

# SEMBS

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN BROMELIAD SOCIETY

AFFILIATE OF BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

MARCH / APRIL 2017



*Aechmea nudicaulis*, Grisebach 1864, endemic to Mexico, Central America, the West Indies, Venezuela, Brazil. Eager, colorful bloomers, easy to grow

## Coming Up...

**Saturday, March 25**, 2 PM, the program will focus on miniature Neoregelias and other small growing bromeliads. These plants are most popular with our members, as it is possible to have a relatively large collection of diverse plants in a small space! The meeting will take place at Telly's Greenhouse, 3301 John R. Road, Troy, MI. For purposes of this meeting, we're considering plants that mature (sensibly) in a 4" pot, or multiple growths/specimen clumps in 4-6" pot. If you have any appropriate plants to display, please bring them! We will also discuss our Spring Plant Order and determine from which commercial nurseries we will order.



**Friday, March 31-Sunday, April 2**—we will have a booth at the Novi Home & Garden Expo, as we have done for the past few years. Our society has received lots of beneficial publicity due to our participation at this annual event! Details to be discussed at the March meeting. We are provided with a limited number of tickets to attend the show. Anyone who would like to donate a couple of hours to help host our booth will receive a ticket to see the rest of the show. Call Paul if you can't attend the March meeting, but are interested to help out at the Novi Show.

**Saturday, April 22**, 2 PM, we will have a presentation on rare and unusual species and hybrids of Tillandsias, and follow up with a discussion of strategies for growing them successfully in our climate. The meeting will take place at the home of Paul and Karen Wingert, 27276 Edgemoor, Farmington Hills, MI 48334.

If you have specific requests for the Spring Plant order, it will be helpful to submit them by the April meeting so that availability can be confirmed with the growers. If you cannot make it to the meeting, but wish to be part of the plant order, email your plant requests to Paul at [pcwingert@gmail.com](mailto:pcwingert@gmail.com). The deadline to place your orders by email for the society spring plant order will be April 29.

**Saturday, May 20**, 2 PM, we will meet again at Paul and Karen Wingert's home. The main focus of the meeting will be to distribute the spring plant order.

## Gardening under Fluorescent Lights

*by P. Wingert*

The fluorescent light cart has been an indispensable component of my horticultural endeavors. I built a sturdy, functional cart more than 40 years ago that has proven to be extremely durable! Constructed simply with 2x4 lumber and carriage bolts, each of the three levels provides solid shelving for the plants, and flexible options for suspending the light fixtures. I use four "Permanest" plastic trays in a standard 11" x 22" flat size on each shelf, and each tray can hold up to eight plants in 5" pots, or 13-14 miniature bromeliads in 4" pots. My light cart is an additional source of light inside my greenhouse.

The fluorescent lights provide a consistent and predictable condition for plant growth, and can be used to extend the hours of daylight. On the many dreary, cloudy days during our winter months, it is definitely the brightest source of light. Plants grown through the winter under lights tend to have better conformation (less strappy leaves) even compared to the other bromeliads growing in my greenhouse.

I have used T12 lights for years, typically utilizing a variety of wide spectrum tubes in a 4 tube fixture. This past October, I replaced one of the T12 fixtures with a T5 four bulb fixture, using a combination of 2 6500K tubes and 2 full spectrum + ultraviolet tubes. To the naked eye, there



is an appreciable difference in the brightness of the T5 fixture. While this is not a "scientific" comparison, the plants under the T5 bulbs appear to have leaves with more intense leaf color, nearly what I would expect to see with the plants growing outside during the summer months.

The proof of that may be that one of the "red-leaved" Neoregelias actually got leaf scorch marks consistent with summer sunburn! The leaves were not in contact with the tubes in any way, so it had to have come from the UV wavelengths. That particular plant got moved with the "T12" plants for the rest of the winter to recover!

Overall, the increased brightness allows for the plants to be a couple of inches further away from the tubes, which also allows for easier enjoyment of the plants. If I have any criticism at all of the new fixture, it is in the spacing of the tubes. The new T5 fixture has the bulbs spaced only 2 ½ inches apart. In my opinion, the bulbs could be spaced 3 or 4 inches apart; it would allow more area coverage with very little sacrificed in terms of light intensity! I did research 6-tube and 8-tube T5 fixtures prior to purchasing the 4-tube fixture, and settled on the 4-tube fixture partly due to the electric load on the circuit. I can imagine that either the 6 or 8 tube fixtures would contribute to an awesome display.



