

BROMELIANA

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OUR SPRING PLANT ORDER

by Herb Plever

Last year at this time I wrote: "We've finally gotten through a winter even nastier than last year, and suddenly our spring order is upon us even if we still don't have real spring weather." Well this winter has been even nastier, and we've just had another 3 inches of snow for good measure. You really need a spring awakening, so order some bromeliads and be uplifted. Nursery costs and plant prices are higher this year.

At the April meeting you will see pictures of all of the plants in bloom. If you want to review the photos before you order, they will be available at the meeting on CD for \$8.00. I have cut down the list to make it easier for you to choose. There are 5 small and 4 medium to large Aechmeas: *A.* 'Haiku', *A.* 'Kiwi Baker', *A.* 'Jack', *A. nudicaulis* var. *aequalis*, *A.* 'Parati', the stunning *A.* 'Samurai', *A.* 'Mend' and *A.* 'Sasha' (tc).

New in the billbergia list is *B.* 'Anna Louise' (pictured above). There are seven really lovely Cryptanthus we haven't seen before: 'Alberta', 'Arrogance', 'Audacity', 'Chantilly Lace', 'Honey Girl', 'Little Bunnis' and 'Ruby Star'. They are dramatic and beautifully marked; you should add a few to your collection.

I invite a few courageous members to join me in



Billbergia 'Anna Louise' ph. Ben Sill

ordering the spiny, medium sized *Deuterocohnia mezziana* for its huge, branched spray of yellow flowers on a tall scape. By popular request *Dyckia fosteriana* cv. 'Silver Queen' and *D.* 'Cherry Coke' are back on the list.

Guzmania sanguinea has been brought back to the list along with four mini Guzmanias and the beautiful *G.* 'Audrey' and *G.* 'El Cope' in tissue culture. *Nidularium innocentii* var. *lineatum* has been a favorite brom that I have been growing on an off for 57 years since I first got it from Ed Hummel in 1963. Some members have had problems growing it, but once you manage to establish it, var. *lineatum* will grow, put up many pups and become your favorite. Try it again and you'll be glad you did.

Also on the list per your requests are the wonderful *Orthophytum navioides*, *O.* 'Brittle Star' and *O.* 'Iron Ore'. There are 33 Tillandsias on the list at prices you won't want to resist. After a long absence on the list we have added *T. intermedia*, *T. schiedeana*, *T. tricolor*, *T. velutina* and *T. vernicosa*. You should try medium-large *Vriesea* 'Intermedia' with its incredible inflorescence and the small, variegated *V.* 'Sunset', or a few of the five great *Vriesea* tissue cultures including *V. delicatula*. The prices are right so you will want to buy a bunch. □

NEXT MEETING - Tuesday, April 5th, 2011 **promptly at 7:00 P.M.** at the [Ripley-Grier Studios 520 8th Ave. \(between 36th & 37th St\) Room 16E](http://www.nybromeliadsociety.org)

VIDEO OF PLANT ORDER - Photos of the bromels on the spring order including many closeups of their inflorescences to help you make your choices. All of the photos will be available for you to purchase on CD. Take advantage of this chance to buy great plants at bargain prices, delivered to you in May. Please bring in plants for sale and for Show and Tell.

IN MEMORIAM: ROY GUSSOW

by Herb Plever

It is with deep regret that I report the death of Roy Gussow on February 11th at the age of 92. Roy was an active member of the NY Bromeliad Society for about 16 years, a bromel enthusiast, grower and experimenter. For many years until recently, he served as a director of NYBS, and he was proud that his daughter Mimi was also an active member.

Members knew Roy as an outspoken advocate for our Society, but very few knew that he was a very important and famous “abstract sculptor whose polished stainless-steel works with swooping contours gleam in public squares and corporate spaces” (NY Times obit 2/21). Roy’s status as an artist was such that a long obituary by a NY Times staffer with a photo (reproduced here) was printed in the Times. We see that Roy’s esthetic attraction to beautiful abstract forms also led to his appreciation of the beautiful architectural shapes of bromeliads.

Roy was born in Brooklyn in 1918. He attended Farmingdale State College with the goal of becoming a farmer, but he became disenchanted with farming, changed courses and earned a degree in landscape architecture. After service with the U.S. Army in France during World War II, Roy enrolled in the Institute of Design in Illinois where he became a student and disciple of the cubist sculptor Alexander Archipenko.

