



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

August-September, 2011

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Lori Weigerding

Our next meeting is September 11th at 2 pm in the Annex at the Chicago Botanic Garden. We will have \$1 raffle tickets for sale for those interested in the plants donated by Chris Hill, Martha Goode and the few remaining tillandsias from the show. Some of the items we will discuss at the meeting are: future dates for meetings, what programs you would like and the Show. We will discuss the feasibility of car pooling to the Cactus and Succulent Society Auction which will be on Wednesday, September 14th at 7 pm at the meeting room at the Oak Park Conservatory. The address is 621 Garfield Street, Oak Park, IL. We also need to have a roster for the 2012 officers to vote on at the next meeting.

President's Column

Hi everyone,

I hope everyone is doing fine and that all our extended families are safe from Mother Nature! I think she needs a vacation! I want to thank everyone for their help before, during and after the show! I think we did OK considering the state the economy is in. We usually just break even or a little above. I especially want to thank Marjorie and Anne for their wonderful ideas! The kids along with the adults enjoyed coloring. Maybe next year we can offer a prize for the most artistic coloring. Anne's macrame hangers were the greatest, and although this year we didn't sell too many, there's always next year. I still want to pick up a few of them to hang my plants in!! You just never know what the public wants.

I'm sorry that we didn't make the last meeting, but it coincided with something I didn't do with Jeff last year, so I had to do it this year. We'll have to be sure she doesn't schedule something on that Sunday next year!

We want to welcome Peg and her sister! Happy to have you and hope to see you at many more meetings! We have a few things we should discuss during our next meeting, for example who wants to car pool to the Cactus meeting, when do we want to schedule the luncheon at Lambs Farm? We also need to discuss if we want to have any more meetings in 2011 and when do we want to start up again in 2012.

At our next meeting we will be raffling off the donated plants we received, so bring your money along!! Looking forward to seeing everyone there on Sunday, September 11, 2011.

Lori Weigerding

We want to thank everyone who contributed to the success of our Show. Those who worked were: Del Busczynski, Paula Dering, Martha & Steve Goode, Jack and Ardie Reilly, Henry and Patsy Schmidt, Priscilla Segel, Roberta Torossy, Jeff and Lori Weigerding, Anne Coughlan, Marjorie Leon and Julie Jimenez.

We want to welcome Peg Cizek who joined at the Show.

Paul Wingert brought a lot of beautiful plants to sell at the August meeting. We were sorry that several people were unable to make the meeting and see his program. He explained what he looks for in parent plants to make his hybrids. He wrote the following for our newsletter. The following eleven pictures are Paul Wingert's.

Confessions of a Bromeliaddict- *by Paul Wingert*

It is summertime in the Midwest, and the bromeliad growing is easy! Long, warm days with plenty of sunshine, and cool nights bring out all the best colors in the plants. The plants are growing most actively, and many are blooming or setting buds.

Most exciting for me, I'm getting to see first bloom on many of the hybrids that started out as tiny seeds 3-4 years ago, and some that will be primarily grown for their interesting foliage are taking on mature characteristics. These are a few that have really caught my attention so far this year:

Neoregelia 'Hatsumi' x 'Lambert's Pride'



This one shows characteristics of both parents, although the size of the plant favors the pollen parent. The rosy, pink glow set off the rather large, nearly white flowers.

Neoregelia 'Rien's Pride' x 'Royal Cordovan'-

This is one of my favorites so far this year! It was showing really nice color even in the late winter months and before the flower had initiated. The grex has shown some variation in overall coloring. This one is from a "red" selection. Others range from "orange" to "dark red". The plant size is just about 12" across.





I've been fascinated with the "banded" Neos since I first saw a Neoregelia 'Hannibal Lector'. During the summer of 2007 I crossed several different parents which have resulted in many interesting children!

I've focused on plants that will be in the miniature to small size range. One of my favorites is a hybrid of Neo. 'Tunisia' x 'Governor's Plea f2'. It is a nice blend of the characteristics of both parents, with the added bonus of prominent teeth that give it a "big plant" personality. For size reference, it's still growing in a 4" pot and beginning to develop some pups!



