



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

January/Feb., 2017

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Lori Weigerding

It is a New year. This is the Chinese Year of the Rooster. The Bellagio Hotel and others in Las Vegas celebrate with their beautiful displays.



Year of the Rooster at the Bellagio



Easy job for the Editor!

President's Column

Well it's been a screwy winter - knock on wood! Not too much snow, no real flooding or ice. Lots of fog though, at least around us. I can't wait until it gets warmer and stays that way.

If you haven't checked your email lately, The Daylily and Iris Society has invited us to their Chili Bash at Friendship Park, 395 W Algonquin Rd, Des Plaines, IL, 60018 on February 19, 2017, from Noon to 3pm, as a way for all of us to get to know one another, since we're doing our show together in May 2017.

I've heard back from a few of you that you'll be attending, I hope to see more of you there. Our first meeting is March 12, 2017 and my calendar says day light savings, I don't know if it's right, but watch your time if it is.

Look forward to seeing you all in February and March!

Lori Weigerding



Do I have to label the plants?



Bellagio pictures taken by Martha Goode

Our first meeting at the Botanic Garden this year will be on March 12th at 2pm in the Lakeside Room which is in the Visitor Center. We will have to get busy and start planning the Show which we are having along with the Iris and Dayily Society on May 27 & 28.

On behalf of the Iris and Daylily Society, Priscilla has invited us to a Chili Bash with them. It is a wonderful chance for us to get to know some of their members. It will be held February 19 at Friendship Park, 395 W. Algonquin Road, Des Plaines, 60018 from 12-3. If you would like to attend please let Lori know (lweigerd@sbcglobal.net)

In the November 2016 Journal of the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand, there was an article "Learning about the genera: Hechtia". It was written by Andrew Devonshire and also at another time by Robert Kopfstein.

Learning about the genera : Hechtia

– The first section of this article is by Andrew Devonshire. The balance of the article is by Robert Kopfstein and is reprinted from a 2010 issue of the San Diego Society's 'Blade'.

Hechtia is a genus from the subfamily Pitcarnioideae. They are resilient terrestrial bromeliads that can be found thriving in harsh conditions where other plants struggle to grow. The Hechtia (pronounced Hek-ti-a) genus has over 60 species, with the majority being endemic to Mexico. Their range is from southern Texas, right through Mexico, down into Guatemala and Honduras. The genus is named for Julius Gottfried Conrad Hecht (1771- 1837), German counsellor to the King of Prussia.

Hechtias grow in a typical rosette formation and the leaves are usually very well armed with spines. This can cause confusion with bromeliads like Dyckia and Encholirium as they have a superficial similarity. What is unique is that the Hechtia genus has two different modes of flowering. Many species produce the flower stalk from the centre of the rosette, while others will produce the flower stalk from the side of the plant.

Hechtia marnier-lapostollei: This species is really the only one seen in New Zealand collections. Its plump, succulent leaves are covered in trichomes, giving the whole plant the appearance of being dusted in silver. This plant is named after avid botanist Julien Marnier-Lapostolle. It is a desirable specimen plant that can

be grown in a large pot, or planted out in a full sun and well drained garden situation.



Photos by Len Harrison, www.fcbs.org

Most hechtias are dioecious – that is they are either male and have flowers that produce only pollen (staminate), or they are female and the flowers are exclusively pistillate (having only ovaries). Most bromeliads have ‘perfect’ flowers – that is, they have both stamens and pistils. Hechtias are not the only dioecious bromeliads, Androlepsis (which has only two species) and some of the catopsis species are dioecious as well. Another feature of hechtia inflorescences is that they are also dimorphic – the shape of the male inflorescence is different from

its female counterpart. This has caused some problems for taxonomists because many of the herbarium specimens used for formal descriptions are based on only one plant’s inflorescence.

