

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



June 2004

NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 17, 2004** at 7:30 PM
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

June Program

Bromeliad Photosynthesis and Patterning – A Study in Extreme Adaptation

This month, our speaker will be **Barret Bassick**, one of our own members. I believe this is the first time that Barret has been one of our speakers. I can not tell you much more about the topic than the title. Barret was still developing it when the newsletter was being written. This sounds like an interesting area of exploration and we look forward to learning more on Thursday.

Our plant table this month will be provided by **Marilyn Moyer** and **Roger Lane**. Marilyn always pleases us with her plant selection – hopefully Roger will do as well.

June Refreshments

Casper Curto and **Daryl Ducharme** signed up for refreshments this month. Can someone else help them out?



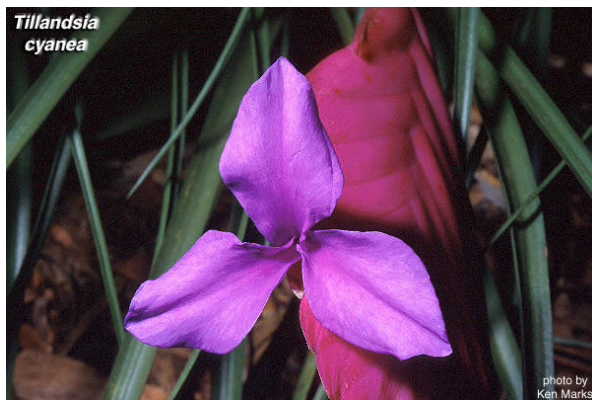
Guzmania conifera from Deroose Plants
13th World Bromeliad Conference, Houston, Texas July 1 - 5, 1998

Here is a beautiful plant from Ecuador: *Guzmania conifera*. Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. I did not have a photo of Barret.

May Meeting

Jeffrey Kent provided a slide show on a trip to Ecuador in 2003 with a scientist who is doing research how the air-borne impurities and pesticides in the water supply is affecting plant material. With so many bromeliads having cups for holding water, there was no shortage of material for research. And many of these plants are indeed dying because of these impurities. Of course, pristine forests and bromeliads in Ecuador are also still being wiped out. Jeffrey did not get to explore as much as he had planned because of the heavy rains throughout most of his trip.

Perhaps because of the continuing downturn in Bromeliad populations in habitat, Jeffrey is starting to disseminate more representatives of his personal collection to maintain these plants. For the members in attendance, it was a feeding frenzy at the plant table. We took in over \$300 and many people went home with some very special species (such as *Vriesea sparsiflora*) – some being released for the first time.



Tillandsia cyanea spike and flower make it a popular item at our bromeliad sales. Photo by Ken Marks is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Notes on the Intensity of Color in Spikes of Tillandsias

This article by David Berry, Jr. is taken from the March 2000 PotPourri, newsletter of the Greater New Orleans Bromeliad Society.

Much of the beauty of tillandsias such as *T. lindenii* and *T. cyanea* is the bright watermelon pink of their flat spikes. This color is a delightful contrast to the blue or purple of the expanded flower petals.

Light is an important fact in the development of the pink color. As evidence, the side of the spike that faces the brightest light is a darker shade of pink than the other side. Yet light is not the sole factor in intensifying the color of the spikes. In fact, too much light will destroy the color. As an example, when plants are placed in the bright light of full sun the pink color will be blanched to the color of celery. When plants are suspended high in a glasshouse in a bright, hot location, even the green of the spike will be whitened.

In addition to light, temperature and humidity are essential factors in the coloration of the spikes. The deepest color in the spikes can be developed by reproducing the cool, moist condition of a cloud forest. But it will rarely be possible for the average grower to reproduce in his greenhouse or garden such a condition as that of a misty, moving air of cool mountain slopes. Nonetheless, the goal can be recognized, and certain steps taken in its direction.

Keep the plants in the coolest part of your greenhouse or yard. If in the tropics, keep the plants in a shady part of the garden. At the same time, give the plants as much humidity as you can manage by spraying them from time to time and by watering down the surroundings. As an example of the response of the plants to a dull, cool condition, during overcast or foggy days two and sometimes three flowers on the spike will expand at the same time, whereas only one flower is the usual development.

Our fellow society members, the Goodale Moirs of Honolulu, place their *T. lindenii* and *T. cyanea* plants at the upper end of their Nuuanu Valley yard where the cool driving rains and mists from the mountains above descend upon the plants. Under these conditions the pink coloration of the spikes is so dark and also so bright, that a luminescence seems to be in the color. The Moirs call this place in the garden their cloud

forest. Other kinds of bromeliads besides these tillandsias grow luxuriantly there.

T. lindenii and *T. cyanea* are natives of the high Andes of Peru and Ecuador. As there is heavy rainfall in their native regions, the plants should be watered heavily.

