



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

January/February, 2014

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Lori Weigerding

The midwest has had a colder winter this year. In the Southwest, we have had a warmer winter. Of course, one season's weather is not a predictor of the weather in the next season. We will have to wait to see what spring brings. In case you have forgotten the meeting dates for the meetings until July here it is, along with some of the programs.

March 9- First meeting of the year will be in the Annex at the Botanic Garden. Goode's program on 2013 Southwest Guild

April 13th- 2pm meeting in the Annex at the Botanic Garden, DVD of Dennis Cathcarts-Singapore

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

Wow what a winter we're having! I know it could be worse, but I'm certainly tired of having it be so cold! Well how is everyone's plants doing? I'm sure yours want to be outside, just like mine do. Well we got some more snow the other day. Guess we'll be dealing with some more winter weather. We'll have to continue to hug our plants inside for a while longer.

At our last meeting we decided to have our first meeting of the new year in March. Martha and Steve will be showing us their program on the Southwest Extravaganza. I can't wait to see it! They're always so interesting!

We'll hope you all stay warm and don't have too much trouble keeping your plants warm until spring is finally here.

I thought I'd ask you all for your thoughts and prayers for Roberta and my Mom, who are both in rehab and getting better. We certainly do miss having Roberta and Julie at our meetings.

Look forward to seeing you at the meeting March 9, 2014 at 2 PM.

Lori Weigerding



From www.fcbs.org



Have you had any problem with your broms rotting. I found the following article from November 1976 of the Long Beach/Lakewood Bromeliad Study Group. Multford Foster had written this in volume 1, number 5 of the Bromeliad Society Bulletin.

- Q. Does water in the cups ever cause the plant to decay? Some of the leaves of my nidulariums seem so brown and mushy around the base. Also what would cause large brown spots to appear on my nidularium? Do I give them too much light?
- A. In the first place all of the tank type bromeliads must have water in their cups in order for them to live. The other types of bromels do not have cups

so they could not hold any quantity of water. If your plant is in a greenhouse and there is a drip from above that may bring foreign substances or if you have sprayed with oil or arsenate of lead, decay could easily start in this cup because of the poisonous chemicals. A drip going directly into a plant from an overhead galvanized pipe would soon cause serious consequences.

Bromels that are living on rocks or in the ground withstand much more adverse conditions as they have built up a resistance to the greater predominance of chemicals which are prevalent in rocks or soil in greater quantity. Also the roots have a tendency to take up sufficient water necessary for their sustenance. But when the tank bromeliads which depend on their leaves and the base of their leaves to absorb and digest their food, have an overabundance of chemicals such as iron, copper etc. they do not have the resistance to tolerate more than their minute needs

It has been authoritatively said the one per cent of our air is mineral and from that one percent such plants as Spanish Moss and the xerophytic epiphytes must receive the greater part of their mineral needs. Sufficient organic material reaches many of these epiphytic plants from decayed leaves, twigs, bird droppings, numerous insects etc. All provide a balanced chemical ration.

The mushy leaves around the base of a nidularium could not come from decay in the cup unless the whole plant was decayed. As long as you will have to cut your fingernails and your hair you will have to take off the lower leaves from your bromeliads as they mature and decay naturally. But if an abnormal number of leaves are rotting off at the base, foreign substances are entering them or your potting material is not correct.



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Most of the species of the nidulariums are shade loving plants. All bromeliads want light and plenty of it, but do not confuse this with sunlight; nidulariums do not want much direct sunlight.

For the most part they live on or near the ground floor of the forest. They enjoy plenty of moisture and like a humid condition, not dry air.

If your potting material is allowed to get soggy and is poorly drained and that generally means that it is turning sweet, then the nidulariums and most of the bromeliads do not like this condition so they try to tell you they don't by rotting. Old leafmold or osmunda fiber will break down in two years and ceases to be acid. It becomes sweet but it smells sour. Most plants do not like it. Replant your bromeliads once a year if possible, for their best health and growth.

Mulford Foster-Orlando Florida

Nidulariums

A French botanist, Charles Antoine Lemaire described the genus in 1854. They are found in eastern Brazil and grow low down on trees or in the ground and grow in humid conditions. They can grow in temperatures as low as the 40°s with no damage. They have a tank and typically have a flat to semi-erect rosette. They like to be grown in a shady location and keeping some water in their cup helps to meet the plant's moisture requirements.

Information from:
Bromeliads Are My Hobby
by Kathy Dorr

Starting with
Bromeliads: A Guide to the
Growing of Bromeliads by
the Bromeliad Society of
Queenland.



In December Steve and I went to Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Superior, Arizona. We took a Dyckia “Cherry Coke” to donate as well as some Puya mirabilis seeds. While we were there we saw some clumps of Hechtia texensis that had flowered earlier in the year. We didn’t see the Puya berteroniana which had flowered another year. I will have to get one for my garden and see if it will flower for me. What an awesome color.



Note the blue-green flowers
www.fcbs.org

When you have a bromeliad flowering, why don’t you share it with us?

Since it is a new year, I thought I would share the following musings. Herb Plevier wrote this in the March 2012 New York Bromeliad Society Newsletter Bromeliana (Edited)

As I inspect my collection while watering, looking at plants in flower or checking on the condition of the plants, I get occasional flashes that provoke and occupy my thoughts. Here are some recent ones:

PLANT PLACEMENT If you have more than one light source in your apartment or home, you have made a choice of where to place various broms. Some of us even make placement changes

according to the season when there is less or more light and when very cold temperatures in the winter may affect window sill plants. Now that spring weather is near, this is a good time to evaluate how different plants have fared in the places where they are growing, and to consider making changes when they soon will be receiving more light (and sun if you are lucky to have such exposures) and warmer and more humid temperatures.