At our annual show in 2007, I crossed a *Hohenbergia correia-araujoi* that was blooming from the MBG collection, with a *Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii* that I had brought to display. The cross only took one way, with my plant setting seed (only 2 berries, and relatively few seeds). All of the resulting plants have turned out to be pretty interesting plants with characteristics of both parents. The one pictured is probably my favorite of the grex so far. This one is primarily grown for the foliage. Both parents have interesting inflorescences, but few people would describe them as beautiful!



I've had several out of this grex of Vriesea 'Fireworks' x 'Poelmanii' bloom so far. Many have had colorful, branched inflorescences, though one had a single spike. The one pictured came into flower just after our society show last summer, and the flowers continued to open for 8 weeks. So far, it's the pick of the bunch. There are still a couple of plants that haven't bloomed yet, which are growing vigorously and should bloom this fall, so I still have some high expectations. Growing flowering Vrieseas from seed



requires space and patience, since you can't cull based on the foliage characteristics alone. However, when you get the occasional spectacular result, it seems all worthwhile!



The two plants pictured (*left and below*) are from a grex of *Aechmea chantinii* cv. 'Black' x *Aechmea zebrina*. I've only seen a couple of them bloom so far, and the inflorescences have been as variable as the foliage colors evident here. The plant on the left wasn't really my objective in terms of foliage, but it got a reprieve when it produced this enormous inflorescence! It began flowering in September 2010, the same time as the *Vriesea* above.

The selection pictured at right is my favorite foliage selection so far, with the best characters of both parents. Perhaps I'll see a flower this summer. Is it too much to ask to combine it with an inflorescence like the one above? I can only hope!!



During August of 2005, I had both Billbergia 'Windii' and *B. rosea* in bloom at the same time. I thought, "Wouldn't it be cool to have the *B. rosea* traits shrunk down to a more manageable size plant?" Four years later, as you see here, I got pretty much the results that I was seeking to achieve! The grex has been somewhat variable in regards to foliage coloration, banding, and flower characteristics, as these two demonstrate. The plant pictured above is growing in a 4 inch pot. (You won't see that with a *B. rosea*!) I've

had several plants bloom during the past two summers. This summer, I'm excited that I'll be seeing several more bloom! One plant is currently in spike, and there are at least five more showing buds down in the tubes.



This last one plant pictured is not one of my hybrids, although those of you who know me can imagine that I have plans for it! This is the species *Orthophytum navioides*. The significance here is that it has a reputation as a temperamental, if not difficult species to grow. I personally killed two of them, before acquiring this one in 2008. Florida grower Steve Hoppin shared his wisdom to have success growing it. His advice, grow it in straight perlite, with just a thin (3/4" or so) layer of organic matter such as peat or pine bark. I modified it slightly, using small (1/2"-3/4") lava rock along with the perlite. The results are clear! July 13th I witnessed my first flower, and there is evidence of a new pup developing under all those leaves. It demonstrates that with a little knowledge, there may be no limits to what we can grow!



Orthophytum navioides

In the May 2009 Journal of the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand, Peter and Gilliam Hutchison of Thames had an interesting story of their friends' dog.

Mackenzie...the bromeliad groomer

Meet Mackenzie Copsey, the dog that cleans up broms. We were astounded when we witnessed our friends' dog, Mackenzie, drinking from and cleaning up their broms. He seeks out all the old mother plants, especially the rotten smelly ones, and eats out the centre leaving a shiny clean cup! Mackenzie travels to and fro from Auckland to the Bay of Islands with his family and continues his garden work at both properties. So far his health hasn't suffered from his exploits and the broms look lovely-we're not sure what the long-term outlook will be but

maybe we should all be training our canine friends to help in the bromeliad garden.

If you have your plants outside, it will soon be time to bring them indoors. The Bromeliad Society of South Florida had a pamphlet, “Bromeliads and Cold Weather”

COLD SENSITIVE BROMELIADS

This list of cold-sensitive plants, and the temperatures at which damage occurs was compiled by Nat DeLeon and others. It is taken from our bulletin, *The BromeliAdvisory*, edited by Moyna Prince.

