

# SEMBS

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
AFFILIATE OF BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL  
NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2014



*Tillandsia concolor* L.B. Smith 1960. Epiphytic in exposed locations, Mexico, Salvador.

## NOVEMBER MEETING

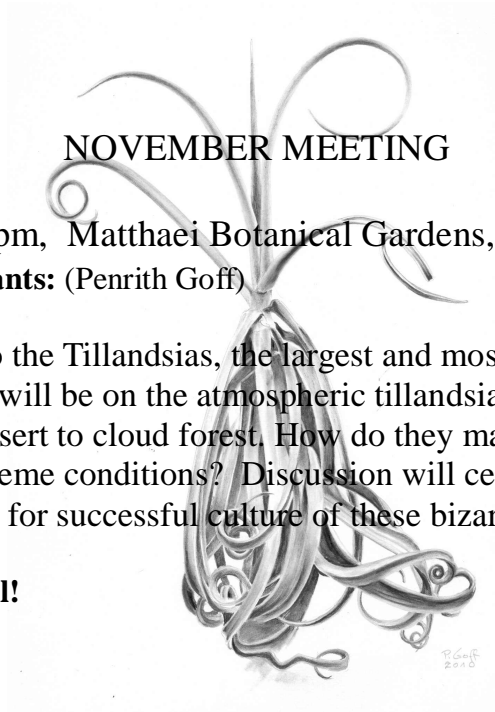
Saturday, November 15, 2 pm, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Rm 139

Topic: **The Awesome Air Plants:** (Penrith Goff)

A power point introduction to the Tillandsias, the largest and most extremely evolved bromeliad family. Emphasis will be on the atmospheric tillandsias (air plants) with photos of their habitat, ranging from desert to cloud forest. How do they manage to survive and flourish without roots under such extreme conditions? Discussion will center on answers to this question and the implications for successful culture of these bizarre plants.

**Bring plants for Show and Tell!**

**Guests welcome!**



## ***Christmas Brunch!***

A great way to usher in the holiday season

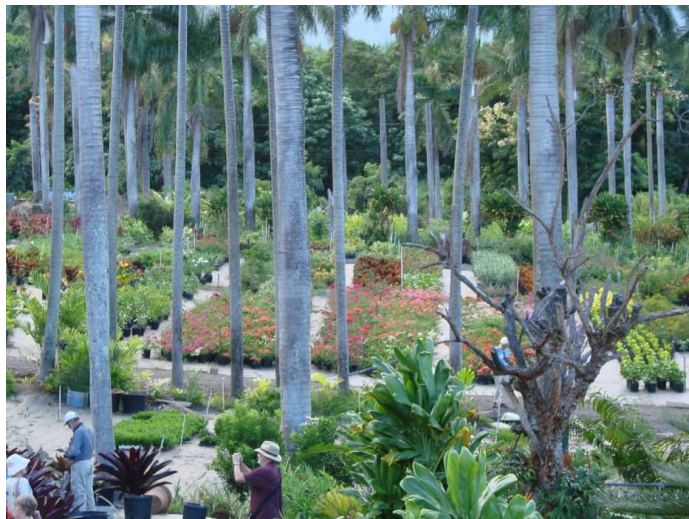
Lynne and Pat Echlin will again host our Christmas potluck on **Saturday, December 6, at 1 p.m.**

**Meat and potatoes and a few side dishes will be provided. Veggies and desserts are needed to fill out the meal.**

**Please give Lynne a ring at 248-651-9521 as soon as possible or email to [lechlin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lechlin@sbcglobal.net) to let her know how many are coming and what you will contribute.**

*Guests very welcome!*

**Paul Wingert says that he went to Hawaii fully expecting to see some spectacular plants, and he was not disappointed! These pictures are of some of the plants that really caught his eye. Locations included the Bromeliad World Conference Show, Lyon Botanic Garden, and nurseries of David Fell, David Shiigi, and Sharon Peterson. It is hoped that some of the photos give a shared sense of the wonderful experiences of the conference, and a couple of the photos try to capture the grandeur of the locations that were visited.**





## Winter Worries by P. Goff

Although bromeliads are remarkably pest-free, there are a few nasty little creatures which sneak up on us in winter and silently proliferate in the luxurious dry warmth of our homes. It would help to check their activity if we could keep our homes at 50% humidity but that is not easy when temperatures outside fall well below freezing.



