

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF

SAN FRANCISCO

JANUARY 2016



Meeting Specifics

When: Thursday, January 21

Time: 07:30 PM

Recreation Room

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

Brazil Part II: Chapada Diamantina

Andy Siekkinen from San Diego visited us last September with a show on his visit to Brazil last spring. He presented his preliminary results on his genetic research on the *Hechtia* genus at the first World congress on Bromeliad Evolution - a genus of particular interest to Andy since he has gotten into the bromeliad hobby. While in Brazil he also visited some of the bromeliads in habitat near the conference locale. His September show covered the bromeliads he saw in the Caatinga of Pernambuco, Brazil.

This month, we will visit Chapada Diamantina, which is a large national park in the state of Bahia. The vegetation in the park is 'Caatinga' which is similar to the dry thorn forests of Mexico. Known for its widespread rock formations, it is home to spectacular views and amazing plants that we will see in the show. Unfortunately, since Andy visited the park, fires destroyed much of plant material that will be covered in the show. Andy also will be bringing plants for sale.



Roger Lane has signed up for refreshments this month. All other contributions will be appreciated.



December Meeting

Our holiday meeting brought out many new faces wonderful food, gift plants, and conversations

Last month's meeting culminated another year for our society. Over the year we had a diverse group of speakers, gained many new members, and had 2 successful sales.

At the holiday meeting, we have a chance to socialize with the other members, partake of great food provided by our members, and exchange plants.

This meeting would not have been such a success without the help from many of our core

Thanks go to

- Our society for providing Michael Kiehl/Tropiflora plants for each member
- Our society for providing ham and turkey
- Dan Arcos for coordinating the party and food contributions.
- Marilyn Moyer and crew for setting up the venue and providing

holiday decorations

- The crew who cleaned up our room after the party
- Carl Carter for leading our group and keeping it operating smoothly.

Our president and vice president - thankful for another successful year in our society.



Aechmea nudicaulis

This is an extremely variable species with nine recognized varieties and many forms (possibly as many as 20), most of which have not been officially named. It is found from Mexico southward, throughout Central America, extending into southern Brazil.

The foliage may be banded, all green, or various shades of red. There are several variegated forms as well. All can be easily identified when grown in bright light with little fertilizer. One of the prominent characteristics of this species is the pronounced constriction of the leaves, sometimes referred to as a “thumb print”.

All forms are of very easy culture and can be grown either in pots or epiphytically on almost anything. While the inflorescence is showy, it is not long lasting. Hummingbirds are readily attracted to the yellow flowers. Several of the forms are self-pollinating and produce long-lasting bright red berries.

Pacific Orchid Exposition

Our society will be selling plants again at this year’s Pacific Orchid Exposition (POE) that takes place at Fort Mason in San Francisco from 26 February through 28 February. Over the last couple of years that we have sold at the POE, we have discovered that tillandsias are the most popular bromeliads for the orchid fanciers.

This sale is one of our two annual sales to support our society and we need your help to make it a success. Our sales booth is small and can only handle 3 people at a time. **There will be a signup sheet at our meeting to work in our booth.**

We also need help from our members in labeling and pricing the plants that we will sell.

Dues are Due

A new year has begun and dues for our society are due: \$15 for a single membership and \$20 for a dual membership. Pay our treasurer, Harold Charns at the meeting or mail to Harold. See back page of newsletter for details.



What is a World Bromeliad Conference?

Fun for everyone is what it is! Some people have the idea that a World Bromeliad Conference is for officers, directors, judges and “experts”. Wrong. It is a biennial three-day bromeliad extravaganza for anyone who likes bromeliads.

To get the most possible enjoyment from a conference, it is advisable to register, stay at the conference hotel, arrive a day or two early and stay over a day or two. Unfortunately, not everyone can attain the optimum and fortunately, it is not necessary. One may attend as much or as little of the conference as one can manage. Full registration is a package deal and covers all regularly scheduled events, but if you can be at the conference only one day and wish to attend one or two events that day, arrangements can usually be made - ask! If you are in the vicinity for reasons and can only drop by to see the plants and purchase one or two, it would be silly not to take advantage of the opportunity and just as silly to register for the full conference. Staying at the conference hotel puts one “on the scene”, doesn’t use precious time traveling to and fro, and puts one’s bed at hand when one’s legs refuse to go anywhere else, but it is not a requirement.

