

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF

SAN FRANCISCO

APRIL 2016



Meeting Specifics

When: Thursday, April 21

Time: 07:30 PM

Recreation Room

Where: San Francisco County Fair

Building

9th Avenue at Lincoln Way

San Francisco



On the Cacti Trail in Northern Peru

Gary Duke has been collecting cacti and succulents since he was 10 years old. He has been President of the South Coast Cactus and Succulent Society and the Long Beach Club in southern California. He was recently elected to the Board of Directors to the Cactus and Succulent Society of America. He's an avid collector of cacti and also collects Tylecodons and Dudleyas. He has over 1000 different species in his private collection and enjoys propagating them.

Gary will be doing a presentation on his travels in Peru in two parts. On Tuesday, he will cover the southern part of the country for the Cactus & Succulent Society. On Thursday, he will feature the northern part of the country, where he encountered more bromeliads. In his presentation, Gary describes lots of tall columnar cacti that we don't see very often, especially large ones in the wild and some of the small globular ones as well. He also has lots of pictures of bromeliads, along with scenic views in the Andes plus a bit on the Peruvian culture. Come and see a new perspective of Peru.

Gary might be bringing plants for sale.

Roger Lane will be bring beverages this month. All other refreshment contributions will be appreciated..



March Meeting

It is spring and Puyas are coming into bloom in the Bay Area

Brian Kemble gave a thorough overview of cultivated Puyas. Each plant was described with habit shots, showing the mature plant and inflorescence size and arrangement. And most spectacularly, the flower close-up shots! Also, the growing conditions, and

blooming age, were provided when known. And several species, purchased at Annie's Annuals were provided on the raffle table. Thank you, Brian.



This is *Puya chilensis* flowering after 15 years in England

Possibly, Your Last Newsletter

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 Charms at the meeting or mail to Harold. See back page of newsletter for details.

Tillandsia usneoides

Well, this Editor finally has nothing to say! Did you ever think you would see such a day? Just take a deep breath, sit back, and poof; I'll think of something.

Let's talk about *Tillandsia usneoides*: Spanish Moss. It is a bromeliad, you know. But, we never talk about it because it is just there and everywhere in a tropic climate. Some people like it. Some hate it. You seldom see it bloom because it happens usually at night or early morning and it just hangs around looking weird and ghostly. The old strands die off and new ones crowd in, and there is little or no way of taking off the old ones without destroying the long tangle. But it has its moments.

Occasionally there will be something new in a Journal or a Newsletter. The following is something that I have not read before. There are so many stories about the origin of finding this bromeliad and the names that were given to it. This is from an article in the ORLANDIANA, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida, June 2003.

Origin of the common name, Spanish Moss. Native Americans called the plant "tree hair", which name the French explorers turned to "Barbe espagnole" - Spanish Beard - to insult their bitter rivals in the New World. The Spanish retorted with "Cabello frances" ("French hair"). "Spanish Moss", a milder variation of the French taunt, has survived.

A Shelter for Wildlife One species of spider, *Pelegrina tillandsiae*, makes Spanish Moss its sole habitat. These spiders are found from North Carolina south to Florida and west to Texas. Yellow lineate and dark abdominal markings distinguish this species. (This Editor has not found spiders in Spanish Moss - just wasps, and lots of them so be alert when you mess with it.)

Your Editor's favorite story about Spanish Moss is about an old Spanish sea captain who traveled to the new world and fell in love with a young native girl. The young girl not wanting the advances of the old man with the long white beard fled into the forest and climbed a tree to hide. The captain followed her up in the tree, and his long beard got tangled in the branches of the tree. As he was unable to free himself, the young girl fled back to her family.

The captain died in the tree, but his long beard continued to grow. The birds and other jungle animals took the white hairs to their nests and the winds carried more afar. Now, *Tillandsia usneoides* (Spanish Moss) can be found in most of the tropical countries of the new world.

[This article by Gene McKenzie is reprinted from the August 2003 CALOOSAHATCHEE MERISTEM, newsletter of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society.]

