

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



January 2013

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 17, 2012** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

January Program

Looking for Bromeliads in all the Wrong Places

Carl Carter, our club president, will present a slide show on his trip to Peru last year. This is one of Guillermo Rivera's tours that some of our members have taken. **Peter Wan** was on this trip with Carl and helped to keep Carl sustained during the lunch breaks. Carl would use the lunch break as an opportunity to explore plants quite a distance from the bus. Peter would make sandwiches for Carl and give them to him when the bus left for the next destination. This will be an entertaining show covering many different areas of Peru: the regular plant stops, the distant plant stops that Carl explored, Machu Pichu, and the plants, birds and animals along the Amazon. Additionally, we will get Carl's entertaining discourse. So don't miss it!

January Refreshments

Roger Lane signed up for refreshments this month.



Here is **Carl Carter** posing with objects he will tell us about at this month's meeting. Perhaps these are beach mats for Peruvian giants. Photo is courtesy of Carl Carter.

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.

December Meeting

Our holiday potluck dinner and party was a great success. Thanks for bringing in great food items and wonderful gifts to share. Michael Kiehl provided gift plants that everyone wanted. Thanks to **Marilyn Moyer, Peder Samuelsen,** and **Roger Lane** who arrived early to help set up the tables. Thanks also to all the members who helped in the cleanup and tearing down the tables. We wish to also thank **Dan Arcos** for the planning and ensuring the party went off without a hitch.

Pacific Orchid Exhibition (POE)

Our society will be selling plants again at this year's Pacific Orchid Exhibition that takes place from **21 February through 24 February**. The theme this year is East Meets West. We need help in staffing the sales tables over a period of several days. We will have a signup sheet at this month's meeting for you to volunteer. The days and times for the sale are

Wednesday, February 20, 1 PM on - Set Up
Thursday, February 21 (Gala Benefit) - 6:30pm - 10:00pm
Friday, February 22 - 10am - 6pm
Saturday, February 23 - 9am - 6pm
Sunday, February 24 - 10am - 5pm

During the last couple of years we have gotten a better feeling for the kinds of bromeliads that are popular with the orchid fanciers and we hope to have a very successful sale. But we need your help to make this a success.

Bromeliads in Hanging Baskets

This article by Geoff Lawn is reprinted from the October 1989 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of New South Wales. Although we usually do not have many hanging baskets at our sales, we have had good luck in selling glass globes with tillandsias growing in them. Hopefully, we will be selling these globes at the POE.

With the current revival of interest in hanging baskets or containers of all shapes and sizes, bromeliads can be promoted as ideal subjects for this culture. Many of our miniature-to-medium

size epiphytes and some terrestrials fulfill this role admirably. They add contrast and height to a display, be it the private patio, shade house, pergola, or public show. Consider also that suspended to two meters up, generally bromeliads receive more light and better aeration. Often on still winter nights, colder air settles at bench, floor or ground level. This is a crucial factor from which susceptible species may escape by higher placement. To minimize frost strike and heat radiation, hanging containers need positioning at least half a meter clear of solid roofs, walls and rafters.

From a functional viewpoint, not all hanging containers are well designed for plants generally, despite their intended purpose. One fault is too few or small drainage holes. Some pottery has side peepholes or coves too cramped for accommodating anything but the smallest kinds. Another point is that a concave shape at the rim creates replanting problems if the root ball is to remain reasonably intact. In terms of culture, metal containers should be treated with caution – they can heat up and cool off rapidly during the daily cycles. For epiphytic bromeliads, the container's width is invariably more important than the depth, as many are shallow-rooted.

The following selection is a basic list from which to select suitable plants:

- *Acanthostachys strobilacea*
- *Aechmea* Bert, *calyculata*, *corymbosa*, *fasciata* var. *purpurea*, *filicaulis*, Foster's Favorite, *fulgens* var. *discolor*, *gracilis*, *lindenii*, *luddemanniana*, *orlandiana*, *pineliana* var. *minuta*, *recurvata*, Royal Wine, *weilbachii*
- *Billbergia amoena* var. *minor*, Catherine Wilson, *chlorosticta*, *distachia*, Fantasia, *lietzei*, *leptopoda*, *nutans*, Santa Barbara
- *Cryptanthus* Cascade
- *Dyckia brevifolia*, *fosteriana*, *minarum*, *tuberosa*
- *Guzmania ligulata* var. *minor*
- *Neoregelia albiflora*, *ampullacea*, *lilliputana*, *punctatissima*, Polka Dot, Petite, Pepper, *tigrina*, *tristis*
- *Quesnelia humilis*, *liboniana*, *marmorata*
- Tillandsia – most small silvery and soft varieties
- *Vriesea carinata*, *ensiformis*, *guttata*, *psittacina*, *scalaris*

Decide on your subject's main attraction and hang it to best advantage. Many of the aechmeas, billbergias and neoregelias with leaf reverses, striped, mottled or banded are enhanced by being staged above eye level. With the increased exposure, the soft-leafed plants positively glow through their translucent foliage, but extra shading and watering may be required. Attachment to beams, away from head height and walkways should be secure, as sometimes wind turns baskets into swinging pendulums capable of being dislodged.

If you can't bear the thought of setting aside your best or only bench specimens for this transfer, why not compromise by placing pot and all in a slat raft – the bromeliad will probably appreciate the temporary change as much as you.

This exercise really is a small-scale landscaping for aerial gardens. Hanging containers are a standard practice, of course, but we need not become complacent with this simple yet effective technique. The diversity is there to enjoy.