Roy’s house and studio in Long Island City were known to us as the place where he grew his broms, but it also housed his work shop where he worked with drill presses, hydraulic lifts and a band saw his daughter Jill described as “the size of a truck” to fabricate and polish his huge stainless steel sculptures. The sculpture shown in the photo here was a 1976 8 foot high sculpture called “Three Forms: on a two foot granite base in front of the entrance to the Family Court building at Lafayette



Roy and Mimi Gussow

and Leonard Streets in lower Manhattan. It is described as a “blend of three distinct flowing shapes” with “mirrorlike finish which casts reflections from all directions as the viewer moves around it”.

Roy is quoted as saying: “I strive for lyrical equilibrium among distinctly different elements, and I like to think I am suggesting optimism, beauty and well-being.” No doubt this was also his goal

when growing his bromeliads. Roy’s sculptures grace buildings and centers in more than a dozen cities, including for example: “Two Forms” (1968) outside the Amity-Civic Center, Tulsa, OK, “Crystal” (1983), “17 ft. high with six wedge-shaped facets reaching out to viewers while reflecting the sun and casting images of passing clouds”, “a 16 ft continuous swirl of sculpture” that was designed by Jose de Rivera; Roy worked with him to construct the sculpture in front of the Smithsonian Museum of Technology (1967). It stands 24 feet high. It was one of the first abstract sculptures to adorn a public building in Washington, D.C.

Smaller works by Roy Gussow are included in the collections of museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Brooklyn Museum. The NY Times obituary reports that: “when some of his sculptures were exhibited at the prominent Borgenicht Gallery in upper Madison Avenue in 1973, James R.

Mellow wrote in the New York Times, “This is precisionist work of a high degree, every effect calculated for maximum effect and carried off with perfect aplomb”.

Roy’s health was weakened in the past few years and we missed his energy and counsel. Roy is survived by his three daughters Mimi, Jill and Olga, two grandchildren and one great grandchild. We send our sincere condolences to the family.



“Three Forms” sculpture at Manhattan Family Court. Photo courtesy NY Times



“Two Forms” Civic Center, Tulsa, OK.

A CORRECTION, THEN AN EXPOSITION FOR CHANGES

by Herb Plever

In the March, 2011 issue of BROMELIANA, I inadvertently misstated one of the parents of *Neoregelia* 'Hannibal Lector' as being *N. concentrica* when I intended to write *N. carcharodon* cv. 'Tiger' as listed in Chester Skotak's registration of the cultivar. (Note that the seed parent named in the registration was also incorrect. It should have been listed as *Neoregelia* 'Rafa' and not *N. punctatissima*.)

Questions have already been raised by Derek Butcher (and others) about the designation of *N. punctatissima* as a species. See the comments in "Uncle Derek Says" under *N. punctatissima* in the species section of the registry in www.fcbs.org in which he suggests that the plant we recognize as *punctatissima* is a form of *N. ampullacea*. Now, in noting my necessary correction on *N. carcharodon* cv. 'Tiger', Derek has sent me a lengthy, technical exposition that raises questions about *carcharodon* as a species. Derek prefers using *N.* 'Skotak's Tiger' as the name for the cultivar, emphasizing its current non-alignment with the species because it has not been examined by any taxonomist who has identified it as *carcharodon*.

Derek said in February 2009: "*Neoregelia carcharodon* is now 'Great White'. You may remember that in episode one we thought we knew what *Neoregelia carcharodon* looked like and thus the plant with blue petals I imported from Florida, became 'Blue Shark'. Since then there has been a change of heart. Are the plants we knew as *N. carcharodon* really a better fit under the latest name *Neoregelia gigas*? Harry Luther seems to think so. If this is the case what does a true *Neoregelia carcharodon* look like?

"Let us look at how *Neoregelia carcharodon* came into being. It is based on a Morren icon made in 1882 of a plant found somewhere in Brazil. I am not sure what icon it was based on because there are two held at Kew (#419 & #477) and both done by Cambresier. Regrettably for the likes of me these icons are only allowed to be viewed at Kew under very tight security. Mez was the first to link it to a collection made in Rio de Janeiro near Sao Christovao. This was expanded by

Lyman Smith to include Espirito Santo which is the State just north of Rio de Janeiro. This included Foster #245 from Santa Teresa. The description had been expanded from the painting made in 1882 with assumptions made that this particular taxon had actually been found in the wild.

