

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



MARCH 2012

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 15, 2012** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

March Program

Bromeliad Adventures in Southern Ecuador – Part 2

In January, **Peter Wan** gave us a great slide show on his trip to Ecuador last year with Guillermo Rivera. Your editor did not realize that this show only would cover part of the trip. This month we will receive Part 2 on this same trip and it is possible that there may be a Part 3 in the future.

Our plant table may contain some of the leftover plants from our recent POE sale. So bring your money for a wonderful plant table.

March Refreshments

John Molnar and Gary Turner signed up for refreshments this month.



Tillandsia wagneriana is one of the plants described in the Longwood Gardens article. It is found in Ecuador. Come to the meeting to see if **Peter Wan** saw this plant. Photo by Herb Plever is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

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

Last month's meeting on the basics of bromeliads in one hour was a huge success. We had a very large turnout and several guests and hopefully, everyone went home with a greater knowledge of bromeliads. Although the talk went on for more than an hour, we all appreciated the topic. Thanks to **Dan Arcos, Peter Wan, and Wes Schilling.**

A Quick Guide to Bromeliad Problems

This article by Peniel Romanelli is reprinted from the February 1996 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida.

Most bromeliads are fairly trouble-free, but problems do crop up. Some of the more common ones along with some possible causes are listed below.

PROBLEMS	LIKELY CAUSES
Pale, bleached appearance	Too much sun
Poor color	Too much shade Fertilizing ¹
Long floppy leaves	Too much shade
Brown or yellow leaf ends or edges	Plant grown too dry Cold or heat damage Poor ventilation Mix or water has wrong pH (most bromeliads like acidic mix)
Brown spots	Watering in full sun Too much light Cold or heat damage Chemical burns caused by copper or arsenic from treated woods or misuse of pesticides ²
Quilling (inner leaves stuck together)	Little or no water in cup
Brown or mushy leaves at base	Overwatering, potting too deep or bad drainage
Holes (or bites) in leaves	Snails, slugs, insects or watering in full sun
Center leaves loose, withered brown or whitish and soft with a smell that would choke a buzzard	Crown rot ³ possibly a result of stagnant water or poor ventilation

1. Avoid fertilizing neoregelias and billbergias.
2. Never use oil-based pesticides or anything containing copper or arsenic.
3. Crown rot can be treated by pulling out the loose leaves, thoroughly rinsing the cup with clean water, and filling the cup with a good systemic fungicide for about 1 hour. Drain, let plant dry overnight and refill with clean water. The plant probably won't bloom but you should get pups.

Designer Bromeliads

This article appeared in the *Bromeliad Newslink*, newsletter of the Western Australia Bromeliad Society, Inc., October/November 1995. It was written by Geoff Lawn. The comments have more relevance if you have grown or know these plants.

In this era of personalized, tailor-made commodities, until recently the bromeliad/gardener relationships have been thought of more from the cultural point of view – whether easy/difficult to grow given the conditions the potential owner can offer. However, “likes” and “dislikes” take on a whole new meaning when one humanizes the virtues and drawbacks of particular species and hybrids. So, by way of the double entendres, I present with tongue in cheek this small selection of howlers. Check out the looks, personality, and the lifestyle!

<i>Orthophytum navioides</i>	Hates being separated, keeps a low profile and is very down to earth.
<i>Aechmea ornata</i> v. <i>nationalis</i>	Sensitive and prickly to a point; can become ragged around the edges.
<i>Hohenbergia correia-araujoi</i>	Tall and handsome but difficult to keep contained; always droops at the bottom.
<i>Orthophytum vagans</i>	Undemanding, but if overfed tends to wander and reproduce quickly.
<i>Neophytum</i> Ralph Davis cv. <i>Wide Wings</i>	Very open but needs plenty of space; prone to split ends.
<i>Aechmea</i> Foster's Favorite cv. <i>Favorite</i>	Compact and refined; just look at those swollen ovaries.
<i>Dyckia fosteriana</i>	Sulks indoors and loses its suntan; revels in being crowded and fully exposed.

<i>Neophytum</i> Firecracker	Small and dainty but under heat is inclined to get browned off.
<i>Neomea</i> Nebula	Has a dark side and a lighter side; really blossoms at maturity.
<i>Aechmea</i> Black Panther	Attractive, dark and slender, but hard to find at night.
<i>Cryptanthus sinuosus</i> cv. Cascade	Really a static ground dweller but takes to swinging high.
<i>Billbergia amoena</i> v. <i>viridis</i>	Tough and beautiful; puts up with almost any treatment without complaint.

