

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF

SAN FRANCISCO

FEBRUARY 2017



Meeting Specifics

When: Thursday, February 16

Time: 7:30 PM

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



Genus Cryptanthus - The Earth Stars

This month **Keith Smith** will be our speaker. Keith has been a member and board member of the Sacramento Bromeliad Society and the BSI for over 40 years. He has a large greenhouse in Auburn and grows far too many bromeliads and other genera. Although he provides many of his society's plant tables, this has not help create more space, as he must save even dying plants in order to produce pups.

Keith will provide a slide show illustrating the wide variety of both species and hybrid cryptanthus. He will also will give detailed instructions on how to carte for them and will have a number of them on the plant table.

If you grow cryptanthus, bring them in so our members can see how they are grown locally.

No one signed up for refreshments this month.. Any contributions are appreciated.



January Meeting

Last month, Ben Harink took us to the Botanical Gardens at Utrecht University

Last month, our own member, **Ben Harink**, took us on a behind-the-scenes tour of the Botanical Gardens at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. He contacted Eric Gouda and was able to spend a day visiting the various greenhouses housing bromeliads.

Ben first showed us many outside slides demonstrating

how beautiful the grounds are. Because of the climate, many bromeliads (mostly tillandsias) are moved outdoors for the warmer seasons.

But most of Ben's slides concentrated on the plants inside the greenhouses. Ben is a superb photographer and we got to see slides of many rare plants that are probably not

ever available commercially. There are several greenhouses devoted just to bromeliads and separated by genera: pitcairnia, dyckia, aechmea, vriesea, etc. And in the colder months, the outdoor bromeliads are moved indoors. Thanks, Ben for a trip to Utrecht.

This is an outdoor scene at the Utrecht University Botanical Gardens



DUES ARE DUE

This is a reminder to you that dues for 2017 are due: \$15 for a single membership and \$20 for a dual membership. Pay our treasurer, Harold Charms at the meeting or check the last page of this newsletter for details.



Pacific Orchid and Garden Exposition

Our society will be selling plants again at this year's Pacific Orchid and Garden Exposition (POGE) that takes place at the San Francisco County Fair Building (same building in which we meet) from **24 February** through **26 February**. Setup will be on **Thursday, February 23rd** from 1 PM to 8 PM. We must be out of the building at 8 PM on Thursday evening.

Sale schedule is Friday/Saturday (9am to 6 pm) and Sunday (10 am to 5 pm). Cleanup is 5 pm to 6:30 pm.

This sale is one of our two annual sales to support our society and we need your help to make it a success. We need help in

- Pricing plants for the sale
- Provide plants for display
- Set up sales booth/display
- Working in sales booth
- Teardown.

The table shows signups at the January meeting. Please see if you are able to help fill in any of the vacancies.



Members pricing our marvelous sale plants last Saturday.

Feb 22/Wednesday (Set Up)

NAME	TIME
Harold Charns	6-8 PM

Feb 23/Thursday (Set Up)

NAME	TIME

Feb 24/Friday (Sales)

TIME	PERSON	PERSON	PERSON
9 AM - 1 PM	Marilyn Moyer	Peder Samuelsen	Jana King
1 PM - 6 PM	Harold Charns	Dan Arcos	

Feb 25/Saturday (Sales)

TIME	PERSON	PERSON	PERSON
9 AM - 1 PM	Carola Ziermann	Dan Arcos	
1 PM - 6 PM	Charlotte Masson	Edgar Xochitz	

Feb 26/Sunday (Sales)

TIME	PERSON	PERSON	PERSON
9 AM - 1 PM			
1 PM - 6PM	Cheryle Harlan	Dan Arcos	Marcia Leong

Feb 26/Sunday (Tear Down)

TIME	PERSON	PERSON	PERSON
5 PM - Done	Dan Arcos		

Mothering a Fading Mother Plant

I would like to relate how I learned to get the most out of a fading mother plant.

I bought my first cryptanthus almost exactly a year ago. It came unlabeled with two large pups and a substantial cluster (about an inch in diameter) of dried flowers at the center. The condition of the inflorescence and the size of the pups leads me to estimate that it had bloomed several months before I acquired the plant.

I repotted the mother plant in a large terra cotta pot and allowed the pups to develop a few more leaves before gently shaking them loose and rooting them in the same Miracle Grow potting soil that I used for the mother. This medium is just a loose potting soil mixture with some slow release fertilizer already in it, but I also add some peat moss and perlite to the mix. Then, in May, I left the mother plant on my fire escape (it faces North and gets good indirect light all day with direct light in the late afternoon) and hoped that she would produce more offspring before fading away. In this light the mother became more roseate.