**DUES for 2017 payable to:**

**SEMBS**

**P.O. Box 80472**

**Rochester, MI 48308**

**\$12 for individual memberships,**

**\$15 for two or more memberships at one address,**

**\$5 for associate membership (75 mi. from Detroit).**

**Dues may be paid at the March meeting**

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## Small and Miniature Bromeliads

The most recent census of the Bromeliad family lists over 3900 species! Of these, there are hundreds of smaller growing, desirable species representing a wide range of genera. Add to that the thousands of new hybrids being created, and the choices available to the plant collector can be overwhelming! The following photos give a small taste of the tantalizing varieties available.



*XDYckohnia 'July'*



*Neoregelia 'Willem V.'*



*Wallisia cyanea* cv. 'Sandy' (note the new genus name)



*Tillandsia vernicosa*

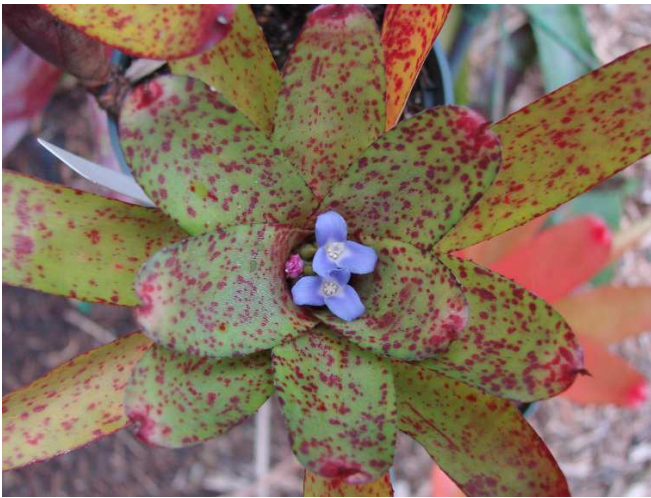




*Billbergia 'Lou Wilson'*



Neo. smithii x 'Painted Lady' –Michael Kiehl  
hybrid



*Neo. (Angel Face x cyanea) x liliputiana*



*Billbergia 'Poquito Mas'* growing in a 4" pot

## Our Spring Plant Order

The SEMBS annual Spring Plant Order has been one of our more popular activities. The opportunity to choose plants that are rare or simply unavailable in our area, and take advantage of a group discount, is an attractive perk of society membership! Distribution day at the May meeting is always special, too. It's a fun time, and always interesting to witness the reactions to seeing all the new plants! We will definitely plan to order from Michael Kiehl again this year <https://www.michaelsbromeliads.com/> Michael lists about 2000 different bromeliads! You can access the pricelist from his web page under the "Our Collection" tab. There are very few pictures on his page, but if you want to connect names with pictures, you can research [registry.bsi.org](http://registry.bsi.org) or Google images. If you have specific plant requests in mind, Michael has offered 25% off the list price for our society order. We have also taken advantage of his "Grower's Choice" selections. Simply request how many plants you would like to try at either \$5.00/ plant or \$10.00/ plant. Those prices on the "Grower's Choice" plants include shipping and MI sales tax. Michael has never failed to send us a tantalizing selection.

We have also ordered in recent years from [Tillandsia International](#) and [Davis Farms Tillandsias](#). Both offer a wide variety of plants at reasonable prices. Dig a little deeper into their offerings and you can find many rare species and hybrids that we never see at our local garden centers. Two other Tillandsia specialists to consider are [Rainforest Flora](#) and [Bird Rock Tropicals](#). Both Paul Isley and Pamela Koide are highly respected for the contributions to the hybridization of Tillandsias. Some of their hybrids are quite pricy, but not terribly unreasonable when you consider the time and patience required to grow many of these plants from seed! Many of the hybrids that they offer are quite hardy, have unusual form, and can be spectacular in bloom with long lasting inflorescences! The Bird Rock Tropical web page has been recently rebuilt, and it is very informative and a fun place to go window shopping! For those who are interested in Tillandsias, both of these growers present some very enticing offerings! If there is enough interest to meet minimum order requirements, we will consider to place order to any, or all of the Tillandsia growers listed.