Pitcairnia

The Pitcairnia was the earliest bromeliad to evolve and is the second largest genus after Tillandsia. There are more than 450 identified species and varieties with a range from Cuba and Mexico to Argentina; the largest concentration is in Columbia, Brazil, and Peru. The only bromeliad ever discovered out of the Americas is Pitcairnia Feliciania, found in Guinea, Africa.

In general, this bromeliad thrives in areas of shade and moisture. It grows epiphytically (as an air plant), can be saxicolous (growing on rocks) but mostly is terrestrial. Many species have long, narrow grass-like leaves; some have short, wide leaves; some species (*P. heterophylla*, for example) grows both.

Steems wrote, “this genus is a collection of oddballs, as it contains many species that don’t conform to our expectations of what a bromeliad should look or act like”. For instance, some Pitcairnias are deciduous, as in the case of *P. heterophylla* whose inflorescence emerges first, the leaves following after the start of the rainy season. Compare the inflorescence of *P. xanthocalyx* with that of *P. tabuliformis*, and you cannot help but wonder what they are doing in the same genus.

Pitcairnias thrive in the ground, especially in shady or semi-shady conditions and around moisture. Plant them around a fountain or a birdbath, and they will produce vigorous, healthy growth. They need room for their roots, so give them plenty of space or plant in a large pot.

Pitcairnias make interesting foundation plants. The flowers range from red to orange to blue and, although they are short-lived, the inflorescences often last for several months. Next time you are pondering what to do in a particularly shady area of your yard, consider a Pitcairnia.

Pitcairnia chiriquensis comes from Chiriquí, Panama, where it lives by waterfalls. This bromeliad loves moisture.

P. domingensis is saxicolous and epiphytic; it is found on the coastal rocks and woods from sea level to higher altitudes in the Dominican Republic.

P. flammea grows in wet conditions in the woods and on rocks in southern Brazil. Its leaves are spineless and grow 2 to 3 feet long. This bromeliad grows well in the shade.



Pitcairnia tabuliformis



Pitcairnia xanthocalyx



Habitat of *Pitcairnia chiriquensis*

P. heterophylla is found from southern Mexico and the West Indies to Venezuela and Ecuador, generally growing in wet and shady locations. Its flowers appear first in the spring; the foliage follows. While it makes a nice clump, beware of the nasty spines at the base of the plant. This pitcairnia can adapt from full shade to full sun.

P. tabuliformis is an atypical member of the genus from Chiapas, Mexico. Its numerous leaves form a rosette that flattens at blooming. The flowers rise from the center of the bromeliad and are a brilliant orange-red color. This pitcairnia does not like wet leaves; provide moisture from below, as well as watering the soil only. Do not plant this species in the ground. It is a smaller member of the genus and does best in a pot.

P. xanthocalys clumps readily, loves moisture and makes good ground cover. The leaves of this bromeliad are green on top, silver on the bottom.

All pictures are from the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

[This article by Karen Andreas is reprinted from the July 2005 ORLANDIANA, newsletter of the Bromeliad society of Central Florida.]



Pitcairnia domingensis



Pitcairnia flammea



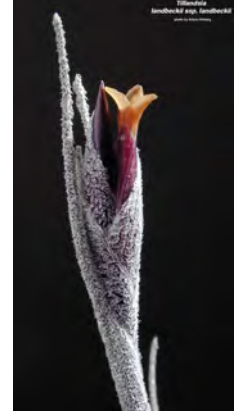
Pitcairnia heterophylla

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.

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

President	Carl Carter	carl.m.carter@sbcglobal.net	510-318-2379
Vice President	Dan Arcos	darcos@pacbell.net	415-823-9661
Treasurer	Harold Charns	Harold@States-Street.com	415-861-6043
Secretary	Carola Ziermann	carola.ziermann@yahoo.com	925-446-4028
Director	Roger Lane	rdodger@pacbell.net	650-949-4831
Director	Jill L. Myers	GEZUNDA@Earthlink.net	415-706-7358
Director	Gary Turner	BehrTek@yahoo.com	860-221-8800



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.

Roger Lane

551 Hawthorne Court
Los Altos, CA 94024