In the meantime, I got hooked on these plants and acquired 20-30 other cryptanthus. I loved the new plants, but they made me realize how unique and impressive my first cryptanthus really was. As the mother plant began to put out her second set of twins, I became interested in keeping her alive and productive as long as possible. Unfortunately, the web provided little information about bromeliad longevity; the general consensus seemed to be that growers have little control over how long a plant lasts after blooming. I found this answer unsatisfying and set about doing everything I could to keep my favorite bromeliad healthy.

Most of what I did for the plant should be common sense to the bromeliad grower. I kept her moist but not too wet and fertilized her lightly with 17-8-22 fertilizer about every 3-4 weeks. I find that my cryptanthus tend to do better in porous clay pots despite the fact that they dry out quickly and need frequent watering, especially in the summer.

As the second set of twins developed, I could see that they were gradually crushing the mother plant between their thick stems. I decided to remove the entire inflorescence in order to make room at the center of the plant and thus avoid crushing her. The plant is very large for a cryptanthus and the inflorescence was quite substantial as well. The blooms were difficult to remove although they were completely dry, but they finally yielded to a pair of needle nose pliers. The second set of pups grew just as large and just as quickly as the first set, and the space opened up in the center of the plant prevented the offspring from choking their mother.

Two months ago I decided to remove the second set of pups and they detached easily with a little tug. Despite the removal of the inflorescence, the pups' thick stems would have eventually crushed the mother had I not removed them. The mother plant spent the winter under fluorescent grow lights and is now putting out her third set of pups. She still looks quite healthy with the exception of some darkening and a few black spots on the larger, older leaves. I am convinced that the greatest threat to an aging cryptanthus is from her own pups. For the mother and her offspring to flourish, one must strike a balance between allowing the pups to grow enough for removal and not letting them get so large as to damage the mother.

This article by Chris Blazier is reprinted from the New York Bromeliad Society Newsletter (April 2004)



Clone Preservation Project Update (Completion)

No species in this complex appears to be self-fertile, much less to set seed without pollination. You should assume that at least two clones would be needed to produce viable seeds for any of the species. However, it is quite easy to cross *Aechmea orlandiana* and *Aechmea fosteriana* with each other and with other *Aechmea* species (consider the number of reported *Aechmea orlandiana* hybrids). Of course, if you have humming birds around (they need to be around when plants of this complex are in bloom), there is always a quick little beak ready to cross-pollinate any two open flowers that provide a sip of nectar. The fruits turn blue when seeds mature inside.

If you find these seed-filled fruits, you can try your hand at growing some seedlings. These will be hybrids, of course, and it is unlikely that any will be worth propagating, but it could be interesting to spend some time trying to figure out what the unknown pollen parent might be.

I need to make some comments on *Aechmea Bert*, the hybrid between *Aechmea orlandiana* and *Aechmea fosteriana*. I have some plants that probably came from Foster's original cross (although this is hard to prove given the uncertain distribution of the Frase hybrids); they basically do not have any of the orange colors present in the leaves of *Aechmea orlandiana*. Plants currently for sale as Bert are much more colorful and have better form than those old clones. These newer clones could be remakes of the original cross, or the result of more complex crosses within the complex. Since these clones are just as large as the original, they are clearly not *Aechmea Little Bert*.

I don't know what *Aechmea Viktor* looks like, so, in theory, this name could apply. However, since no separate cultivar names are attached to these newer clones, we will probably have to come up with new artificial names (think Clone 1, Clone 2...) to distinguish them. Unfortunately, this also means we will probably never be able to decipher their history.

The variegated form of *Aechmea Bert*, although readily available, has apparently never been given a cultivar name. It is apparently unique in the way the variegation skips generations. Offsets of variegated plants frequently lose all trace of variegation, but offsets of these plants frequently appear with fully developed variegation. This trait means you don't want to discard plants that have lost variegation. It also suggests that you should grow this plant in a clump in order to maintain some variegated rosettes at all times.

As always, if you have any information to add concerning plants in this complex, please let me know. In particular, information concerning older clones still in cultivation or wild-collected plants from some of the many BSI members who collected in Brazil over the years would be welcome.



Aechmea Bert

This article by Alan Herndon is reprinted from the August 2010 newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida.

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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Photo by Courtesy of Roxanne

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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