



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

November/December, 2013

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WEB SITE

<http://bromeliad-chicago.org>

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Lori Weigerding

We did a lot of planning at our October 13th meeting. When you get your calendar for 2014, you need to put the following dates on it. We will list the rest of the meeting dates in June.

March 9- First meeting of the year will be in the Annex at the Botanic Garden.

April 13th- 2pm meeting in the Annex at the Botanic Garden,

June 8- 2pm meeting in the Annex at the Botanic Garden

July 13-2pm meeting in the Annex at the Botanic Garden to finalize our Show.

July 18, 19 & 20-Set up and Combined Show of the Cactus Club and Bromeliad Society.

July 19- Dinner of Bromeliad Society members paid for by the Club.

President's Column

Well we've certainly had a very interesting couple of months! We've had so many different kinds of bad weather! The tornados path would have passed close to us, but all we got was a lot of rain. We've even had a little snow - oh no! I hope everyone got all their plants in before all this crazy weather!

We certainly had fun during our last meeting! We had fun picking out our spoils with the raffle. We decided to change the Holiday party to paying for the Saturday dinner after the plant show. We decided to have our next meeting in March 2014.

Keeping Roberta and her family in our prayers as she continues to recover.

*Wishing everyone safe and happy holidays!
See you all in 2014.*

Lori Weigerding



Dole Plantation

Pictures from Larry Clever

Larry Clever went to the Dole Plantation in Hawaii while visiting his son and took the following pictures. We wish his son well in his tour of Afghanistan. (I don't think that they grow Bromeliads there.)

Paula Derning showed us the picture on her phone of the Aechmea progeny that were blooming. She had received the mother plant for working at the WBC in Chicago.

Martha read the Thank You note from Inspired Youth who we had sponsored to come to our show and learn about bromeliads and the Garden. We voted to do this again in 2014. Paula will check with a group of youth who raise and sell vegetables to see if they would be interested somehow in being involved with our club.

Instead of having a Thank You dinner at the end of the year we voted to have it during our Show. Marjorie made the motion and Priscilla seconded it.

Some of the suggestions for next year's programs are; combine with another

Society to have Kris Jarantowski from the Botanic Garden speak about his years at the Garden; a tram ride of the Garden; visit the Ball Garden in West Chicago; visit the Oak Park Conservatory, take a tour of the University of Chicago experimental growing area.

The club members voted to keep the dues the same as last year. Please send your renewal in by February.

The April 2008 issue of the Bromelaid Society of New Zealand had an article, "Winter Chores in the Garden and Greenhouse" by Gerry Stansfield. This article of his has been edited.

"Winter Chores in the Garden and the Greenhouse"
Gerry Stansfield

Around about this time we usually give out some advice to our newer members and perhaps a reminder to others, about winter chores. There is one job we must do prior to winter, and it is extremely important to do it now rather than the usual spring clean up and that is to dead leaf our plants.

Unlike the spring and summer months, the dead leaves in the winter can and do start to rot and break down, and this can very quickly lead to bacteria and viral infection. Now you might say, 'How can that happen'. Well, we do know quite a lot about rotting vegetation. After all, that's what composting is all about. However, there are significant differences in the process. In composting, we allow the temperature of the compost to rise dramatically which generally kills any pathogenic and viral bacteria, and leaves us with lovely sweet smelling compost. But this does not happen with our dead bromeliad leaves.

So, how does this bacteria get into our plants? Well here again, we do know that all bromeliads have trichomes, and we know that these trichomes are there to facilitate the absorption of water from rain and nutrients, and we also know that they are quite capable of absorbing matter from decaying vegetation. It is well known that vectors (or carriers) such as animals, insects, mites, aphids, nematodes, mealy bug, scale and the sucking or chewing type of slugs and snails etc etc, are all viral disease carrying insects, By chewing and sucking at our plants they pass on forms of infection that can attack the stomata pores of the leaves and of course also the stemcells. They just love rotting vegetation! These insects are extremely harmful to our beloved bromeliads. So by getting rid of the dead leaves, etc. we are helping our bromeliads to continue to grow and in a healthy condition.

