



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

January/February, 2012

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<http://bromeliad-chicago.org>

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Lori Weigerding

We hope that you are having a good year. Our first meeting is at the Botanic Garden in the Annex (trailer) on February 12th at 2pm. Below is the schedule for the remainder of the year.

February 12, March 11, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9 and October 14.

The Cactus and Bromeliad Societies will have a joint Show on July 21 & 22.

We would like to show your plants in our newsletter! Please send the pictures to stevegoode1@ameritech.net

The Chicago Flower Show is scheduled for March 10th-18th. We are not doing a booth.

It is time to renew your membership.

President's Column

Well I hope everyone has survived our very interesting winter! I'm not complaining mind you, just am afraid what we'll have in February and March! Well our next meeting will be February 12, 2012 at 2:00 PM in the Annex trailer. Martha has secured us a speaker from the Gardeners of the North Shore Society, who will be telling us about their society! Before their presentation, we can talk about our efforts to keep our wonderful plants alive during the winter and any other topics that are of interest to those that attend.

I hope and pray that February 12th will be a snow and ice free day! Hey we can only

hope that it's at least 40 and sunny! Please come and join us for an informative afternoon and a good time sharing! Bring along a friend or two, and any problem questions you might have. Looking forward to seeing you all!

Lori Weigerding

Steve and I went to the Southwest Guild Plant Show & Sale in the fall. At the auction we got old newsletters. Several were from the Long Beach/Lakewood Bromeliad Study Group. This excerpt is one they took from the Houston Newsletter of December, 1973. It is good to see we are still sharing information. Article is abridged since we don't have the issue of the previous month .

By Larry Lawrence



We do know that when Columbus "discovered" America, the hybridization of what is now the commercial pineapple was completed, and the possible parents of the hybridization no longer were "wild". To do this, the Americans had to do their hybridization before the time of Christ or at least by 500 A.D.

We do know that the ancient Egyptians were aware of the pineapple, as a stylized version of the pineapple has been identified on column decorations ---these columns completed well before the time of Christ. It is also possible that the Assyrians were also "aware" of the pineapple's existence---possibly introduced by the "Gods" of antiquity? We also know that the pineapple was an item of trade in other areas where the plant cannot be grown (e.g.Moundville, Alabama) prior to the exploration of DeSoto.

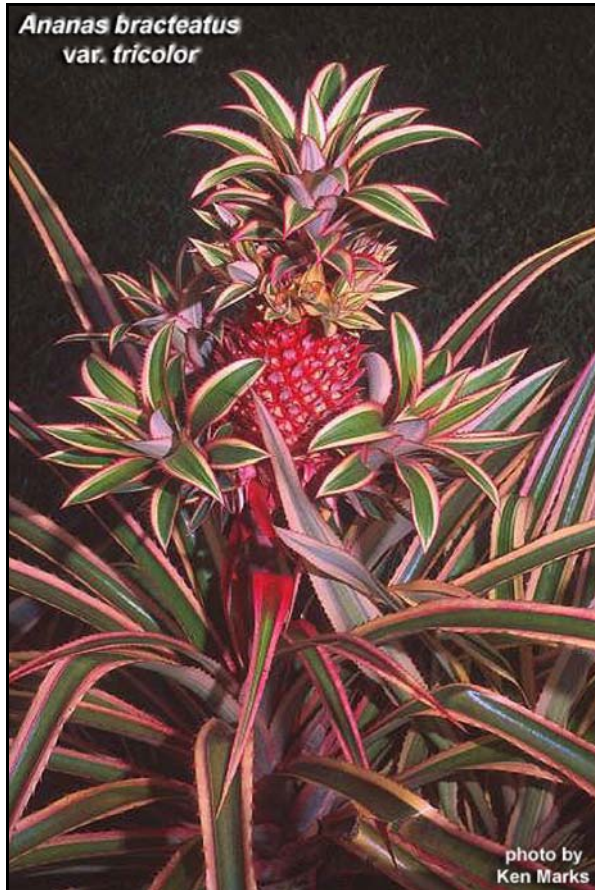
The "Indians" of Central and South America used the pineapple for fibre and as a medicine long before Bromelain and Ananase. *Ananas erectifolius* produces fibres approximately six feet long, that can be used for fabrics or for rope. The

pineapple fruit is a good cure for worms;it aids in digestion and can be found in some formulas for meat tenderizers. The pineapple was also used to produce wine by the Incas and Brazilian natives. When Columbus discovered the Western hemisphere the local inhabitants were advanced in civilization by several hundred years over their discoverers. They knew the earth was round, their calendars were more accurate, their craftsmanship far excelled all civilizations of the time except that of the Chinese. Like the Vandals, Visigoths, Mongols and other barbarian hordes, the Spaniards destroyed the physical and moral structures, keeping only three great discoveries for themselves---tobacco,corn,and the pineapple.



