

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

DECEMBER 2013



Meeting Specifics

When: December 19

Time: 7:00 PM

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

Note that we are meeting earlier this month for the holiday party.

Holiday Potluck and Gift Exchange

This month culminates another year for our society. For our members that are not able to get to our monthly meetings, we hope that many of you will be able to join us for the holiday potluck. This month's meeting will be an opportunity for us to socialize and partake of great food. The society is providing an organic turkey and organic ham. We are asking you to bring a dish to share- drinks, appetizer, vegetable dish, rolls, desserts, etc. Please try to remember to bring serving silverware for the dish that you bring. We will provide plates, cups, silverware, and napkins. Dan Arcos is coordinating the food items and will contact you via e-mail or phone. If he missed you please call Dan (415-823-9661) to see where you can fill in some of our gaps. The current food item list is available at <http://sfbromeliad.org/p#2501BB>

Our club will provide a plant for each member. You may also bring a special plant or plant-related item for exchange with the other members (not required).



Tillandsia flexuosa, *Melocactus matanzanus*, Cuban tree frog



November Meeting

Kelly Griffin shared with us some of his adventures in Havana, Cuba while on a speaking tour

Kelly Griffin recently visited Havana Cuba to speak at the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study. His adventures started upon his arrival at customs where his entry was delayed because he was traveling alone. The customs officials are used to handling tour groups, but not individuals.

At the conference, some of

the speakers were not too stimulating, so Kelly and a few others escaped to explore Havana. Their taxi driver drove one of the many restored American cars that are found everywhere in Cuba. One of the first stops was at the Havana botanical gardens. Kelly says that it has great potential but is too large at 160 acres.

They went into the countryside and puzzled the taxi driver who pointed out a single plant and was surprised when Kelly wanted to explore more than just one plant of a kind. Kelly found lots of tillandsias but was only sure of the identity of one of them: *Tillandsia flexuosa*. This beautiful plant does not do well in our environment because it needs high

Restored American cars are a feature of the Havana landscape

humidity conditions. Probably some of the other tillandsias that Kelly photographed were *Tillandsia utriculata*.

Kelly found many plants (non bromeliads) that he wished that he could introduce into commercial cultivation, but no seeds were available.

The taxi driver took him near Guantanamo Bay where he was told to not climb the hill or he might be shot. Kelly ignored this advice to inspect the *Melocactus* growing near the ocean.

Kelly's show and photography were superb, as always. We



got to see many plants in habitat as well as the occasional reptile, amphibian, and insect. Kelly returned to the symposium and had not been missed.

Quesnelia quesneliana photo is by Herb Plevier and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies



Quesnelia is a great bromeliad for the Florida landscape. Its various sizes, variation in inflorescences, and stoloniferous growth add interest to a collection even when the bromeliad is not in bloom. There are approximately 16 species in this genus. *Quesnelia* is definitely a bromeliad that deserves a closer look.

The genus was named for M. Quesnel, the French consul to French Guyana who first introduced this bromeliad to Europe. It is found in the central coastal regions of Brazil where it grows up to the ocean, on rocks, in pastureland, and in coastal mountains. Coastal *Quesnelias* tend to be medium to large size with brilliant pink inflorescences. Species that grow epiphytically (as air plants) in coastal mountains tend to be small, tubular species that often resemble *Billbergias*. The inflorescence is short-lived - about two weeks. While *Quesnelia* grows best in bright light to full sun, it can tolerate lower light conditions.

Generally, members of this genus

Quesnelia

have spiny leaves, although the severity of these spines varies. Use spines to identify *Q. testudo*: the true testudo will have spines on its lower scape leaves. If those spines are not present, it is not testudo. It may be *Q.*

quesneliana. Give the larger varieties such as *Q. testudo* plenty of room. They grow vigorously and you will have a clump in no time. The smaller *Quesnelias* do quite well mounted, growing in baskets, or planted at the base of a tree, which it will climb. *Q. humilis* is a smaller member of this genus (8-10 inches high). Its bright red inflorescence holds flowers that Steens describes as “orange at the base, shading to bright red and then tipped with purple.” It is a vigorous grower, growing stoloniferously (the new pup is on a stem-like growth - or stolon). *Q. imbricata*, in habitat, is epiphytic (an “air plant”__, saxicolous (grows on rocks) and terrestrial (grows in soil or on the ground). Its orange-red inflorescence stays in color for up to a month. When grown in full sun, its leaves turn a bronze color. *Q. liboniana* grows on trees and rocks. Its flowers are dramatic - navy blue and orange-red. *Q. marmorata* pups with short stolons, making it ideal for mounting or cascading out of a pot. Its leaves are green with brown or deep maroon blotches.

Padilla reports a fruity scent emanating from the center of the plant prior to its blooming. *Q. quesneliana* grows mainly as a terrestrial bromeliad in sand by the edge of the ocean but it is also found on trees in open pastureland. Grow in bright filtered light for compact growth. Williams reports that it is one of those bromeliads that needs to throw a couple of pups before it will bloom, so do not remove the pups right away. *Q. Tim Plowman* is a popular cultivar of *Q. marmorata*. It’s known for its tall upright leaves that curl at the top. Do not overwater this *Quesnelia* and make sure it is not in wet or soggy soil - its curls will straighten!

Pictures are available at the web



Quesnelia Tim Plowman photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of FCBS

site of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. Go to <http://fcbs.org>, then go to the Photo Index. Next time you meet a *Quesnelia*, take it home!

This article by Karen Andreas was published in *Orlandiana*, the Newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida, March 05.

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 sfbromeliad.org 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 payable to the BSSF to: Harold Charns, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

The Bromeliad Society International publishes the Journal bimonthly at Orlando, Florida. Subscription price (in U.S. \$) is included in the 12-month membership dues. Please address all membership and subscription correspondence to Membership Secretary Annette Dominquez, 8117 Shenandoah Dr., Austin, TX 78753-5734, U.S.A. or go to www.bsi.org.

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