

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF

SAN FRANCISCO

APRIL 2015



Meeting Specifics

When: April 16

Time: 7:30 PM

Recreation Room

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

RESCUE: A passion that became Orquideas

Moxviquil Botanical Garden

This month Craig “Cisco” Dietz will be visiting us from Chiapas Mexico to talk about his rescuing plants that were being destroyed by illegal cutting of trees in the forests around Chiapas. This work started in November 1994 and the plants are now housed in the Orquideas Moxviquil Botanical Garden in Chiapas. The rescued plants now number over 25,000 with 600 species represented. Although Cisco’s background is in film and photography in California and New Orleans, when he visited Chiapas he decided, “this is where I want to live.” Some of the comments from reviewers of the botanical garden include “Heaven”, “A magical place”, “This place is making a real difference to the well being of the world.” So let’s have a great turnout to welcome Cisco.



Roger Lane will bring mostly beverages for refreshments. Can others supplement the refreshments this month?

Two of the plant walls and Davis posing in front of some of his artifacts



March Meeting

Last month, we had a great turnout for Davis Dalbok's presentation

In March we happily had our meeting at Living Green where our host was **Davis Dalbok**. Davis and his wonderful staff gave us a tour of their warehouse laden with treasures from all over the world. The focus of our visit was the lush vertical gardens created by the Living Green staff. Two of the plant walls were located outdoors. One, with an assortment of plants

including bromeliads was created for a SF Home and Garden Show. It was 3 dimensional with a projection of hanging plants that included tillandsias. The other was a woodland garden that displayed ferns, grasses and various varieties of Japanese maples that really gave the piece a soft appealing aesthetic in color and texture.

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These walls are equipped with drip and spray systems that water daily. Both walls faced north.

Indoors were two smaller vertical gardens with tropical house plants such as bromeliads, ferns, pathos and mini palms. One of these walls had a water tank at the base and circulated water at the back

Here is Chinese statuary and some designer pots at Living Green Design

of the wall regularly. The second wall had a series of troughs that held water when the plants are hand watered.

Davis and his assistants are well informed about all aspects of how these vertical gardens are manufactured and operate.

Outdoors Living Green displays a marvelous collection on landscaping palms, aloes, succulents as well as Asian statuary. Indoors the collection also includes art works from all corners of the world. Visiting Living Green is certainly worth it.



The Bromeliad Society of San Francisco thanks Davis, Mimi and the rest of the staff for their hospitality.

Color and Pollinators



The color of our plants' bracts, petals, and leaves is one of the main evolutionary strategies that evolved in bromeliads to attract pollinators such as bees, butterflies and birds.

During their daylong search for food, pollinators may be attracted to bract, petal or leaf color. If they find the plants to be a good source of nectar, imprinting of the experience occurs and then bio-chemical triggers will continue to draw them to the plants. This strategy guarantees continuous pollination of the bromeliad ovaries.

The pollinators may not "see" red as we do (bees, for example, probably see it as blue-green and they prefer yellow). This strategy refers to the visual attraction of color during the day. Some plants evolved in habitats where there were no such pollinators available, and plants with odoriferous flowers (usually putrid ones to us) were able to attract bats and moths that fly at night in those habitats that were attracted to these odors.

If different pollinators are attracted to different colors over the course, those plants with [the] "right" color for pollinators in their area will

over those plants whose colors are not attractive to them. In the exquisite dialectical relationship between natural law and chance, all life on our planet from the beginning to the present has evolved and been shaped by Natural Selection.

Dr. David Benzig states in "Biology of the Bromeliads", (Mad River Press); "Implicit in explanation of how animal-mediated breeding systems operate is the assumption that a suitable pollinator will arrive at the right flower at the proper time to pick up or deposit pollen..." But how does it work?

Benzig continues; "...Bees and related species have sophisticated visual capacities and can sense both color and outline in sufficient detail to distinguish one flower type from another...bees perceive color, but not like we do. Bees have a trichromatic color vision system with UV, blue and yellow receptor pigments. Honeybees not only discriminate among these three primaries but perceive them in combination as well. Thus an insect's realm is marked by shades of

blue-green, blue UV and yellow UV.