**Brown soft scale** (*Coccus hesperidum*) is the most common problem and is easily scrubbed off with a toothbrush and water with soap or detergent. Once the baby scale (crawler) has dug in, it does not move again but gradually builds up a shell-like covering from molted skins and wax which protects it from pesticide spray. The babies are born under the shell and are most vulnerable when they emerge as crawlers. Spray is effective against crawlers, the more entrenched scale must be controlled with a systemic pesticide. When a mature scale is dislodged it cannot re-establish and will die.

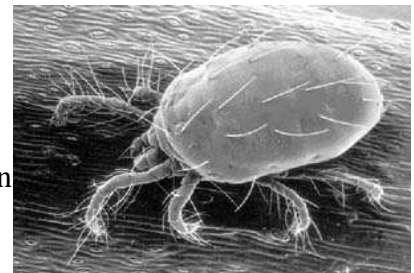
**Flyspeck scale** (*Gymnaspis aechmeae*) appears as raised black dots, smaller than a pinhead, which, as the scientific name suggests, favor bromeliads. It is common in Florida and is often carried north from Florida on plants which were not maintained in a nursery. The hard little scales are more difficult to remove than brown scale but they can be scrubbed off the plant.



**Mealybugs** are a soft scale which disperses widely and rapidly. It is easy to kill with alcohol or soap but because it is so prolific it is difficult to eradicate an established population. Attack any white fuzz you see in the hope you have destroyed eggs. Mealybugs do not bother hard leaved bromeliads but they feel right at home in those soft fuzzy tillandsia leaves where the owner's unsuspecting eye will never notice them.

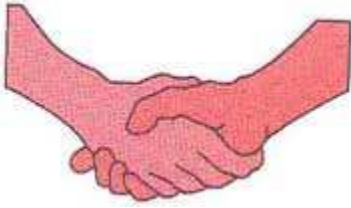
Scale infestations on bromeliads usually only make for unsightly leaves. However severe infestation covering much leaf surface can kill the leaf and even the plant. It is therefore a good idea to remove dead leaves all the way to the caudex, to reduce the area where insects would find undisturbed shelter.

**Spider mites** (*Tetranychus* sp.) are mites which colonize on the undersides of leaves and, like scale, suck out the cell contents of the leaf. In nature there are a number of enemies which help to keep them in check. In your home they have only friends. They are tiny black or red insects which spin copious webs (hence the name) and often remain undetected until brown spots on the leaves indicate that much damage has already been done. Spider mites are most interested in the soft green leaves of tillandsias, vrieseas, and guzmanias. If you see a tiny black dot on the underside smears it is (or was) a spider mite. Get



of a leaf, rub it gently with your finger. If it out the Safer's Soap.





## Welcome new Members!

**Amy Kraus, 10112 Manhattan Circle, Ft. Wayne IN 46825**

**Sandy Ohlund, 3888 E. 600 N., Rolling Prairie, IN 46371**

### *From the editor's desk*

In this last issue of SEMBS I would like to express my thanks to all those who contributed to the newsletter during the past year. The more you contribute the more successful the newsletter will be in its mission. Our membership embraces a wide range of interests and experience and we all benefit from sharing each other's adventures and misadventures with bromeliads. A collection of several hundred provides a lot of material but even a small collection can be very interesting. A visitor to our show years ago picked up a freebie billbergia and joined SEMBS. He remained a member until his death and his billbergia flourished and bloomed—he sent me photographs. He came to meetings but never, to my knowledge, acquired another bromeliad. You have preferences and favorites, successes and failures—how about sharing them with us?

SEMBS, the newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Bromeliad Society, appears bimonthly for the purpose of disseminating information about bromeliads and about Society activities. Editor: Penrith Goff. Material published in the newsletter may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes without the express permission of the editor. It is requested SEMBS be credited as the source and that any changes from the original be noted as such. Photo files of illustrations are usually available upon request.