There's no accounting for taste – so, did you find your perfect match? Most bromeliads are bisexual anyway but several are either male or female. For instance, if you don't know the history of your *Androlepis skinneri* or *Aechmea mariaae-reginae*, go easy for your "lady" could turn out to be a "lad die"! For those growers with an identity crisis one could always take pot luck and bond with any number of unidentified or mislabeled bromeliads around! Many names with positively glowing descriptions are more likely to find proud owners but, like this article, one should never take it all too literally or seriously.

**The Bromeliad Cascade Garden at
Longwood Gardens, Kennett
Square, Pennsylvania**

This article by Herb Plever is reprinted from the April 1995 newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.

Longwood Gardens, founded and supported by the DuPonts in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, is the biggest of its kind in the East. It features some of the most beautifully designed and grown gardens in the country. In 1,050 landscaped acres, 3 ½ acres of which are in conservatories under glass, are more than 11,000 different kinds of plants, trees, and shrubs.

The newest addition to Longwood is the Cascade Garden for bromeliads. It was designed by the late Roberto Burle Marx as a display garden and was completed about 3 ½ years ago. The knowledgeable Rolfe Smith is responsible for the maintenance of the Cascade Garden and other conservatories at Longwood.

The Cascade Garden is in a large room approximately 55 feet square with a very high 18 to 10 foot ceiling. The interior space is broken by

a few floor to ceiling vertical columns. The walls and columns are covered with clumps of bromeliads mounted epiphytically, some with their bases wrapped in coconut fiber. On both sides of the walkways are large beds of bromels grown in pots sunk into the beds. Some broms were planted directly in the bed material. Some 3000 feet of root zone heating cables are wound throughout the beds and are embedded in the walls and columns to keep the roots of the plants above 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

The walls are made of a blend of shredded tree fern, vermiculite and brown-dyed cement, and they have a rough uneven surface to create a natural appearance and a good rooting medium. The columns are steel supports with wood frames covered with halved tree fern trunks.

Stone is used to create a few random outcroppings with pockets and to make low retaining walls to section off the walkways from plant beds 35 tons of Pennsylvania mica were mined from local quarries for the stone work.

Fog emitters are placed throughout the room and are timed to give off an intermittent fine mist to maintain relative humidity at 80%. The mist is so fine that you are barely able to see it and it does not quite wet the leaf surface. It goes on and off every few minutes; the duration and frequency are adjusted according to the temperature and humidity. Many early mornings the mist is boosted to maximum emission so that the entire room is covered with a dense cloud of vapor which does wet down the plants and creates maximum humidity.



This photo of the Cascade Garden is courtesy of the Longwood Gardens website.

All plants are hosed down twice a week during the warm months and less frequently at other times. Fertilizing is done only by adding Osmocote slow release pellets to the pot media and by pushing the pellets into the coconut fiber.

The walls are covered with clumps of the following bromels: *Aechmea fasciata* in different cultivars, some of which were in bloom. Most had upright, non-spreading leaf growth; *A. ramosa* in full bloom; *A. chantinii* (both the green and brown barred forms) in full or recent bloom, and they also had more upright than spreading foliage; *Guzmania* Amaranth; *Tillandsia dyeriana*, *T. wagneriana* (there was only one piece but it was mature and in excellent shape, growing epiphytically and enjoying the high humidity. This usually is a finicky plant to grow); *T. rolandgosselinii*, which looks like a small form of *T. xerographica*, but it has greenish-yellow leaves; *T. Emilie*, an old cross of *T. cyanea* and *T. lindenii*, and intermediate in size between both parents; *T. cyanea*; *T. gardneri*; *T. geminiflora* in a large mass of plants, many of which were in bloom. These were grown on a lower wall so that they received more diffused light. With the high humidity in the room, *T. geminiflora* could have

taken stronger sunlight but it is basically a low altitude plant as its green, non-scurfy leaves indicate; *T. fasciculata* in bloom; *T. albida*, a tall-stemmed silver epiphyte growing in clumps with no very showy inflorescences; *T. punctulata* does not like full sun; *T. edithae* in huge clumps growing quite large in long caulescent form; *T. bulbosa* growing in a large mass in every direction, a few of which were in bloom; *Vriesea gigantea* and *V. fosteriana* cv. Red Chestnut – a few specimen plants with good markings; *V. hieroglyphica*; *V. Bananas*. These were mounted, one above the other. As they were all blooming, there were bright yellow spikes in a line from floor to ceiling; *V. bittuminosa* x *V. saundersii*.

The door to the adjoining conservatory was faced with sheets of tree fern which were covered with *Tillandsia ionantha*, *T. filifolia* and *T. gardneri*. The *T. filifolia* were beautifully grown and in bloom and were obviously enjoying the constant mist and high humidity.