Probably the most cold-sensitive broms in our area is *Navia igneosicola*. It should be protected when temperatures go below 50 degrees F.

At about 40 degrees F:

- Most *Cryptanthus*
- *Aechmea fulgens* and its forms
- *Aechmea mexicana*

High to mid-thirties:

- *Aechmea brevicollis*
- some hybrids of *Aec. Fulgens*
- *Aec. magdalenae* var. *quadricolor*
- *Aec. Germinyana*
- *Aec. mertensii*
- *Neoregelia eleutheropetala*
- *Neo. Mooreana* (or *Neo. Peruviana*)
- Most of the Amazon neos

Mid-Thirties:

- *Aechmea chantinii* and its various forms
- *Aec. corymbosa*
- *Aec. melinonii*
- *Aec. moorei*

- *Aec. nallyi*
- *Aec. politii*
- *Aec. servitensis* var. *exigua*
- *Aec. tessmanii*
- *Ananas*- all species
- *Bromelia humilis*
- *Guzmania bracteosa*
- *Guz. donnell-smithii*
- *Vriesea splendens*-its varieties and some hybrids

Two plants that I have found to be prone to cold damage are *Aechmea* Orange Sherbet (*Aec. chantinii* x *Aec. brevicollis*) and *Ananas paraguayensis*. Both sustained damage at about 40 degrees F.

This list of freeze survivors was provided by Tom Wolfe in the February 1990 issue of the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay Newsletter (after the freeze of 1989). It was reprinted in the BromeliAdvisory. Dec. 1994

SURVIVAL BROMELIADS

The following is a list of bromeliad plants that were exposed to approximately six hours of 18 degree weather two nights in succession, with temperatures not exceeding 30 degrees for at least 48 hours.

No Damage Observed

- *Aechmea* Burgundy
- *Aec. comata*
- *Aec. recurvata*
- *Aec. recurvata* var. *variegata*
- *Aec. blumenavii*
- *Aec. triangularis*
- *Aechmea* X *Neophytum* Ralph Davis
- *Neoregelia chlorosticta*
- *Neo. Vulkan* F2

Very Little Damage

- *Aechmea distichantha* (all varieties)

- *Dyckia* (all)
- *Hechtia stenopetala*
- *Canistrum Triangulare*
- *Quesnelia humilis*
- *Nidularium fulgens*

COLD WEATHER PROTECTION

Here are some suggestions taken from an article written by the late Dr. Nelson Redfern, a member of our society and the Bromeliad Society of Broward County. The article originally appeared in the *Commentary* in November 1984.

1. **KEEP PLANTS WARM.** This can be achieved by bringing plants indoors or by providing heat where they grow.
2. **PROVIDE COVER TO PLANTS.** This prevents heat loss by convection air currents and prevents evaporative heat loss. If plants are on or in the ground. It also prevents ground heat loss and creates a warm pocket.
3. **KEEP PLANTS OUT OF THE WIND WHEN POSSIBLE.** Convection air currents will lower surface and core temperatures of plants. Keeping plants close to the ground will help as well as moving plants next to buildings or other larger plants that will shield the wind.
4. **PLACE PLANTS IN AREAS WHERE WARMTH IS LIKELY TO BE PRESERVED.** Close placement to the ground or on the ground where conduction from the warm ground will help. Close placement to bodies of water, large trees, or buildings will also help.
5. **COVER OPEN SHADE STRUCTURES.** This allows for the retention of warm air to be stratified (warm air has a tendency to

rise).

6. **SPRINKLE PLANTS WITH CAUTION.** This is especially effective if frost is imminent and duration of cold is brief. It is less effective if there is prolonged frost or there are cold, dry winds.

The following pictures have been taken by Catherine Jameson, Anne Coughlan's daughter. They provide a different viewpoint of looking at Bromeliads. We thank Catherine for the pictures. We did photoshop two of them.





Dyckia marnier-lapostollei v. *esteveii*





Tillandsia cyanea



The flower is afraid to come out for the Show!



Steve's picture of the **hanging**.



Cryptanthus 'Pink Starlight'