"Let us now look at the book "Fragments of the Atlantic Forest in NE Brazil" by Elton Leme which became available in the English version in 2008. Here we have a new species called *Neoregelia gigas* described in great detail by Leme and Kollmann. Being pedantic I could say that this plant does not occur in NE Brazil but is published in this book for convenience sake. In fact, it was described in much greater detail than we



Neoregelia 'Skotak's Tiger' (*carcharodon*?)

ever had for *Neoregelia carcharodon*. This new species was compared with *Neoregelia pernambucana* which is based on a specimen collected in Jaqueira, Pernambuco which is several States to the north. The type specimen comes from Santa Teresa which is the same area that Foster #245 came from, which as we know is treated as a *Neoregelia carcharodon*. No attempt was made to

show how this new species was distinct from this Foster collection. In other words we are out on a limb as to identity.

"As we move north we have the new *Neoregelia silvomontana* from Bahia (from the same book) where we read 'After collecting the type specimen, we learned that the species had already been introduced into cultivation and in the United States, having been erroneously identified as *N. carcharodon* (Baker) L. B. Sm. based on rosette shape, with its wide leaves and well developed marginal spines.' This seems a very positive statement but in fact is very misleading. Was it a recent introduction and from what source in Brazil? The statement could also be linked to the 1990's where we had problems (and still do) as to the differences between *N. carcharodon* and *N. pascoaliana*. There is also the note that *N. silvomontana* is probably self sterile.

"We now have *N. carcharodon*, *N. gigas*, *N. pascoaliana*, *N. silvomontana*, and *N. pernambucana* which are all variations on a theme. *N. pernambucana* being the

most northerly and thus more difficult to grow. Let us now look at one plant we have in Australia which has a fairly good pedigree. It is a plant that has been called *N. carcharodon* for years and is in the famous Pinegrove ledger under #248 which we are now able to view, thanks to Ross Little. The Ledger is a mine of information. We now know that Pinegrove got this plant in 1981 from Amazon Plants AND Olwen Ferris. This suggests that the plants and/or seed got to Australia from Seidel (Amazon Plants was a favourite customer of Seidel) in the same way that the plants and seed got to the USA at about the same time. It is usually grown throughout Australia as '*N. carcharodon*' from Pinegrove or Buchanan.

"This plant has been dissected and we lean towards *N. gigas* even though the petal colour seems to be white on most occasions. The description says pale lilac apex which is not discernable in the accompanying photographs in the book. We can only assume that it can only be seen by the naked eye. Petal length from several sources seems to vary, due possibly to cultural differences. Leaf width is also not consistent. Another puzzle is whether the inflorescence is always sub-simple as the description says. The photographs in the book show that this trait is not easily seen, meaning that the entire inflorescence needs to be dissected. #248 seems to be simple! Care should also be taken in accepting the current view in the USA because we cannot prove any clonal link. We also know from the world travellers amongst us that there is great variability in plant-size, shape and colour amongst species in the wild, so snap decisions as to species identity are to be frowned upon. Floral comparisons are the only way to go.

"Some sellers are quick to make a name change and others not so, so be careful when ordering by name because you could easily be duplicating your collection. Perhaps these naming problems will never be solved, but if you have Pinegrove or Buchanan #248 anywhere on your label you do know something of its pedigree. At the suggestion of Helen Clewett...we will be registering the name *Neoregelia* 'Great White' with a bit of historical information. It will also be under *Carcharodon* Group in case anyone is searching the Cultivar data base using the name *carcharodon*. Whether it becomes 'just another' *Neoregelia gigas* we leave for history to decide!

"But that is not all. You will have to wait for the next exciting episode because there are many Cultivar names being used, some registered, some not registered

for what I call the *Carcharodon* Group. Some plants are showing a bluish tinge to the petals suggesting links to 'Blue Shark, or dare I mention *N. gigas* or *N. pernambucana*. If you are keen to grow species and thus help in plant conservation then take care with what is on offer." □

CHESTER'S NEW MINI GUZMANIAS

Chester Skotak's work to produce true miniature Guzmanias is proceeding rapidly. Here are three of his new minis, **each of which is less than 3" in diameter!** They will be shown at the 2012 WBC.



N E W S and N O T E S

2012 WORLD BROMELIAD CONFERENCE will be held on September 24-30 at the Caribe Royale Hotel, in Orlando, Florida. The local host for the conference is the Central Florida Bromeliad Society.

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