's 'em likes you see's em.

**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**

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OF  
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**We will be exploring Argentina this month!**