The judged show at a World Bromeliad Conference is a ballroom chock full of meticulously groomed bromeliad specimens, intricate society displays, and bromeliad arts and crafts. It takes a good hour for a quick once over and many hours if you want to really look at all the exhibits, take pictures, ask questions, or take notes.

The plant sales area is a bromeliad shopper’s heaven. A wide variety of bromeliads is available in a wide-range of prices and usually includes some hard-to-find bromeliads as well as some new releases.

The programs and speakers cover a variety of bromeliad topics and sometimes include hands-on workshops. They range from pure entertainment to serious education for everyone.

Tours of local bromeliad gardens and nurseries are usually offered at several different times which allows more freedom of choice in activities and makes the tour groups a more manageable size. The tours are a good opportunity to meet new people, see how others grow and use bromeliads, and gather cultural tips and ideas.

The rare plant auction is another treat. There are always a few prize plants that go at bargain prices that even a tight budget can withstand *that is, provided the budget has survived the plant sales at this point). If you feel extravagant or are a big spender, you may bid on some of the rare beauties offered. Or, you may simply attend to enjoy the excitement, see the plants, and make out your wish list.

Conference banquets vary, but are always festive dinners where the tables are bedecked with bromeliads, awards are presented, and entertainment provided.

There are also pre- and post-conference activities for those who come early or stay over. It is a good idea to plan an extra day or two anyway as the conference city always holds a few “must do while here” attractions which simply cannot be fit into the overall schedule of conference days.

My one complaint is that there are too many “must do” activities at a World Conference. I invariably underestimate my time and overestimate my physical capacity.

When making out my schedule to squeeze in all the “must do” activities, I forget to allow time for eating, sleeping, getting from here to there, program over-runs and late starts and conversations with old friends, new friends, and strangers. I leave the conference exhausted, disgusted that I missed so much, thrilled at all I managed to work in, fussing over new plants acquired (that I don’t have room for) and looking forward to the next World Bromeliad Conference.

[This article by Kit Hilburs, editor of THE OFFSET, December 1987, Journal of the Atlanta, GA Bromeliad Society, sums up what takes place at a Bromeliad Conference very well]

Upcoming Bromeliad Conferences

There are two bromeliad conferences that you should consider attending:

- The World Bromeliad Conference XXII will be held from June 13-19, 2016 in Houston, Texas. The Houston Bromeliad Society has hosted more than one world conference, so they know how to organize and put on a great event. Go to www.bsi.org to get details on the conference. **Registration fees will be going up after January 31, 2016.**
- The next Australian Bromeliad Conference will be held from 31 March to 2 April 2017. Forty-five countries have already expressed interest in attending. Go to www.sunnybroms.com for conference details. If you have never been to Australia, here is a great opportunity to visit.

Hohenbergia stellata

Hohenbergia stellata (Schultes F., 1830 (star like)) is found in Brazil, Trinidad, Venezuela, and Martinique at lower elevations, though it can be found as high as 3,000 feet. Both an epiphyte and terrestrial, it is a large plant and the most colorful of the genus. The broad green leaves can be three feet long, forming a large rosette with three foot long flower spike. Along the spike are pointy clusters of very red bracts from which pure blue flowers emerge. Its color will last for many months. Its large size and need for moderate warmth and humidity is a problem for many collectors. However, it is an excellent plant for those wishing to round off their collection with a *Hohenbergia*. Being a natural terrestrial, a large pot is called for, though like many bromeliads it will grow even in a tiny pot.

It does need very bright light to get that vivid red. Although it had already been described, this was one of the first bromeliads seen outside Bahia state by Mulford and Racine Foster on their first trip to Brazil.

[Article by Dan Arcos is reprinted from the January 1983 newsletter of the Bromeliad Study Group of Northern California]

Fog History of Atacama Reconstructed

For an interesting article about how tillandsias have played a role in studying the history of fog in the Atacama Desert, go to <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35065404>



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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Gyneranthus Ruby Star photo by L. Geisler

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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