

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



## December 2011

# NEWSLETTER

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, December 15, 2011** at 700 PM  
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San  
Francisco

### December Program

#### Holiday Potluck and Gift Exchange

**T**his month culminates another year for our society. There are many of our members that are not able to get to our monthly meetings. We hope that many of you will be able to join us for the holiday potluck.

**Note that our meeting time this month is 7 PM instead of 7:30 PM.**

This month's meeting will be an opportunity for us socialize and partake of great food. The society is providing a turkey and honey baked ham. We are asking you to bring a dish to share with the group – drinks, appetizer, vegetable dish, rolls, desserts, etc. Please try to remember to bring serving silverware for the dish that you bring. We will provide plates, cups, silverware, and napkins. **Dan Arcos** is coordinating the food items. Dan has tried to contact each of you by phone or e-mail. If he missed you, please call **Dan (415-823-9661)** to see where you can fill in some of our gaps.

Our club will provide a plant for each member. You may also bring a special plant or plant-related item for exchange with the other members (not required).



## 2011 Programs

**W**e enjoyed a wide variety of programs this year and gained new members into the world of bromeliads. A thank you is given to all the people who participated in our two sales this year; these sales are our only money-making opportunity that enables us to obtain great speakers and great plant tables. Finally, we wish to thank the people who planned our garden tours and hosts for the garden tours on the Peninsula this year. Here are some highlights of our activities this year.

### January

**Peder Samuelsen** gave us a show on the New Orleans Bromeliad Society International 2010 World Conference. Since he and **Marilyn Moyer** were the only people from our society who attended the conference, we were able to experience New Orleans vicariously through Peder's wonderful photography with an appropriate musical background.

### February

**Peter Wan** gave us a slide show on his trip to Florida bromeliad nurseries to purchase plants for our sale at the Pacific Orchid Exhibition. The plants he purchased looked better in person than the slides conveyed. Peter advised us that there was a surprise stop in his show! This stop was Disneyworld which is one of Peter's favorite places to visit while in Florida. For those of us who have never been to Disneyworld, Peter provided a great overview. Now you just have to hop on a plane and visit.

### March

In March we had a field trip to the Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco. For some of us, this was our first visit and it was a wonderful experience. The plant material is vast and displayed in diverse ways. You may be surprised how well tillandsias grow on a bicycle and Vrieseas grow in the front seat of an old Edsel. Our host was **Clarke de Mornay** who is a full time professional working at Flora Grubb Gardens. He described how adaptable bromeliads are in the landscape and home and how they have become a staple plant family for customers at the nursery. Many of us went home with a new bromeliad from the nursery.

### April

**Dr. Guillermo Rivera** was our speaker in April. He was visiting California to be a speaker at the National Cactus and Succulent Conference in San Diego. Guillermo spoke to us on the bromeliads of Argentina with the focus on the varying types of habitats that bromeliads are found. Although his slides did not include all of the bromeliads found in Argentina, he did list all the genera that are found and included many of the plants that we have seen on our trips with him. Some of our members had asked him about *Tillandsia peiranoi* (endemic to Argentina) on a previous visit and he included a photo in this show that he had taken by holding his camera high over his head. Obviously, this plant is not easily found.

### May

**Mario Vega** was a great host for our visit to the Conservatory of Flowers in May. All of the plants are very happy and many of the bromeliads were in flower or were coming in to flower. Since our last visit the plants have become more established and appear very vigorous. The plants in the pool room were especially lush – perhaps because the roof coating has washed away with all of our rains this year. The rotating exhibit of poisonous plants was excellent and many of our experienced growers learned new facts from the text accompanying the plants.

### June

**Ted Kipping** was a lifesaver for our society last month. Our scheduled speaker cancelled and he was able to provide a show with almost no advance notice. His slide show on the cloud forests of Oaxaca and Chiapas showed the incredible diversity of plant material found there. In addition to the bromeliads, Ted introduced us to possibly “hundreds” of other plant species and this show represented a downsizing from the photos he took when in the cloud forests. Ted is amazing – he knows the botanical names of almost all the plants he showed us. Thanks Ted for an amazing viewing of wonderful plants we probably never see in cultivation.

