

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

June 2013



Meeting Specifics

When: June 20th

Time: 7:30 PM

Where: Recreation Room
San Francisco County Fair
Building
9th Avenue at Lincoln Way
San Francisco

This month we will be selling most of the society's leftover sale plants at half the barcode price. So come early for bargains!



What's wrong with my brom?

This month our own **Dennis Westler** will give us the talk we all want but are afraid to ask for: "What's wrong with my brom?" Dennis will tell us about the afflictions, attacks, and annoyances of bromeliads and how to address these problems. Dennis has been collecting and growing bromeliads for 4 decades and has the horticultural background to tackle our tough questions. So look at that brom that has been worrying you and take a good look so you can tell us about it. Please, if you bring in a sick plant, bring it in a plastic bag as quarantine.

June Refreshments

Yolanda Huang has signed up for refreshments this month. We hope that someone else will also volunteer!



May Meeting

Flora Grubb hosted our meeting and discussed growing tillandsias indoors and outdoors.

Last month we returned to the Flora Grubb nursery that is probably the best and certainly the most interesting nursery in San Francisco. Their plant material is diverse and presented in various ways to guide the home gardener. They always have an interesting group of bromeliads for both the novice and collector. One of

the interesting tillandsias that several of our members purchased was a form of *Tillandsia crocata* – probably a hybrid with some *crocata* in its background. It was much larger than the standard *crocata* with yellow fragrant flowers. Clarke de Mornay discussed how he grows his tillandsias outdoors in a small

yard in San Francisco. Because the San Francisco climate is so moderate, he can grow many tillandsias that some of us have to shelter during our winters.

Zenaida Sengo then spoke to us about the book she is writing on growing tillandsias indoors. For those of you who attended her last

Upcoming book will have 400 tillandsia photographs!

presentation, you saw how she skillfully uses tillandsias in wall hangings. She asked us for guidance as to how we grow our tillandsias and how frequently we fertilize them. Most of us grow them outdoors and the range of answers for frequency of

fertilizing ranged from none to once a month. She introduced Caitlin Atkinson who is a professional plant photographer and has just about completed all the photography for the book. Timber Press will print the book and Zenaida is not sure



when it will be published but the draft is currently in review. Keep your eyes peeled for a new book on tillandsias.

June Bromeliad Sale

A big thanks goes out to all our members whose participation made the sale such a success!



Our combined plant sale with the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society (SFSCS) on June 8th and 9th was a fantastic success. When the doors opened on Saturday morning, the line wrapped around to Lincoln Way. After the serious shoppers had filled their boxes and gotten into the cashier line, the long line started and did not wind down until about 3 PM (for quite a while the line wrapped around to the plant hotel and sometimes beyond). The cashier crew was seriously understaffed and in spite of the long line most of the customers were very patient; very few set down their boxes and left.

Our plant display was the best we have had for many years. Often, the screen for the tillandsias is sparse to say the least. This year it was filled with wonderful show-quality plants. And the tables were also splashed with the colors that well-grown bromeliads provide. Thanks to you people who brought in such magnificent plants. The general public appreciates these displays.

The sales went well also. We purchased some different plants from nurseries this year (foliage vrieseas, Billbergia Hallelujah, and a few cryptanthus) and they were certainly popular with customers.

Our gross sales amounted to \$5413 – some of this amount was from society sales and the rest from our members. Our treasurer has the sales breakdown and will get a check to you if you sold.



Aechmea

This article is a combination of two articles that appeared in the February 2004 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida. Photos on the next page are courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

The genus *Aechmea* has the most diversity in form and inflorescences of all bromeliads. Size ranges from a few inches to nine feet in diameter (*Aechmea conifer*); growth habit may be upright and tubular or an open rosette. Leaves may be soft or rigid; plain or scurfed; one solid color or bicolored; barred, striped, or mottled. The leaves of all species in this genus have teeth; however, there are some spineless cultivars (such as 'Eileen', 'Deleon', 'Frederike', and 'Maya').

Generally, the inflorescence is on a long scape, although in some *Aechmeas* it does not rise above the throat of the bromeliad. The form of the inflorescence itself is varied: branched, cylindrical, or globular; erect or pendant. After blooming, the often long-lived inflorescence will produce berries; seeds are carried inside a gel-like substance.

Aechmea was established as a genus in 1794 and is now divided into 8 subgenera. The genus is given the name because of the characteristically sharp points of the bracts covering the flower buds and of the sepals (*Aechmea*, from Greek *aichme* "spear tip". The genus comprises over 200 species. [This is the genus in the Bromeliaceae that the taxonomist moves a described plant that does not fit the current thinking. Ed.]

HABITAT: Grows epiphytically in the rain forests of Brazil and neighboring countries. Also grows on rock and as a terrestrial. Some grow in dry areas.

CULTURE: Some species flourish in full sun, others in deep shade. They can tolerate dry periods (because of impounded water) but they do enjoy humidity and regular watering. Many of these grow well on rock (the stolons grow roots along the entire length).

CHARACTERISTICS:

Form: leaf rosette ranges from a narrow tube to a widely flaring vase.

Leaves: toothed; often marked with cross-banding or patterned spotting. Ends are rounded but with a sharp tooth at the middle.

Bracts: cover flowering scape and are vividly colored (red, pink, orange).

Inflorescence: Wide range of form: cylindrical, cone-like, panicle, upright or pendant.

Flowers: small, ball-shaped even when open, opening small; flowers sometimes appear not to be open. Petals have two small flaps at the base.

Fruits: berries form beneath the flowers that are sometimes very colorful and they may last several months.

What's in the name? Names referring to:

Entire plant: *gracilis* means "delicate" *miniata* means "small"

Leaves: *angustiflora* means "narrow-leaved", *dealbata* means "dusted with white", *fasciata* means "barred", *recurvata* means "bent or curved back", *triangularis* means "triangular", and *zebrina* means "zebra-like stripes".



Inflorescence: *coelestis* means “bluish (i.e. the flower), *cylindrata* means “cylindrical”, *disticantha* means “flowers in two rows”, *filicaulis* means “threadlike stems”, *fulgens* means “glowing (in this case, red), *gamosepala* means “sepals fused together”, *nudicaulis* means “naked stem”, and *penduliflora* means pendant flower”.

Names denoting similarity to other plants: *bambusoides*, *bromelifolia*, *nidularioides*, *tillandsioides*.

Name Change: Plants formerly in the genus *Streptocalyx* (18 species) have been reclassified as *Aechmea*. The name *streptocalyx* is no longer in use.



July Garden Tour

Our annual garden tour will take place next month on Sunday, 14 July, and will cover the central San Francisco in the upper Market Street area. Dan Arcos is coordinating this event. Three gardens will open simultaneously from 11 AM to 2 PM followed by a potluck at Harold Charns and Rose Schubert’s home and garden.

The three gardens are Brian Ransom’s, Richard Wigen’s and J. Patrick Aaron and Armin Linedegger’s. For security reasons, only members who have RSVP’d will be e-mailed or mailed the directions with a map. You are welcome to bring along any guests.

The gardens are all within a brisk 15-20 minute walk of each other. Parking in the city is difficult and carpooling is recommended. If you have a van and would like to leave Harold’s at 10:50 AM with a load of people, please let Dan know.

There will not be a coordinated potluck, so please bring a dish for 8 and beverage to share. If you have a perishable food item, you may leave it at Harold and Rose’s before you start the tour.

Dan’s contact info is

Daniel Arcos

danarcos@sfbromeliad.org

415-823-9661

There will not be
a monthly
meeting in July!

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 Charns, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

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