If you have only a few bromeliad plants, this may not be a big job. But if on the other hand, you have large collections, be they in your garden, or the green house and shade house, then it is a major job and should be planned, as it could take some time. If your plants are in pots, then it is just a matter of lifting the pots, cleaning up the plant and replacing the pot. If on the other hand, you have your plants, planted in the ground, then it becomes a big job. Perhaps you can do with the help of a kneeler or thick foam pad. We find the kneeler is ideal, as with the handles it allows you to hoist yourself up again, these are available from Mitre 10 and probably other hardware shops. Remember, it is also a good time to lay slug baits when you have finished getting rid of all the leaves.

Some other issues we will discuss in the January/February issue are dealing with lower humidity and light in the winter.

One of the reasons I like many of the bromeliads is for their beautiful foliage. One of the neoregelias I saw at the home tour of Lisa Robinette's garden at the 2012 Orlando Extravaganza was Neo. Lorena Lector.



Neo. Lorena Lector

I was able to purchase it at the 2013 extravaganza held at Indian Rocks Beach, FL. I brought it back with us to Arizona. This time I remembered to put it under shade cloth for awhile when we first got here so it didn't burn.

The September 2013 East London Bromeliad Society from South Africa had the following article “Foliage Bromeliads”. We did not include all the pictures that they had in their article.



Lyn Wegner : Vriesea 'Rosita' albomarginated. A Grant Groves plant. Gorgeous foliage, the white edge flushes pink in bright light. An attractive flower spike which doesn't look as if it belongs to this plant. I grow it under shade cloth. There is a plain green form too.



Brenda Wegner: Left, *Neoregelia* 'Vivacor' is a colourful hybrid from Altria Labs in Brazil. This plant gets morning sun. Right, *Neoregelia* 'Razzberry Ripple', seed parent, *Neoregelia* 'Grace', pollen parent, *Neoregelia* 'Lolita'. I also grow this plant where it gets the morning sun.

Foliage Bromeliads

Last month we looked at a variety of Blooming Bromeliads, this month it is the turn of Foliage Bromeliads to be shown off. There is a fascinating range of leaf patterns or markings to be found in the amazing bromeliad family. Variegation, zonation, marmoration, tessellation, fenestration are just some of the words used to describe the eye candy of leaf patterns we find in this family. Some of the vrieeseas are well known for their tessellations, fenestrations and hieroglyphics, often reflected in the actual names of particular plants. Maybe we can unpack what causes these markings and the meaning behind the names at a future meeting. The foliage comes in many different shapes, from needle thin to broad and flat, symmetrical to irregular, spiky to soft. I have read recently that bromeliad foliage is the most widely patterned

and coloured of any plant in the world. Amazing hey? All bromeliads have trichomes (scales) on their leaves, which serve as a very efficient absorption system. In their natural habitat, they help reduce water loss and shield the plants from harsh sun. Sometimes they are so heavily covered that they appear silvery-white. On many species (especially in more humid areas), the scales are smaller and less noticeable. Sometimes they form patterns and banding on the leaves. Many thanks to Pete Pfister , Brenda Wegner, Barbara Black, Dudley Reynolds, Lyn Wegner and Danie Conradie who brought in a varied selection of their current favourite foliage bromeliads.

Jack Reilly sent the following picture of moving plants into their greenhouse.



Jack and Ardie Reilly's Greenhouse (picture from Jack Reilly)

We wish you all have many things to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

Some photos appropriate for the winter season are:

Aechmea 'Snowflakes' and Vriesea 'Snowman' which we found at the www.fcbs.org website. We hope you have a Joyous Christmas and winter Holiday. Don't be a humbug!



www.fcbs.org



Till. ionantha X paucifolia

If you haven't paid your dues please do so.

Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago Membership Application

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