The National Collection of Tillandsia

This article by Tony Jarlett is taken from the September 1993 newsletter of the North County Bromeliad Society.

The National Collection of Tillandsias started after I was given a book called Indoor House Plants as a present.

At this time, I was only interested in growing late flowering chrysanthemums, but after reading about Bromeliads and their needs, I decided to grow these plants as they seemed to need little attention.

The book listed Mr. B. Wall as a supplier of Bromeliads and details on how to join the British Bromeliad Society. I decided to join the society and send for a list of available Bromeliads.

I finally ended up with *Aechmea*, *Billbergia*, *Vriesea*, *Nidularium*, and of course, my first *Tillandsia*, which was *T. stricta*. As with most people, I was fascinated by this plant that needed little attention; no potting or compost, just spraying two or three times a week.

What could be easier, or so I thought! How wrong can you be? If you grow only one type and from the same type of climate, then you will not have too much trouble. Now try to grow them from various types of environments and all in one 12 foot x 50 foot greenhouse. They can keep you on your toes and give you a few problems to solve.

Back in 1981-82, tillandsia plants were hard to get and even harder was obtaining information. I then found Holly Gate Nursery and met Clive Innes, who showed me round his greenhouses and

show house. I was so impressed that it made me even more determined to collect tillandsias. After buying all the different species he had for sale, I asked if he knew any good books I could get.

He said, "Yes, I have got one in the house," and disappeared, returning with his Werner Rauh book, Bromeliads for Home, Garden, and Greenhouse. This became my main source of information for many years along with the British Bromeliad Society Journal.

Then, one day, out of the blue, I got a telephone call from Len Harrison, asking if I would like to go to a Bromeliad swap at Liverpool Botanic Gardens the next Sunday. I said, "yes, please," and looked forward to meeting someone else who was interested in Bromeliads. He arrived the next Sunday with his father-in-law. I got in the back seat of the car and found that the seat beside me was filled with a pile of American Bromeliad Society Journals. I sat in the back of the car reading these journals nearly all the way to Liverpool. I decided to join the American Bromeliad Society, which gave me a good source of up to date information, and a way of buying unusual and rare tillandsias.

About this time, a work colleague who had a National Collection of *Bergenia*, suggested that as I was getting a large collection of tillandsias, I should write to the Nation Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens to see if they would be interested in accepting my collection of tillandsias as a National Collection.

On 12 November 1985 I received a reply from Assistant General Secretary, Jane Taylor, who said my offer would be brought before the National Collections Committee at the next meeting in March of 1986, providing I agreed to the conditions of acceptance. These conditions took me back a bit, as I did not realize the implications of being a collection. Briefly, the conditions required me to:

- Maintain an agreed minimum number of specimens of each species.
- To add to and improve the collection so as to remain as representative as possible.

- Keep accurate records, and to map the individual plants in the collections.
- To cooperate with routine inspections of the collection and the recording systems. Also, to give an annual report on the collection.
- To provide material for herbarium specimens.
- To provide quantities of propagating material on request from the NSPCG.
- To open the collection to the public at least once a year.

On March 25, 1986 my collection was accepted as the National Collection of Tillandsia. At this time it was the only genus of Bromeliad in the National Collection Scheme. My collection has now grown to 99 species and 23 cultivars.

I see in the National Plant Collection Directory this year that we have been joined by the National Collection of Aechmea. This consists of 31 species and 12 cultivars and is held by Liverpool City Council in the Liverpool Botanic Gardens. It is open to the public from 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is free.

Dyckia

Dorothy Buyer, a well known grower of Dyckias and Hechtias in Vista, California, wrote this article in the March 1993 newsletter of the North County Bromeliad Society.

Dyckias are the most familiar of the terrestrial bromeliads and are also the easiest to grow. These spiny xerophytes almost always form dense rosettes (*Dyckia estevesii* does not) of fleshy leaves with a dense covering of scales and with linear striations on the underside.

The upper side of the leaves may be glabrous or covered with silvery scales to varying degrees. The rosettes range in size from four inches (*Dyckia macedoi*) to forty inches or more (*Dyckia leptostachia*, *Dyckia frigida*) in diameter. Stems are often prostrate but usually the offsets are so numerous that stems remain hidden. These bromeliads are long lived and after years of

growth, if offsets and old leaves are removed, thick stems are exposed.

The inflorescence may be simple, slightly branched or paniculate. The flowers range from yellow to red with most in the mid-oranges. Dyckias have perfect flowers but not all are self compatible. In cultivation *Dyckia fosteriana* will self-set seed but *Dyckia marnier-lapostellei* will not. All species hybridize easily and precaution must be taken, either to insure true species or to protect the desired hybridization. The winged seeds germinate readily when fresh and viable. Percentage of germination decreases rapidly as weeks pass.