In January 1998, the Houston Bromeliad Society had the following article (edited)

THIS IS THE DAY OF NEW BEGINNING..

The title and first line of this old hymn seem appropriate today. As a new year begins most people pause, do a quick mental review of the year past, give themselves a small pat on the back for the few goals they accomplished in the preceding year, and then castigate themselves for “the weakness of the flesh”, “the lack of resolve”, and in general their failure AGAIN to change their ways.

This just proves once again how very human we are. I would think it would be very dreary living in a world of perfect people, because I know I’d never measure up, and there’d be all that guilt to carry around. But, if we don’t try to improve ourselves, we’ll probably degenerate into a state far worse than we are now, and that might be pretty hard for the world to take.

First things first! This should make the editor happy; despite my usual monthly lack of inspiration I will get my column to the editor on time every month. This will probably bring terrible confusion to the editor who will suspect this missile is from someone else, because it will be **early**. I don’t want to be responsible for anything horrible happening to our editor, so I may give him a hint; or maybe not! I figure he’s tough...he’ll adjust!

I will put in the “sweat equity” required to bring my collection to the standards that I know are reasonable for me. When needed, I will not talk about spraying...I will spray...thatday!!! Lord, how I hate to spray!

I will repot the terrestrials more frequently, so that my non-plant growing neighbors will know that dyckias do not devour their pots. In a well cared for collection, you can actually see some **mix**, plus the pot. Look at **Rita Beeler’s** plants. Don’t take my word for it!

I will take pups off when they are mature enough to be on their own, so that their symmetry is not disrupted. I will not pretend that all bromeliads like growing as multiples. Only lazy growers let them “flourish” in that manner. I should know!

I will get back to the routine of giving my plants an encouraging teaspoonful of Osmocote in a timely and reasonable fashion. I’ll probably shock them all into

bloom.

I will pay more attention to the condition of the plant as related to its placement in the greenhouse, especially now that it's winter and every plant, of necessity, is pretty cozy with its roommates. If your collection is more than 150 plants, and you grow for show as well as your own pleasure, there probably won't be enough room in the "penthouse suite" for all your potential entrants. That's when you have to be ingenious, and learn to climb the ladder, remove "first plant" from most desirable spot, and replace it with another desirable plant (call it "plant two") that deserves its place in the choice spot for awhile. After this maneuver, slowly climb down the ladder to the appropriate spot, and carefully place "plant one" in "plant two's" spot. Repeat this procedure until you feel that your best plants are receiving the best light, at least some of the time. If you say you've done this "ladder relay" repeatedly" without dousing yourself with cool to cold tank water, you're fibbing! Repeat this maneuver with as many plants as you feel need rotation, or until your knees give out, whichever comes first.

Winter is an ideal time to methodically repot and "retag". Pups mature enough to deserve repotting should be. An excellent method of keeping track of your plant's name is to make two tags and bury one of them to protect it from UV radiation. I actually prefer aluminum tags that I wire on. Today, there are so many excellent books with abundant, beautiful bromeliad photos, that make identification a lot easier. Take photos of any plant whose name befuddles you, and one wintry night gather your books and photos and go for it! Doing this with good friends and good wine makes for a pleasant time, pools knowledge, and usually reduces your number of untagged, orphan plants.

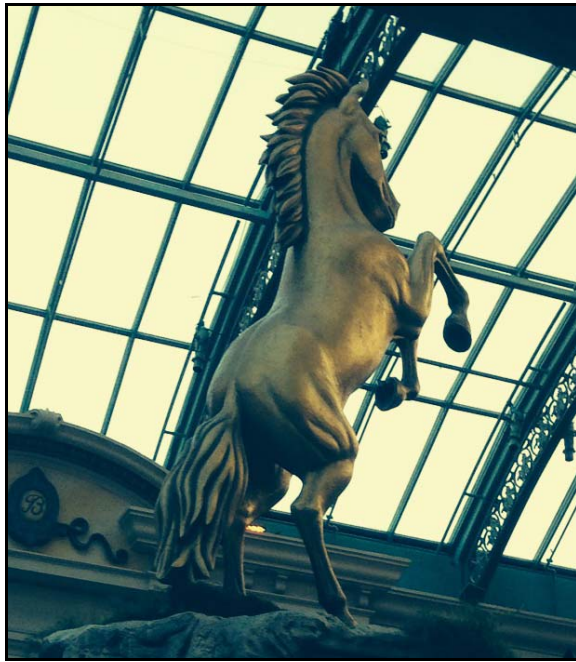
Without a doubt the best loved gift my husband ever gave me is a remote thermometer with buried wires that lead to the sensor in the greenhouse. Day or night, I can glance at that thermometer, and take appropriate action; or leave well enough alone. I especially appreciate this gift at three in the morning when it sounds as though the wind is picking up, and I wonder if my decision not to turn on heat was a correct one. Wonderful device!!!

Check your fans to be sure they are blowing where they are needed. Box fans have a way of moving about, and winter ventilation is so very important. They are easily anchored by rope attached on both vertical sides, and then anchored to a side greenhouse wall.

As I grow older, I more fully appreciate the beauty and wonder that prevails

in the plant kingdom, especially among the bromeliads and other tropicals that we grow.

If you take the time and wander throughout the greenhouse, and really observe your plants, not in a hurried fashion when you're watering or straightening a plant that's fallen over in its pot, but rather as pleasant time spent with old friends, you'll enjoy a pleasant interlude and understand again what brought you to this hobby. You'll probably also lower your blood pressure!



Steve just got back from Las Vegas. He took this picture in the conservatory at the Bellagio. This is the year of the Horse in the Chinese New Year.

Don't forget to renew your membership.

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

**Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago Membership
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