

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



## JANUARY 2011

# NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 20, 2010** at 7:30 PM  
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

### January Program

#### World Bromeliad Conference 2010 in New Orleans

**T**his month we will have one of our own members: **Peder Samuelsen** giving us an overview of the last world bromeliad conference held in New Orleans in 2010. Peder and **Marilyn Moyer** were the only members of our society to attend this conference. As you know, Peder is very interested in photography and is a superb photographer, so we will be getting a magnificent picture of what we missed by not going to New Orleans. If you want an entertaining show, do not miss this meeting.

#### January Refreshments

**R**oger Lane signed up for refreshments this month.



Here is **Peder Samuelsen** making an important point to **George Bosworth** at one of our past holiday parties.

#### Dues are Due

**A** new year has begun and dues are due: \$15 for a single membership and \$20 for a family. Pay Harold at the meeting or mail to Harold. See back page for details.

## December Meeting

**Q**ur holiday potluck dinner and party was a great success. Thanks for bringing in great food items and wonderful gifts to share. We wish to also thank **Marilyn Moyer** and **Dan Arcos** for the planning and ensuring the party went off without a hitch.

## Mis-Information

Brom Spider wrote this article for the July/August 2000 issue of the Journal of the Gold Coast Bromeliad Society, Queensland, Australia that is being reprinted from the April 2003 Bromeliana, newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.

**M**ost bromeliad growers or collectors who have been growing these plants do not often take notice of plant tags for care purposes. These are just an overall view of what you should do, but when it comes to the general public this is where it can and does strike terror into the very heart of the novice.

The one care note that really gets up my nose is the one that states these are air plants, especially tillandsias. As soon as the normal person reads this they have an immediate assumption THAT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE WATERED!!!!

How wrong could they be? Just because these guys grow on trees and do not appear to hold water they still need to be misted or hosed just like a normal garden plant. I think if they were meant never to be showered, they would have a hump on their leaves like camels have so they can store water. It's OK to tell people that these plants are easy to look after and that you do not have to water them as often as other plants, but they always give this dumb surprised look of "Really, I didn't know that." A classic case of this is *Tillandsia usneoides* (Spanish Moss or Grandfather's Beard). People often say to me that their bunch of this has died and when I asked them did they water it they usually say: "But it is an air plant and you don't have to water it".

This is what I mean about mis-information. I think it is up to us to really inform the public and the novice growers how much or little watering is required of particular plants.

## More Broms are Added to the Endangered List

This information is taken from March 2003 newsletter of the New Orleans Bromeliad Society. So this is old news.

**I** have already reported to you the problems in Brazil where the Press blame bromeliads as soon as there is a Dengue epidemic and thousands of plants are destroyed.

Here is some information that probably won't appear as headlines in the major Brazilian Newspapers! It comes from the Brazilian Environmental Agency. Plants now on the endangered list now include:

*Aechmea apocalyptica*  
*A. blumenavii*  
*A. kleinii*  
*Billbergia alfonsi-johannis*  
*Dyckia cabrerai*  
*D. distachya*  
*D. hatschbachii*  
*D. ibiramensis*  
*Vriesea biguassuensis*  
*V. brusquensis*  
*V. mulleri*  
*V. pinottii*  
*V. triangularis.*

If you are growing these species I suggest you take special care of them.

Uncle Derek Butcher



*Billbergia alfonso-johannis* - Mulford B. Foster Best of Show Award Shown by Joyce Brehm  
17th World Bromeliad Conference, San Diego, California, June 6 - 11, 2006

This is *Billbergia alfonso-johannis*, one of the endangered Billbergias in Brazil. This plant won the best-in-show (horticulture) for Joyce Brehm at the 17<sup>th</sup> World Bromeliad Conference in San Diego. Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

### The Unruly Pitcairnia

This article by Chet Blackburn is reprinted from the June 1996 newsletter of the Sacramento Bromeliad Society.

**E**very family has a horse thief somewhere in its past. In fact, for many families horse thieves make up one or more branches of the family tree. In my family, they probably make up the whole dammed canopy, but the point is that no family is without the occasional outsider who refuses to conform to traditions held by the rest of its members – an outlaw who refuses to behave like every other member of the family.

And so it is with bromeliads. The recalcitrant member of this otherwise stable family is the genus *Pitcairnia*. *Pitcairnia*, and its unruly brother *Pepinia*, do not always follow the rules that “everyone knows” apply to bromeliads. This, in spite of the fact that *Pitcairnia* is one of the first bromeliad genera to evolve. Let’s cite some examples:

1. Maple trees are deciduous, grapevines are deciduous, tulips are deciduous, but “everyone knows” bromeliads are not deciduous. Someone needs to explain that to the small group of *Pitcairnia*s which annually shed their leaves to get through the dry season.
2. “Everyone knows” that a bromeliad leaf consists of a blade and a sheath. No one looks at a bromeliad expecting to see a leaf with a petiole. Yet some of the *Pitcairnia*s can’t even get this simple morphological adaptation right.
3. The family Bromeliaceae is restricted to the western hemisphere...every member of the family but one species is found here. Care to guess which genus includes the solitary outcast?
4. “Everyone knows” that one of the main characteristics for sorting out the three subfamilies of Bromeliaceae is the presence or absence of spines on the foliage. The subfamilies Bromelioideae and Pitcairnioideae have them; Tillandsioideae does not. Leave it to *Pitcairnia* to disrupt this comfortable scheme by some of its members having both types of leaves – spiny and spineless – on the same plant. Some even have spines at the bases of the leaf but none along the blades.
5. “Everyone knows” that bromeliads do not like to be overwatered or grow in soggy soil. Yet there are *Pitcairnia*s growing in the wild in what can only be described as sopping wet conditions.
6. Bromeliads, like orchids, are the subjects of rampant if not random hybridizing. Hybridizers can’t seem to pass a pair of blooming bromeliads without wondering what the offspring between them would look like. For example, there are only about 40 species of *Cryptanthus*, but there are close to a thousand hybrids and cultivars listed, the differences between some of them so small that “subtle” would even be too strong a word to use in describing them.