By 1500 the pineapple, corn and tobacco were introduced to Spain. The first mention in print of the pineapple was in 1516. The first pineapple to fruit in England was given to Charles II, in 1680, and was of such import that a painting was made that still hangs in London's Victoria and Albert Museum. So taken with the pineapple were the Europeans, that imported fruits in the late 17th and early 18th centuries were used for decoration, often rented for an occasion before they were finally used as food. In this respect decorative reproductions of the pineapple were used as symbols of hospitality, both in Europe and the conquered Americas. One might wonder why the pineapple once introduced to the Greek and Roman Empires before the time of Christ ,was not carried on into areas of North Africa and Mesopotamia. A simple explanation is that it is not grown in those areas even today, except as an oddity in greenhouses, botanical gardens, etc. In fact the agricultural acreage for growing pineapples is probably less now than in the time prior to the barbarian conquest of the Americas.

There are several interesting ways of reproducing the pineapple vegetatively. All pineapples can be produced from offsets and from the top. All pineapples can be produced from seeds; however, *Ananas comosus* "cayenne" cannot be reproduced from seed. This is the species most used for commercial purposes. Also, pineapples have been reproduced from leaf cuttings. There is a continuing interest in hybridizing however, except for the decorative varieties and a few special purpose hybrids no commercial hybrids seem to have been developed equal to the hybrids developed in the civilized Americas approximately 500 to 1000 years ago.



Today, there is one major area under cultivation---Hawaii. Several areas in the East and West Indies, Central and South America and Africa grow the pineapple as a commercial crop.

Hawaii's commercial value in the pineapple field is much superior to the other areas. (Countries that commercially grow pineapples today include Thailand, the Philippines, China, Brazil and Mexico. Southeast Asia now produces the majority of the world's pineapples. Thailand produces more pineapples than any other country in the World. The Philippines and Brazil are second and third in pineapple production. Editor's Note)

The pineapple is used today for cattle feed, mulch, fibre, human consumption, landscaping and medicine. It is also used in the preparation of other foods such as chill-proofing beer,

improved cake flour, speeding up the curding of cheese and it even provides an extract for cleaning our teeth.

The pineapple is not a general cultivar in Houston gardens. In most cases the most desirable varieties are just to darn big. The all around variety is *Ananas ananassoides* or *Ananas ananassoides* var. *Nana*. These are miniature plants that produce an edible(?) fruit, grow nicely in a five inch pot set in a sunny window and are about 12 inches high. They bear fruit in 12 to 24 months and remain attractive in fruit for approximately three months. They do appreciate bi-monthly feedings and regular watering. The plants are green to reddish brown, depending on the available light. They are easy cultivars to grow.

Another easy cultivar is *Ananas Comosus* "Cayenne". This one can be acquired " free" by removing the top from a "store boughten" pineapple. Remove the top as though you were sharpening a pencil and place in damp sand or "Terregreen Granules" for thirty days before placing it in an eight inch pot filled with sandy loam potting soil. Depending on your luck, it will produce a fruit in 24 to 48 months, provided it is well fertilized, moderately watered, and given full sun. This is a big plant, although not as dangerous to life and limb as the other large plants---but give it lots of room. It gets a 24-36 inch wing span, and the tips are

like a yucca plant---sharp. It cannot be grown from seed. Two pineapples are of exceptional merit as cultivars. Both are variegated, both are tri-colored(cream, green, and pink); both have large brilliant fruits; they have large profiles needing 12 inch pots and can be reproduced from seeds, pups, tops and leaf cuttings; both are expensive at present. The first is *Ananas bracteatus tricolor*. The second cultivar most preferred by Houstonians is the *Ananas comosus variegatus*.



Since we are now in the Chinese New Year- Year of the Dragon.



Pictures from the www.fcbs.org website.

Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago

Membership Application

New Member Renewal

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Name _____

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Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____

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Birthday (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

Make your check or money order out to the Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago

Simply fill this form out and mail with payment to:

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Lake Forest, IL
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