### July

Our annual Garden Tour took place on the peninsula this month. It had been four years since our last visit to **Tom Vincze's** garden and collection at the home of his parents in Los Altos. The plantings of succulents in the back garden

have settled in along with the newer and expanding planting beds.

From Tom's we went to the home of **Roger Lane** nearby. Roger has been collecting plants for over 4 decades now and shares his space with **Peter Wan's** collection. Together they have built a lean-to on the side of the house. What greeted us as we entered the garden was a spectacular assemblage of color and form in bromeliads. There are 3 greenhouses at Rogers: one with Orthophytums and warmth loving Aechmeas and Billbergias; across the pool was the cacti and succulent house with Roger's collection; the third greenhouse is more a solarium attached to the house where Roger has some larger bromeliads that require some shade.

Like all tours, by this time we were running behind and got to the Stanford Arizona Garden around 1:30 where **Christy Smith**, the Arizona Garden Coordinator, was waiting to greet us and give us an abbreviated history of the garden and an informal tour. The Garden was made more rewarding by the sun coming out from the coastal overcast. The Arizona Garden was built by Leland Stanford from 1881 to 1883 with the then exotic plants of the Arizona Sonora Desert. The planned mansion to go with the garden was never built and after WWII the garden was left derelict until the late 1990's when its restoration began.

By 3 o'clock most of us arrived at the home of **Marilyn Moyer** and **Peder Samuelsen**. The home in Atherton is surrounded by a large garden with greenhouses, a pool, fruit orchard and Koi Pond. Recently Marilyn refurbished and enlarged her shade house where many of her neoregelias and billbergias were showing off those bright reds and magentas. What is great about Marilyn's collection is that it is everywhere. Besides the large scale landscaping there are a few little side patios each with its own assortment of plants enjoying life on the Peninsula...As always, Marilyn and Peder are wonderful hosts and the potluck was awesome. There was plenty of food which we all provided and thoroughly enjoyed. Many of us came home with a little souvenir from a raffle table provided by the day's hosts.

The BSSF would like to thank everyone who came on the tour, including guests from the SFSCS, and other friends. We also want to especially thank Christy Smith for taking time from her newborn child to show us the Stanford Arizona Garden with the assistance of Jim Holl. Finally the day would not have been possible without the love and nurturing Tom, Peter, Roger,

Marilyn and Peder provide their beautiful plant collections and gardens as well as opening their lovely homes to us.

## August

**Kelly Griffin's** show on his most recent trip to Mexico covered areas of Aguascalientes, Jalisco, and San Luis Potosi. Kelly's shows are always memorable both for the wonderful photography and his infectious enthusiasm about the plants. Kelly also brought sale plants which were immediately snapped up. These plants were a combination of Aloe hybrids that Kelly is noted for and a few very interesting bromeliads.

## September

In September; **Dan Arcos** showed us slides from his visit to the greenhouses at San Francisco State University. The director of the Greenhouses, **Martin Grantham**, attended our meeting and brought a fantastic *Werauhia insignis* clump in flower that he has been growing in these greenhouses. Our president has seen this plant in habitat in Costa Rica and it is very tender. Martin is a great grower. In the future we will be exploring means of our society helping out in these greenhouses.

## October

After a short reprise of the search for the rare *Hechtia argentea* that **Andy Siekkinen** gave to the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society on Tuesday night, he took us to Oaxaca where we discovered more Hechtias as well as many wonderful Tillandsias. Andy also provided many Hechtias and other terrestrials for us to add to our collections. We don't usually have many terrestrials on our plant tables. It was great to see a young person like Andy who is so keen on bromeliads and enthusiastic in promoting the interest in bromeliads through his very active participation in his local societies in San Diego.