*Pitcairnia heterophylla* is one of the Pitcairnia that adheres to paragraph 4, above. Photo is by Derek Butcher and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

There are less than 100 Neoregelia species described, but there are 100 pages of hybrids and cultivars (about 21 plants per page) listed in Don Beadle's Preliminary Listing of All Known Cultivar and Grex Names for the Bromeliaceae.

Therefore you would expect a huge genus like Pitcairnia, second only to Tillandsia in the number of species in the bromeliad family, to have been hybridized and cultivated to high heaven, wouldn't you? Beadle lists eleven hybrids and no cultivars.

7. Another compulsion of hybridizers is the creation of bigenerics. There are a lot of horticultural Frankenstein's in our hobby bent on creating new life forms. Navia is the genus closest to Pitcairnia, hence it is the most likely candidate for bigeneric dallying, but have you ever heard of an X Navcairnia? If even hybridizers ignore a genus, you know it must be a disreputable one.
8. That bromeliad growers will collect almost anything is apparent by the fact that some of those bigenerics remain in collections. Why in the world would anyone want to grow an X Neomea 'Nebula', for example? Still, as indiscriminate as we bromeliad collectors are, do you know of anyone who has as many as six of the 320 or so Pitcairnia?

Not only are the Pitcairnia and Pepinia a primitive bunch, but as shown above, they are also an unruly one. For sake of

simplicity, in this discussion no distinction is made between the genera Pepinia and Pitcairnia. They both were formerly included as subgenera of Pitcairnia but recently Pepinia has been elevated to the status of genus.

However, I might add that in his introduction to the Alphabetical List of Bromeliad Binomials, Harry Luther remarks, "Nomenclatural problems continue to plague the resurrected genus Pepinia. A number of taxa that appear to belong in Pepinia have never been formally transferred from Pitcairnia."

Why doesn't that surprise me?

### The Inflorescence

The following article is taken from one written by Jay Thurrott for the newsletter of the Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society, July 2005. Don't worry! You will not be quizzed on the terms in the article, but it may help you understand when **Dennis Westler** uses these terms during our Show-and-Tell.

**A**s a general rule, a bromeliad's inflorescence rises from the center of the rosette of leaves that make up the plant. The group of "embryonic" cells in the center of the cups is referred to as the Meristem. This Meristem tissue is the source of new leaves as the bromeliad grows but becomes altered in some way when the plant reaches maturity and produces an inflorescence instead of leaves. This is the reason often offered for why most bromeliads only bloom once in their lives. Once the inflorescence is produced, there is no longer Meristem tissue to form new leaves and the plant slowly dies.

A bromeliad inflorescence may take a number of different forms. The form alone may be distinctive enough to aid in identification of the plant. This can be **erect** (upright), **pendant** (dangling), **semi pendant** (leaning) or even **reflexed** (pendant and then recurving back toward the upright). A **simple** inflorescence would be a single, unbranched stalk, like *Tillandsia bartramii*, *T. utriculata* is an example of a **compound** inflorescence – one that branches. A **digitate** inflorescence is one where the attached structures arise from one point and fan outward like fingers. If the inflorescence has closely attached structures on either side of the stalk, we say the inflorescence is **pinnate** – resembling a

feather. This type of bloom is often seen in members of the Vriesea genus.



***Tillandsia bartramii*** photo by Ken Marks

*Tillandsia bartramii* from Florida has an erect inflorescence. Photo is by Ken Marks and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.



*Tillandsia utriculata* has a compound inflorescence. Photo is by Dorothy Berg and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

**Welcome New Member**

**W**elcome to new member **Cid Young**.

### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 single (\$15), dual (\$20). To join the BSSF, mail your name(s), address, telephone number, e-mail address, and check made payable to the BSSF to:

Harold Charms, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

### **BSSF 2010 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

PRESIDENT	Carl Carter	510-661-0568	carl.carter@ekit.com
VICE PRESIDENT			
SECRETARY			
TREASURER	Harold Charms	415-861-6043	Harold@States-Street.com
DIRECTORS:			
	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	408-500-2103	peterkwan@earthlink.net

### **BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL**

The Journal is published bimonthly at Orlando, Florida by the Bromeliad Society International. Subscription price (in U.S. \$) is included in the 12-month membership dues: single (\$28.), dual (2 members at one address receiving one Journal -\$30). Address all membership and subscription correspondence to: Membership Secretary, Dan Kinard, 6901 Kelly Lane, Vista, CA 92084, USA, [membership@bsi.org](mailto:membership@bsi.org)

BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

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

**We will see some of the bromeliads of New Orleans this month!**