Dyckias are found in mid to eastern South America, mostly in Brazil with fewer found in Argentina. They are often found growing in rock crevices with little soil accumulation for the roots. Most of the Dyckias growing in cultivation are far more lush than their relatives in habitat. Dyckias are very forgiving as to type of potting soil. A cactus mix is fine, and any fertilizer that is balanced to low nitrogen is good in sparse quantity. Water moderately when weather is warm, less when it is cold.

According to Lyman Smith, there are two varieties of *Dyckia fosteriana*: *D. fosteriana* v. *fosteriana* and *D. fosteriana* v. *robustior*. Both varieties are native to Parana, Brazil.



Dyckia fosteriana - Winner Div.II, Sec. A

Entered by Grant Groves
1999 Mothers Day Show, BSCF

This *Dyckia fosteriana* was a head table winner at a Florida Bromeliad Show. Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

People interested in hybridizing are finding that using *D. fosteriana v. fosteriana* as one of the parents can produce some intriguing results such as Hummel's *D. Olympiad*. Various cultivars are also appearing on the market as *D fosteriana cv. Select Silver* or *Giant Silver*.

There is one beautiful and very different *Dyckia* circulating under the name of *Dyckia fosteriana*. It is much larger than *D. fosteriana v. fosteriana*, has glabrous leaves which are deep red in full sun and has a more upright habit of growth. Since Lyman Smith only gives a scant description of *D. fosteriana v. robustior* in his *Neotropica*, it is impossible to discern if this larger form is indeed *D. fosteriana v. robustior* or if the name *D. fosteriana* is being improperly used in this case. If anyone else has discovered this conundrum and resolved it, please pass along the history.

Orchids That Glow in the Dark?

This article is reprinted from the September 1993 newsletter of the North County Bromeliad Society and originally appeared in the August 1993 issue of *The Orchid Hunter*

Scientists in Singapore are working on a world breakthrough in plant research.

They are infusing firefly genes in orchids – and producing flowers that actually glow in the dark. The purpose of these experiments is to prove that molecular transfer methods work. For example, rats are implanted with human DNA so that specific genes can be tested for links with diabetes.

Since 1987, Singapore has invested \$50 million and lured 200 scientists from top institutes in the United States, Canada, and Europe. The goal is to enter into research and development joint ventures with pharmaceutical companies and share proprietary rights for medicines that are developed.

There is much more to be learned about the glowing orchid experiments. Watch future issues of *The Orchid Hunter* for updates.

I found this very interesting. Will someone try this experiment on Bromeliads? Just think – an *Aechmea fasciata* with flowers that glow in the dark!

Welcome, New Members!

David Snyder
2207 Kiernan Avenue
Modesto, CA 65356
DSNY2207@msn.com

Richard Wigen
37 Ford Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
wigen@sutterhealth.org

Annual Bromeliad Sale

This is a final reminder about our annual Bromeliad Sale. Since it is our only annual event that brings in money to support the society, we need your help. Our combined plant sale with the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society will be on June 26th and 27th this year at the County Fair Building – hours from 9 AM – 5 PM each day. Setup will be on Friday afternoon and early evening, June 25th.

Since this is such an important event for our society, we really need as much support as you can provide. You can help in three ways:

- Entering some of your premium plants in our Bromeliad display area
- Selling your own plants
- Working at the show/sale.

If you are selling plants and you have not contacted **Keith Anderson** with plant prices for making bar codes, DO IT IMMEDIATELY. Call Keith at (650) 529-1278 or e-mail him at e2keith@earthlink.net

We need workers on Saturday and Sunday. Call Roger Lane at (650) 949-4831, e-mail him at rdodger@pacbell.net or sign up at this month's meeting.

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO (BSSF)

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 the affiliate section of the BSI webpage for information about our meetings.

The BSSF publishes a monthly newsletter that comes with the membership. Annual dues are \$12. To join the BSSF, mail your name(s), address, telephone number, and check made payable to the BSSF to: Harold Charns, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

BSSF 2004 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	Carl Carter	510-661-0568	carl.carter@varianinc.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Bruce McCoy	415-641-7511	bmccoy@inreach.com
SECRETARY	Dorothy Dewing	650-856-1441	
TREASURER	Harold Charns	415-861-6043	Harold@States-Street.com
DIRECTORS:	Keith Anderson	650-529-1278	e2keith@earthlink.net
	Roger Lane	650-949-4831	rdodger@pacbell.net
	Marilyn Moyer	650-365-5560	MarilynMoyer@comcast.net
	Peder Samuelson	650-365-5560	Pedersam@comcast.net
	Peter Wan	408-605-2637	peterkwan@earthlink.net

BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

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BROMELIAD SOCIETY
OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Roger Lane
Newsletter Editor
551 Hawthorne Court
Los Altos, CA 94024-3121

WE NEED YOUR HELP AT THE BROMELIAD SALE THIS MONTH