Some of the bromels mounted on the vertical columns (together with Anthuriums and philodendrons) were *Aechmea chantinii* cv. Vista, a Kent cultivar which is similar to but grows smaller than cv. Samurai; *A. Foster's Favorite*; *A. gamosepala* in a variegated form growing in a big mass with many blooms showing. It is probably the cultivar 'Lucky Stripe'; *A. filicaulis* showing a few very long hanging inflorescences; *Guzmania zahnii*; *Tillandsia lindenii* showing a few pink spikes with very large purple flowers.

In a stone outcropping on one of the beds were 11 of Kent's *Guzmania* Superamarenth, most of them with tall, brilliantly colored red-purple inflorescences. We had one in our exhibit at the New York Flower Show, sitting next to *Guzmania* Irene, and I must confess that it is difficult to tell one plant from the other. Perhaps the bracts of Superamarenth are slightly darker or more purple than the mostly red with a tinge of purple bracts of Irene. This is highly subjective and the color is so close that it might be better to treat them both as *G. Irene*.

Other broms in the beds were the following: *Ananas comosus* cv. Ivory Coast – there were two large plants of this beautifully variegated and spineless cultivar grown by Bullis; *Aechmea nudicaulis forma variegata* in a big clump; *Hohenbergia correia-araujoii* growing in a big clump, but strangely with upright non-spreading leaves, about 3 feet tall. Many plants were in bloom, but these were not nearly as big as the robust wide-leaved plants we saw in Florida. And

while the markings were good, they were mostly green and cream with little or no reddish brown. Maybe this plant needs more direct stronger sunlight than a northern greenhouse can provide, especially during the fall and winter months.

A large variety of *Cryptanthus* were used as a kind of ground cover: *C. Ocean Mist*, *C. bromelioides* v. *tricolor*, *C. acaulis* v. *variegata*, *C. zonatus*, *C. bivittatus* Ruby and *C. bivittatus* Pink Starlite.

At the time of my visit in mid-March the neoregelias grown in the beds were rather dull in color after 5 months of relatively low light. These were: *Neoregelia concentrica*, *N. Fosperior* Perfection, *N. burle-marxii*, *N. tristie*, *N. Lila* Splendor, *N. Lois* Bullis, and *N. Royal* Burgundy. More light-sensitive neos such as *N. carolinae* Perfecta Tricolor, *N. Van* Dourme and *N. Gazpacho* might be better choices.

Other bed plants in clumps were *Nidularium fulgens*, *N. innocentii* v. *striatum*, *Orthoiphytum gurkenii*, *O. saxicola*, *Pitcairnia flammea*, 2 or 3 huge *Vriesea* [Alcantarea] *imperialis*, *V. ospinae* v. *gruberi* (with yellow spikes emerging from the cups) and *V. regina*.

Longwood Gardens is only a 2 ½ to 3 hour drive from New York. It makes a wonderful full day or weekend trip and should be seen by every plant lover. There are acres of soft different flowers and flowering trees in bloom according to the season. There are always some roses and many orchids and bromeliads in bloom.

Pacific Orchid Exhibition

Our sale last month at the POE was a huge success. We had a vast array of wonderful sale plants, many volunteers to pull it together, and a lot of fun was had by all. And our club treasury benefited by quite a bit. Harold is still working out the bottom line profit, but we know it was very good.

Our bromeliad display was even better than last year's display. **Michelle Derviss** and **Peter Wan** worked out the design together and the plant material was provided by **Marilyn Moyer**, **Roger Lane** and **Peter Wan**. **Tom Vincze** provided some photos of Golden Gate Bridge (theme of the POE this year) to include in our display. During the sale some people came to our sales booth

asking if we were the group that created the display.

There were many volunteers who arranged and rearranged our sales booth to maximize the display of plants and accommodate the most people. Thanks to **Harold Charns**, we moved into the 21st century for processing credit cards with a smart phone. The "app" worked flawlessly. Many thanks to all the people who helped in the sales booth over several days: **Harold Charns**, **Carl Carter**, **Dan Arcos**, **Casper Curto**, **Gary Turner**, **John Molnar**, **Craig Riser**, **Yolanda Huang**, **Nick Soumie**, **Marilyn Moyer**, **Peder Samuelson**, **Virginia Babasa**, **Jill Myers**, **Roger Lane**, and **Peter Wan**. A little bird told me that our star sales persons were **Virginia Babasa** and **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 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

BROMELIAD SOCIETY
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This month Peter Wan provides Part 2 of Southern Ecuador!