

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF

SAN FRANCISCO

JULY 2014



Meeting Specifics

When: Sunday, July 13

Time: 11:00 AM (Start)

Where

3 Gardens in Marin County



Annual Garden Tour - Marin County

This month, we will not have a regular monthly meeting. Instead, we have our annual garden tour to member's gardens. Because our membership is spread over the entire San Francisco area, each year we visit a different region. This year we will go to Marin County and visit 3 gardens. We will start at 11 AM in Novato at the eclectic home garden of **Michelle Derviss**, an outstanding landscape designer and member of our society. Our second stop will be in San Rafael to the hillside garden of **Tom Henthorne**. Our last stop is to visit a noted palm collection in Mill Valley where we will also have a picnic potluck lunch.

At our final stop we will have very limited kitchen facilities, so bring a food item that is ready to go or needs very little preparation. We will have tables outside for the food, but you must bring your own chairs. There will be paper plates, napkins, and plastic silverware provided. Bring your own serving utensils.

To obtain details on the tour stops and driving directions, please RSVP to Dan Arcos by midnight on 9 July. Dan's contact info is danarcos@sfbromeliad.org or phone Dan at 415-821-7377 or 415-823-9661 (cell).

Some habitat shots in Andy's program: *Hechtia* species, *Tillandsia albida*, and *Tillandsia prodidiosa*



June Meeting

Andy Siekkinen took us to the Mexican states of Jalisco, Colima, and coastal Michoacán

Last month, Andy Siekkinen visited us from San Diego. Although his special interests lie with the *Hechtia* genus, he enjoys all of the bromeliads and has made many trips to Mexico to see them in habitat. His slide show provided fantastic habitat views of many of the bromeliads we grow in cultivation as well as some that may be new species in the *Tillandsia* and *Hechtia*

genera. Among the plants we grow in cultivation that we saw in habitat were huge examples of *Tillandsia seleriana*. Mexico has this species in all sorts of sizes.

We saw many named *Hechtia* species as well as probable new species. One thing that Andy has done since he has started his own tour company Mexico is the opportunity to visit the

the same location to determine how the plants may have changed over time. This was very evident with the *Ursulaea tuitensis* plants. They grow on boulders covered with moss that helps provide moisture for the plants. Andy showed us slides of a happy colony of plants on one trip and an endangered population on his next trip. Whether this change was due to drought or global climate change

Andy showed us wonderful shots of various bromeliads in Mexican habitat



Is not known. Andy had a few of these plants for sale but they were snapped up on Tuesday at the San Francisco succulent and Cactus meeting. I believe that Marilyn Moyer was lucky enough to get one. Andy had a large variety of plants for sale so most of our members were fortunate to

get some new plants for their collection. In fact, we did not even have time for a plant raffle last month. Thanks Andy for an interesting presentation.



June Bromeliad Sale

Part of the Bromeliad Display.
(Courtesy of Tom Vincze)



Our Bromeliad Sale this year was unlike any sale your editor has ever been involved in. It started on Friday afternoon when I barely was able to get into the parking lot. Cars arriving after me could not get in until others had left and it was not easy to open an exit route because we were so jammed together.

There were lots of members already there to help unload the plants and to help finish pricing the plants. When we left Friday night, everything looked fine except for the Bromeliad display. Wes Schilling had brought in

an *Alcantarea imperialis* just coming into bloom. Unfortunately, this was the only plant on the 4 tables allocated to our display.

On Saturday morning Peter Wan and I brought several plants for the display. Fortunately, many others did also. The display looked great and we were ready for the doors to open to the customers.

As always, there is a long line on Saturday morning when the sale starts. The hardcore plant people want the opportunity to pick the best plants. Little did we suspect that the long line would last all day. The line kept getting longer and longer until it almost became a full circle around the room. Some customers pushed their boxes of plants along the floor for 1-½ hours. The customers were

Incredibly mellow. Very few people walked away and left their boxes on the floor.

Sunday was another unusual sale day. There are always fewer customers on Sunday and the volume does not pick up until after church is out. On this Sunday, the traffic flow was steady all day.

At the end of the sale, everyone was exhausted. The sale was a huge success but because of the volume of people it was not as much fun as most of the sales.

Many thanks to all of our members who helped to make the sale such a success. Everyone put in many more hours than they had signed up for and our society appreciates this.