“Red-sensitivity is known in some butterflies, not an unexpected finding given the red to orange hues of many flowers served by these pollinators. Pigments, which reflect or absorb UV, are common in plant parts...petals that project a UV signal are mostly yellow or purple to our eyes.

“Bees not only see colors invisible to humans, but their compound eyes, made up of hundreds of tiny individual receptors and lenses, record solid objects in mosaic patterns rather than as the unbroken images familiar to us. This may significantly affect their ability to perceive shape and outline as well as to detect the movement of predators. Birds probably have visual capacities more like our own. Little is known about bat vision, or that of the less common insect visitors of bromeliads.” (Bromeliad pollinators such as hummingbirds are especially equipped to feed from relatively closed flowers in which the nectar is deep at the bottom. They have very long beaks and can hover stationary at the flowers by flapping their wings up to 80 times a second.)

Benzig continues; “Most birds and humans have rather poor olfactory capacities. Bats may be better off, while insects have the most remarkable sense of all pollinators. Olfaction is in fact their primary sense...”

I can personally attest to this from an experience in Italy some years ago. Sylvia and I had eaten some oranges on a train and we kept the peels in a plastic bag in a small flight bag until we disposed of them in a trashcan. We stayed overnight in a hotel and the next morning while preparing to pack we found our room inundated by an army of ants that had climbed three stories from the lawn below, attracted by the faint orange smell that emanated from the flight bag in which we kept the peel.

[This article by Herb Plever is taken from the December 2008 “Bromeliana”, newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.]

Strybing Plant Sale

Our society participates in San Francisco Botanical Garden Sale for Strybing each year. Marilyn Moyer usually coordinates our participation and submitted the following:

This year May 1st Peder and I will be tied up in our moving out of this house. We cannot be there for this sale and would like some of you to volunteer.

It's to be Friday May 1st from 5 to 8 pm and Saturday May 2nd 9 to 11 (?)

Please sign up by calling me or email me. 650 365-5560 home phone or 650 207-1964 cell.

Or email me. marilynmoyer@comcast.net

This is an annual sale with lots of participants from other plant societies manning their booths and donating plants for the benefit of the San Francisco Botanical Society.

It's lots of fun. Plus it's a chance for you to garner some very nice plants at very low cost.

So signing up for Friday is an advantage because there is free food, better choice, and you might find what you can't live without on the silent auction. There is always very nice material up for bid. It's an exciting event overall

If you have plant donations bring them to the April meeting. There will be someone to bring it to the sale on Friday, May 1. You can also bring it to the sale. It's good to come early Friday to help price the plants. Parking, always an issue may be easier also.

I will submit your names to the volunteer in charge: Chloe Wieland. There will be a temporary badge waiting at the table near the parking lot entrance. If you are planning to do the sale on Saturday, then you will not need a badge. Entry to this sale on Friday is limited to members of the Botanical Society, or you, if you have the badge.

Billbergia distachia

Billbergia distachia (Vellozo) Mez, 1892, (distachia: arranged in two ranks)

Native to Brazil, this billbergia can be found near sea level to 5,000 feet. It is medium sized with compact fat little tubes that grow well for me outdoors. The plant is potted and hung on a fence facing east. Its green leaves are tinted purple, have whitish scurf, and the texture is softer than that of most billbergias. Like *B. nutans*, the inflorescence consists of a pendant spike with lovely pink bracts from which emerge dainty flowers of green sepals and petals tipped with blue.

As far as culture, I can't really say, except that it just grows for me from a pot-bound clump in a six inch pot: no food, no fancy mix - just summer misting and water and rain or no rain depending on the Northern California winter. I suspect it can take frost and I can vouch for it taking full sun. I don't know if the root ball ever gets completely wet. I don't see it as much in collections as it should be, since I personally feel that in form it is very pretty with its eight-inch tubed vase of purplish color that becomes translucent with back lighting. The inflorescence is as charming as any billbergia and like most, it blooms in late winter. It thrives on neglect.

This article by Dan Arcos is taken from the February 1981 newsletter of the Bromeliad Study Group of Northern California



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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