

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

NOVEMBER 2016



Meeting Specifics

When: Thursday, November 17

Time: 07:30 PM

Recreation Room

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



Botanizing in Mexico for the Casual Tourist

This month our own vice-president, **Dan Arcos**, will be our speaker. Earlier this year Dan and Tom Dwyer, another member of our society visited Oaxaca. This part of Mexico is a gem. It has a wealth of bromeliads and cactus as well as wonderful food and arts and crafts for the collector.

Dan will guide us through Oaxaca where a casual tourist can enjoy the plants of Mexico without having to search high and low. We will see the Jardin Etnobotanico de Oaxaca, Orquidario Encantada and the grounds of the archaeological site of Mitia.

Roger Lane signed up for refreshments this month. Any additional contributions will be greatly appreciated.

Guzmania monostachia, Ecuador river scene, *Guzmania squarrosa*



October Meeting

Guillermo Rivera took us on a trip to Ecuador that was a composite of many of his organized plant tours

Last month Guillermo Rivera returned to visit us again after a lapse of a few years. His talk was on Ecuador and the slides represented the best of his many trips to this country. He organized the show around the geographic regions of Ecuador: Amazon jungle, Andes Mountains, and the Pacific lowlands.

Guillermo explained that Ecuador is called a mega diverse country (one of seventeen) that contain the majority of all endemic species. In fact, Ecuador has the most biodiversity per square kilometer of any country in the world. It has over 16,000 species of plants. Although his slide show concentrated on bromeliads,

there were many other types of plants that our members could recognize. The most prevalent bromeliads included Guzmanias, tillandsias, and pitcairnia but there were also the uncommon (at least in cultivation) Mezobromelia. This genus is found mostly in Ecuador and the genus is currently going through a revision.

Guillermo saw the endangered spectacled bear on one trip to Ecuador.

We saw the lovely *Guzmania squarrosa* and *G. monostachia* that is also found in the Florida Everglades. There were some gigantic tillandsia species in flower (almost black) that are probably monocarpic (do not

produce offsets). Some of the other plants we saw that might be in many of our collections were *Tillandsia tectorum*, *T. cyanea*, *T. didisticha*, and *T. latifolia*. The *T. tectorum*s were growing in huge clumps along with the large *T. lymanii*.

Guillermo also supplemented the



plant photos with photos of local people in their native dress, many awesome butterflies, and the scenery of Ecuador.

Nine Nice Neos



Neoregelia carolinae tricolor



Neoregelia meyendorffii variegata



Neoregelia Oh No

If, by some cruel fate, or a spell cast by a wicked witch, I should be limited to growing one genus of bromeliads (what an awful thought), I would pick *Neoregelia*. For to me, the *Neoregelias* are among the most beautiful and rewarding of the bromeliads.

Neoregelias are very easy to grow and seem to withstand some neglect. They are particularly beautiful in form and most in foliage pattern or color - under the 'right' conditions. Many of the *Neoregelias* that color in the center when blooming are only 'gilding the lily.' A great deal of hybridizing is being done within this genus and there are even some interesting bigeneric hybrids being produced. There is at least one *Neotanthus* (*Neoregelia* x *Cryptanthus*), a *Neobergia* (*Neoregelia* x *Billbergia*), some *Neophytums* (*Neoregelia* x *Orthophytum*), and quite a few *Neomea* (*Neoregelia* x *Aechmea*), and some hybrids are the result of crossing *Neoregelias* and *Nidulariums*.

Most *Neoregelias* thrive and color up or develop their nice foliage patterns in strong light. These bromeliads can even take a great deal of sunshine if acclimated properly. In Texas where we get an abundance of sunshine (in winter as well as in our famed hot summers), this characteristic is indeed important. *Neoregelias* color well in greenhouses if given a bright position. In greenhouses, the colors will be more pastel while those grown in very strong light outdoors will assume a deeper coloration. So try growing *Neoregelias* in as much light as they can possibly tolerate.