Tillandsia table at beginning of the sale. (Courtesy of Peter Wan)



Tillandsia table at end of the sale. (Courtesy of Peter Wan)

A Simple Key to Popular Genera

This article written by Herb Plever appeared in the November 2010 Bromeliana, the newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society. Herb states that it is based on an article written by Derek Butcher and Dean Fairchild in 2005 called "A Bromeliad Key for Dummies". Herb modified the original introduction, made minor changes to the key, eliminated *Puya* and added *Orthophytum*.

If you buy a plant or are given a plant without a label, you certainly would like to know its name. But how can you identify it? The first thing to do is to bring it to a meeting; perhaps someone will recognize it. The identification problem is complicated by the fact that if you bought the plant from a florist or supermarket chain, it will likely be a cultivar (hybrid) and not a species. You can check all the species photos on file on <http://fcbs.org> and check all the cultivar (hybrid) photographs on the cultivar register. But there are over 15,000 photos - too much work for a small problem. However, you could narrow down the search if you know the genus of the plant, whether it is a species or cultivar. So here is a do-it-yourself identification key for the most popular bromeliad genera for you to try.

Botanical names are usually stated as two words. First is the **genus** name and next the **species** or cultivar name. Very much like you are identified by a surname and a given name. If you can answer a few simple questions your search will be made easier by pointing to a probable genus. You then have to try to find the species name or cultivar name by searching the photos in the appropriate sections of the Photo database.

The most common bromeliads are *Aechmea fasciata*, *Billbergia nutans*, and *Billbergia pyramidalis*. Florists or super-store chains commonly sell *Guzmania* cultivars. *Aechmea* is the genus name and *fasciata* is the name of one of the species within the genus. A taxonomic key is set up in couplets of alternative "a" and "b" descriptive sentences. Choose the sentence of the couplets that best describes your plant.

1a. Are the leaves with prickles (spines) on the edges? Go to Step 2

1b. Are the leaves without prickles (no spines) on the edges? Go to Step 6

2a. Are the leaves very succulent and taper to a point? Think *Dyckia* or *Hechtia*. (In nature, *Hechtia* are found above the equator and *Dyckia* below).



Hechtia texensis

2b. Are the leaves in a stiff, loose, star-shaped arrangement? Think *Cryptanthus*

2c. Are the leaves in a stiff, tight, many-leaved symmetrical arrangement? Think *Orthophytum* - or, if the leaves are in a stiff, fewer-leaved, symmetrical rosettes, and have a prominent inflorescence stem (scape), again, think *Orthophytum*

Are the leaves green looking? Go to Step 3a.

3a. Are the leaves like grass? Think *Pitcairnia*

4. Are the flowers on a stalk (scape)? Go to Step 5

4a. Are the flowers low down in a rosette of leaves? Think *Neoregelia*

4b. Are the flowers on a short pedestal with a star shape? Think *Nidularium*



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Nidularium leprosa



Tillandsia Victoria

5b. Is the inflorescence nodding with a few leaves in a tube shape? Think *Billbergia*. There are a few exceptions, i.e. *B. amoena*, *B. horrida*, *B. lietzei*, *B. pyramidalis*, *B. Fantasia* have upright inflorescences.



Billbergia nutans

These proposals, some of which date back to 1993, do not seem to have been accepted by Harry Luther. The recently published Alphabetical List of Bromeliad Binomials for 2010 still lists these 42 plants as Vrieseas. In his 1977 Monograph for subfamily Tillandsioideae, Dr. Smith distinguished Vriesea from Tillandsia primarily because Vriesea petals have two petal appendages (nectar scales) on the inside claw of each petal, whereas Tillandsia petals are naked (without appendages). Since then, it has been generally accepted that petal appendages are not a wholly reliable character for identification. I suppose we shall have to await DNA sequencing data for those plants before taxonomists agree on whether they are Vrieseas or Tillandsias.

On the first reading, some members may find this botanical material difficult and daunting to understand. Reread the article again and it will start to make sense.

6a. Are the leaves gray? Think *Tillandsia*

6b. Are the leaves green? Go to Step 7

7a. Do the leaves have longitudinal red lines? Think *Guzmania*

7b. Are the leaves totally green or with patterns? Think *Vriesea*



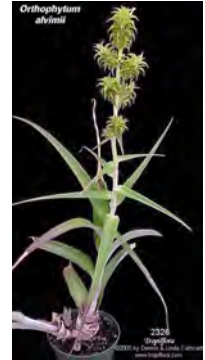
Vriesea fosteriana

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 Dominiquez, 8117 Shenandoah Dr., Austin, TX 78753-5734, U.S.A. or go to www.bsi.org.

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