Searching for Glorious Guzmanias

This article by Mulford B. Foster is reprinted from the February 2004 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida and is an excerpt from an article appearing in the Journal of the Bromeliad Society International (Volume 7, Number 1).

Racine and I made it a collecting goal when we spent six months in Columbia in 1946. We looked far and wide for a favorable spot around Ocana, where Wallis had found it and where he had lost his life, in search of this *Guzmania musaica*, but the mountains, once a lush jungle were now nude and dry. From one section to another we went by horseback, by truck and on foot. For days we searched and finally gave up. To add to the difficulties involved, a precious book of Traveler's Checks joggled out of my pocket while wrestling with the horse over a steep trail. Or they may have been lost when I climbed up into a tree using the horse's back to reach the first limb where lodged a bromeliad. My horse did not seem to approve of this effort and sauntered off just as I was dangling in mid-air. Finally, I was able to take a specimen of *Aechmea pubescens* from high up in the tree and then spent five frantic minutes beating off hundreds of frantic, disturbed ants which literally covered me; possibly it was there

that I lost our very much needed Traveler's Checks whose absence was discovered only much later. In disappointment that day we gave up hopes of finding the coveted *G. musaica*.



This is habitat photo of *Aechmea pubescens* taken by Bruce Dunstan and is courtesy of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Two weeks later, however, on our way to the oil fields, we spied a tree trunk covered with just what we were looking for—*G. musaica*, but it was dusk and we dared not linger then, as the fierce Motilone Indians haunted this area making it unsafe to be out even in the day time, not to mention after dark. All windows and doors in the cabins were covered with hardware cloth to prevent arrows from entering. All night I dreamed of those plants. At six in the morning I rushed out into the jungle and found the tree I had seen the day before. There, like a feast awaiting the hungry, were ten beautiful plants of *G. musaica* encircling the tree trunk in a spiral vine-like rhythm on their long stolons...and they were in flower! It was a rewarding sight, well worth all the discomforts and disappointments of the miles of dangerous searching.



This photo of a *Guzmania musaica* in cultivation is by Peter Tristram and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Aechmeas for the Indoor Grower

This article by Herb Plever is reprinted from the November 2001 newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.

Our November program and this article will treat the genus *Aechmea* in its current conflicted taxonomic status with 230 species in 8 subgenera. (Subgenus *Aechmea* is treated as part of the Nidularioid Complex by Elton Leme.) At this time the transfer of the former genus *Streptocalyx* to *Aechmea* is still being retained (tentatively?) by Harry Luther's *List of Bromeliad Binomials*. But to paraphrase Elton Leme, *Aechmea*'s heterogeneity with multiple antagonistic species complexes will have to be resolved. It is clear that *Aechmea* will soon undergo a much needed revision and that some of its subgenera and species will be moved elsewhere and that parts of *Neoregelia* and other genera will be treated in the genus *Aechmea*.

The reader may justly wonder what this highly technical introduction has to do with the indoor grower. I include it as a warning that in a few years or sooner some of the species you see in the slide survey may wind up in some other genus.

Indoor growers will find that most of the 230 species are far too large to fit into indoor growing spaces. However, I have grown and flowered big plants like *Aechmea fendleri* and a compact form of *A. dichlamydea* var. *trinitensis* raised up high in my south window. There are many small to medium sized species which can be grown on indoor windows. They'll do passably well grown very close to at least 4 fluorescent tubes. Under moderate light they may have longer leaves and they may not flower without the aid of ethylene pills. But still they are beautiful and rewarding to grow.

Among the horizontally small species and cultivars which can be grown in an east windows (better if unobstructed) are: *Aechmea* Bert, *A. Black Jack*, *A. brevicollis*, *A. By Golly*, *A. calyculata*, *A. carvalhoi*, *A. contracta*, *A. Coral Beads*, *A. corriea-araujoii*, *A. corymbosa*, *A. cylindrata*, *A. dealbata*, *A. flavorosea*, *A. fosteriana*, *A. fulgens*, *A. gamosepala*, *A. Lucky Stripes*, *A. mertensii*, *A. milsteiniana*, *A. nudicaulis* (all forms), *A. orlandiana*, *A. pedicellata*, *A. pineliana*, *A. racinae*, *A. recurvata* (vars. *recurvata*, *ortgesii* and *benrathii*), *A. Shinola*, *A. tillandsioides* (variegated form), and *A. warasii*. Of course, these plants will grow crisper with better color and markings in a south or west window. The small *A. triangularis* needs full sun to develop a squat, compact shape with strong markings.

Some of the medium to medium/large plants are very rewarding to grow in a south or west exposure: *A. allenii*, *A. angustifolia*, *A. chantinii*, *A. disticantha* var. *glaziovii*, *A. fasciata* cv. *Morgana*, *A. miniata*, *A. orlandiana*, *A. penduliflora*, and *A. pubescens*.

A. Mirlo, *A. Victoriana* and *A. weilbachii* var. *leodiensis* can be grown in an unobstructed east window but they will do much better growing in stronger light. *A. Foster's Favorite*, *A. Foster's Favorite Favorite*, and *A. Red Ribbons* bleach out their color in bright light and will do better with the diffuse light of an east window. Check out the slides of these plants at our October meeting to see which of the plants mentioned here meet your fancy. You will be able to order most of them in the spring.



Here is photo of *Aechmea carvalhoi* taken by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies



Here is photo of *Aechmea mertensii* taken by Bromeliário Imperialis and is courtesy of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies



Photo of *Aechmea dealbata* is by Dorothy Berg and is courtesy of Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



Here is photo of *Aechmea* Lucky Stripes taken by Geoff Lawn and is courtesy of 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 Charms, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

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We will visit Peru this month with Carl Carter!