

FLORIDA WEST COAST BROMELIAD SOCIETY

1954-2016

Celebrating over 62 Years in Bromeliads

floridabromeliads.org



November 2016 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING

Date & Time:

Tuesday, November 1, 2016
Doors open at 7 pm; meeting starts at 7:30

Location:

Good Samaritan Church
6085 Park Boulevard
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Program

In his presentation titled *Zika Prevention Measures for Home Gardeners*, **Rick Hunter**, Ph.D., will talk to us about Zika virus and the measures bromeliad growers and other gardeners can take to reduce the risk of disease. Rick is a retired public health professional and served as Florida's Deputy State Health Officer overseeing their program on disease prevention and related supporting programs. His career also included work in environmental health programs at the federal and local levels. He is an adjunct instructor in the USF College of Engineering and a retired Army Reserve medical service corps officer. Rick is a member of the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay and readily admits his wife Marcia is the bromeliad grower in the family.

Plant Sales

All members are welcome to sell bromeliads at the meeting.

2017 Officers and Trustee Election

At the November meeting members will vote on a slate of nominees for our 2017 officers and trustee, as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| President | Dick Dailey |
| Vice President | Brian Corey |
| Secretary | Nancy Dailey |
| Treasurer | Gary Lund |
| Trustee (three-year term) | Judy Lund (3-year term, 2017 through 2019) |

Additional candidates may be added to the slate, with permission of the nominee, any time before the voting takes place. If you want to make a nomination or run for one of these offices yourself, contact Susan Sousa, Nominating Committee Chairman, at susansousa1@yahoo.com. Nominees elected from the slate presented in November will serve on our 2017 Board of Directors along with four others: Barbara Stayer and Sal Vactor (the two other trustees currently serving overlapping three-year terms), Ashley Graham as Immediate Past President, and Linda Sheetz, Newsletter Editor.

LAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Program

The speaker for the evening was **Phil Elting**, owner of Elting's Exotic Plants in Riverview, Florida. Phil started in the plant business in 1975, growing tropical plants, and now specializes in bromeliads, especially Vrieseas. In his presentation titled *Tissue Culture Production and Reproduction*, Phil explained his move into the micropropagation technique of tissue culture in order to rapidly produce a large number of bromeliads that are clones of each other.



According to Phil, many of the big bromeliad nurseries are turning to tissue culture as a means of turning out more plants in a shorter period of time than two common ways of bromeliad reproduction--pups and seeds. Pups provide only a limited number (sometimes only one) of plants per mother plant, and while seeds can produce a larger number of offspring, the process from seed to mature plant is lengthy. Below are some highlights of his talk.

- Tissue culture in bromeliads is essentially cloning a mother plant using cells collected from the plant's meristem.
- The meristem is located deep within the center of tank bromeliads and is the growing point of the plant. It is made up of a mass of undifferentiated cells that eventually become leaf, root or inflorescence cells. Meristem cells used in the tissue culture process are collected while they are still actively dividing and prior to their development into different cell types.
- The tissue culture process is conducted in sterile conditions to prevent introduction of disease and harmful agents to the meristem cells and young plants.
- The tissue or living cells harvested from the meristem are called explants. After removal from the meristem Phil places the sterile explants onto the surface of a solid, sterile culture medium that is typically composed of inorganic salts along with a few organic nutrients, vitamins and plant hormones.
- After about 90 days in the initial medium, the small plants that result are placed into a container with a slime-like mixture of a growth hormone and agar (picture on right) and the container is sealed.
- When mature enough, i.e., about 2- to 4-inches tall, Phil separates the plants, puts them into small pots (picture on the right), and introduces them into the greenhouse.



Herb Hill of Hill's Raingreen Tropicals in Lithia, Florida, has been using tissue culture to create hybrids and enlarge his stock for many years now. Phil showed us an example of one of the recent products of Herb's efforts to develop a *Vriesea* with a pure white bloom stalk (picture on the right) for the European market. While this *Vriesea* is beautiful enough on its own merit and many among us would find it collectable, the European market would reject it because of the slight yellow tinge to it. Herb is not daunted and is still forging ahead with this project.



Phil had brought along several dozen *Billbergia* 'Darth Vader' and *Cryptanthus* 'Red Baron' clones in 3-inch pots that he generously distributed to the members.

SHOW AND TELL

Reported by Helga Tarver

- John Edwards *X Canmea* 'Galaxy' variegated (*Canistrum fosterianum* x *Aechmea chantinii*), (picture below)
- Aechmea calyculata* (picture below)
- Barb Gardner Gardening sleeves (picture below); Barb showed a pair of welding sleeves she bought to use as gardening sleeves for protection when working with spiny bromeliads.
- Ashley Graham *Aechmea*, most likely *Aec.* 'Fulgo-Ramosa' (*Aec. fulgens* var. *discolor* x *Aec. ramosa*),
- Nicole Matwijczyk *Catopsis berteroniana*; one of the 24 native Florida bromeliads
- Linda Sheetz *Tillandsia* 'Samantha' (picture below)

Show and Tell Plants



X Canmea 'Galaxy' variegated



Aechmea calyculata



Barb Gardner modeling
'gardening' sleeves



Tillandsia

'Samantha'

THIS AND THAT

University of South Florida Fall Plant Sale

We are grateful to the members who sold plants or volunteered to work in our sales booth at the recent USF October Fall Plant Sale. These folks included Marty Baxley (Sales Chair), Ashley Graham, Ray Gurgui, and Nicole Matwijczyk who sold plants and Gary Lund, Sue Myers, and Bill Schumacher who helped with the sales. Marty reported the sales went well, and that only one person asked about the Zika virus and mosquitoes in bromeliads.

New Member

We have yet another new member. **Richard Poole** joined our society at the last meeting. Seek him out and make him feel welcome.

Bromeliads in Flora Arrangements.

Member Janet Stoffels has long volunteered at the St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts where she has become known for the floral arrangements she makes and that the museum puts on display. She often includes a bromeliad inflorescence in the arrangements such as her most recent creation shown in the picture on the right. The bloom stalk is from a *Vriesea*.



Bromeliad Garden Party

Save the date—Saturday, November 19, noon to 5 pm, for lunch, refreshments, music, a bromeliad sharing raffle table, a tour of the nearby Homosassa Wildlife Park plus boating and kayaking. Dick and Nancy Dailey are opening their homestead in Homosassa to us for the event. The society will be providing food with a

Cuban theme, and members and guests are encouraged to bring a covered dish or dessert. Additional information, including driving directions, will be forthcoming.

Helga Tarver

Helga wants to thank members for their thoughtfulness in sending her get well greeting cards. She is much improved from a minor setback and back to herself as we knew her.

COMING EVENTS, 2016-2017

December 3-4, 2016, Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Sale

Terry Park, 3451 Marion Street, Fort Myers (bprevattpcc@aol.com)

March 11-12, 2017, Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale

Harry P. Leu Gardens, Orlando, FL (<http://www.leugardens.org>)

March 25-26, 2017, GreenFest Plant Sale

University of Tampa, Tampa, FL (friendsofplantpark.com/greenfest)

April 22 and 23, 2017, Green Thumb Festival

Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, FL (stpeteparksrec.org/greenthumb)

July 22-24, 2017, Bromeliad Extravaganza®

Hosted by the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Tampa, FL (bromeliadsociety@juno.com)

2016 FWCBS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
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