To select the 'best' *Neoregelias* is really almost impossible, but there are a few which are so easy to grow and so beautiful and easy to obtain that I will list nine of the 'best.' Most of these plants are species. There are, of course, many beautiful hybrids, but many of them are relatively expensive and sometimes more difficult to obtain. The dedicated and advanced *Neoregelia* collector has many lovely plants to choose from. [Since this article was written, the availability of hybrids is often greater than that of the species and the cost is reasonable. - Ed.]

1. *Neoregelia carolinae* v. *tricolor*

One of the best-known *Neoregelia* and it deserves its popularity for it is a beautiful variegated plant.

Grown in strong light, its yellowish stripes take on a reddish tone that makes a spectacular sight. At flowering time, the center flushes a lovely color.

2. *Neoregelia meendorffii variegata*

This plant is rapidly becoming one of the most widely grown variegated bromeliads. There is much variation in the variegation and the markings do not remain the same in successive generations. Like *Neoregelia carolinae* v *tricolor*, this plant also takes on a reddish tone in very bright light and the center colors when flowering. Well-grown specimens of this *Neoregelia* are often show winners.

3. *Neoregelia* Oh No

This hybrid by Mr. Hummel of California is one of the most beautiful of the hybrid *Neoregelias*. When grown in strong light, the entire plant turns a reddish color that can evoke an “Oh No!” from any observer. The shade of color can vary greatly by the growing location (greenhouse vs. outdoors). There seems to be several clones of this hybrid (or several plants using the same name) so it is best, if possible, to select a plant or offshoot from a plant, which is the color you like. Of course, remember what growing conditions can change the shape and color of a plant.

4. *Neoregelia marmorata* hybrid

The bromeliad that goes by this name in our area has green leaves heavily spotted and splashed with red. When given proper light this plant, though common and inexpensive, has foliage as beautiful as any other bromeliad. An outstanding *Neoregelia* for any collection that is highly recommended for the beginner.

5. *Neoregelia princeps*

This is truly a ‘princely’ plant. When in bloom, *Neoregelia princeps* turns a vivid purple in the center and this lovely color lasts for months. Distinctive!



Neoregelia marmorata hybrid



Neoregelia princeps



Neoregelia concentrica



Neoregelia johannis



Neoregelia spectabilis



Neoregelia ampullacea

6. *Neoregelia concentrica*

Sometimes it seems as though there are scores of clones of this fine bromeliad as nearly all concentricas seem so different. It is outstanding in conformation with wide leaves (3/4 inch) which are marked with streaks, spots, and bars of deep purple. This is a great plant to have!

7. *Neoregelia johannis*

There seems to be several 'varieties' of this one too. The plant I have (which has yet to bloom) takes on the most intense reddish foliage coloring of any of my Neoregelias when placed in strong outdoor light. But I have seen some *Neoregelia johannis* plants, which do not assume this coloration. When blooming, the center is reported as turning a rich purple.

8. *Neoregelia spectabilis*

Some readers may disagree with including this plant in a list of outstanding Neoregelias but no Neoregelia is more easily grown or easily obtained. And while its center does not 'color up' when it blooms, it is still a beautiful and valuable plant. In very strong light, its leaves turn a bronzy color - a lovely sight. This is the 'painted fingernail plant' and many prefer to grow it in a shadier situation. In this case, the leaves are dark green and the tips a more contrasting red. Common, but worth having.

9. *Neoregelia ampullacea*

There are many 'varieties' of this little gem and all are fine additions to any collection. This is a good plant to let clump or to grow on wood or on plaques, etc. as it is stoloniferous. This plant needs strong light to achieve its full potential. There are variations in size and markings, but all are small plants.

So these are the 'nine nice Neos'. Why nine? Well, nine was just more alliterative than ten or fifteen. But, if pressed, I could always find a few more Neoregelias to complete any list.

[This article by Edgar Smith was originally published in 1977 and is reprinted from the November 1982 newsletter of the Bromeliad Study Group of Northern California. Many new species have been described since then and the list of new hybrids is huge. These bromeliads go back to the early history of neoregelias. Do you members have a current list of 'nine nice Neos?']

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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