## November

Many of you know **Gregg DeChirico** because he lived in San Francisco for many years and was very active in the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society including serving as its president. Gregg has been involved with plants for over 30 years and his interests have recently extended into the bromeliad family. He now lives in Santa Barbara which is a marvelous place to grow almost any kind of plant. His topic for us was on

tillandsias you can grow outdoors which drew many of our members who do not attend most of our meetings. Gregg also was selling many tillandsias and other bromeliads – some of which can grow outdoors in our area

## A New Bromeliad Genus

Your editor made a trip to the Quail Botanical Gardens (now the San Diego Botanical Garden) last month to attend a bromeliad judging symposium and the first Bromeliad Bash sponsored by the San Diego Bromeliad Society. There were several bromeliad books for sale and I picked up the 2008 Alphabetical List of Bromeliad Binomials, the last list compiled by Harry Luther before he moved to Singapore. While perusing the book, I discovered the genus *Lapa*. It currently comprises two species and is closely aligned to the genus *Orthophytum*.

The species are

- *Lapa duartei*
- *Lapa itambensis*.

In order to learn more about this genus, I searched the web and the results are interesting.

The Bromeliad Society of Australia has a website and their March/April 2011 update has the following information about the *Lapa* genus:

“Now, there was one plant, which could be called either *Cryptanthus duartei* or *Orthophytum suphutii*. In other words, taxonomists did not know where it belonged. In doing his Doctorate on the group of *Orthophytum* without tall inflorescences my Internet friend, Rafael Louzada thought he would treat this oddbod under the genus *Lapa* (the name of his supervising Professor!). As an aside, I am often asked by taxonomists around the world for ideas about what the common man thinks about their views! It is great fun!

“Anyway, his thesis had *Lapa* in it. But his thesis was not published so the name was not even legitimate but it did not stop the Americans accepting it as gospel. I was perhaps the first to hear from Rafael that it was whoops because there was already a seaweed called *Lapa* and it is a no-no to use the same name twice. The new genus was to be *Lapanthus* but it took some two

years of suspense before it was published! Needless to say very few people are growing this genus because the plants are very rare in the wild and they need specialized growing conditions to survive. You enjoy them by looking at photos.”

Now I did a search for information about the genus *Lapanthus* and came up with this abstract of a technical paper “*Lapanthus* (Bromeliaceae, Bromelioideae): A New Genus from the Southern Espinhaço Range, Brazil” by Rafael B Louzada, Leonardo M Versieux, Instituto De Botânica, Seção De Curadoria, C E P São Paulo, São Paulo:

“In this paper we describe a new genus of Bromeliaceae, *Lapanthus*, restricted to the southern portion of the Espinhaço Range, Minas Gerais State, in southeastern Brazil. Two new combinations to accommodate species previously described in the genera *Orthophytum* and *Cryptanthus* and one new synonym are proposed. *Lapanthus* has morphological affinities with both *Cryptanthus* and *Orthophytum*, but nevertheless differs by the combination of margins of the petals ciliate, presence of lanceolate petal appendages and free stamens, and also by molecular data. *Cryptanthus* and *Orthophytum* have petals entire along the margins, and the filaments of the most internal whorl are adnate to the petals. *Lapanthus* stands out by having a pair of lanceolate petal appendages, which are almost completely adnate to the petals. In *Orthophytum*, however, appendages are cupuliform or sacciform and they are totally absent in the genus *Cryptanthus*. *Lapanthus* and *Orthophytum* present meiotic and mitotic chromosome numbers equal to  $n=25$  and  $2n=50$ , 100 and 150 respectively, while *Cryptanthus* presents meiotic and mitotic chromosome numbers  $n=17$  and  $2n=34$ , 36, 54 respectively, and this difference is considered to be an autapomorphic feature of *Cryptanthus*. Descriptions of the genus and species, identification keys, illustrations, photographs of living specimens, and taxonomic comments are provided.”

Although this abstract is somewhat technical, the bottom line is that the new genus is really *Lapanthus* vice *Lapa*. If you are interested in growing one of these plants, Michael Kiehl is selling *Lapanthus duartei*.



This photo of *Lapanthus duartei* by Michael Kiehl is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

**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.

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**Come to our holiday meeting for great food and fun!**