Because hechtias often are very ‘spiny’, and because the flowers are typically very small – and often white – and to grow them well they need to be in a large (and often heavy) container, the genus Hechtia has been relegated to the status of ‘collector’s plants.’ There is not much of a popular market for these plants and there has been little research done on them. As example, in the 50 Year Index of the BSI Journal there are 65 entries for Hechtia, and 30 of these are listed as a ‘mention’.

Most hechtias grow among and on rocks in seasonally dry regions with calcareous substrates (very much like many agaves). Often they can be found on cliffs overhanging rivers –the plants probably benefit from the constant humidity. Most hechtias (like the dyckias) are prolific clumpers, but there are exceptions: Hechtia argentea seems not to produce offsets. Size varies according to the species, but most seem to be anywhere from ten inches to two feet in diameter: this feature would seem to make them suitable as landscape plants. Colour also varies. Some species are very scurfy which produces a silvery appearance to the leaves. Some, like *H. epigyna*, are softer leaved and lime green. There are spotted hechtias (*H. rosea*) and some whose leaves colour up red to maroon, especially in warmer weather.

In cultivation hechtias are relatively easy to maintain. But unlike the epiphytic broms that don't mind being pot bound, they need a generous pot. If hechtia roots are cramped, and the pot dries out, the result is leaf tip browning. It's important to use a rapid draining potting mix – don't be stingy with the perlite or pumice. Slow release fertilizer is one of the easier ways to feed the terrestrial bromeliads, but organics like fish emulsion, compost tea, or worm castings also function very well. Dividing hechtias in cultivation is probably the biggest problem. Most hechtias have relatively wicked spines, and usually the offsets are tightly clustered around the mother plant, making separating them a potentially bloody affair. A good pair of leather gloves is a must. And unlike dyckias, hechtia pups do not usually produce roots while they are attached to the mother plant. A sharp serrated knife is an essential tool to cut away just enough of the base of the mother plant so that the pup has at least some root tissue attached. If the pup has no roots at all, it still can be rooted in a very porous mix, but this process could take a few months. With even a few roots a separated pup will begin to grow almost immediately; with no roots, the process of growth is delayed, sometimes for as much as one year. Hechtias have been the neglected stepchildren in the world of bromeliads. But for brom enthusiasts who have experimented growing them, the hechtias are proving to be striking accent plants adding to the forms, shapes, and colours of the garden.

The local Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society had Andy Siekkinen as a speaker at our January meeting. His topic was Succulent Terrestrial Bromeliads. He is doing research on them at Claremont Graduate University in California.

Some of the interesting facts were that the trichomes help water and nutrient absorption as well as provide UV protection. He mentioned the Deuterocohnias are more cold hardy since they come mostly from the Andes. They rebloom on the same stalk so you shouldn't cut the stalk off after blooming. Many of the Cactus Clubs still have them under the genus name *Abromeitiella*.



Hechtia 'Wildfire' from Bromeliad Cultivar Register at BSI.org

The Dyckia plants have a lateral inflorescence while Hechtia can bloom on lateral stalks or from the center. Dyckias are from South America while Hechtias

are found in Texas, Mexico and Guatemala. Andy believe there could be some in Arizona near the New Mexico border. Most hechtias have either male or female flowers. Dyckias have both stamens and pistils.



Picture from Central Spine: Newsletter of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society (CACSS)
Dyckia goehringii

The Orthophytum genus is found mostly in Brazil. I got two pups from Andy, Dyckia goehringii and Orthophytum grossiorum. They can't tolerate as low a temperature as hechtias or dyckias. They will be divided into three genera.

Puyas are found at a higher elevation in the Andes. It is more closely related to Dyckia.

In the January issue of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society Newsletter, Scott McMahon had an article. .

ANTONIO RAIMONDI By Scott McMahon, *Cactaceae* collections manager at the Desert Botanical Garden

How many of you have visited another country and returned home wanting to know more about the places you have seen? Cities and states, rivers and mountains often are named in honor of people in that country's history. So too are cacti and succulents named for explorers, botanists and even members of royal families, who sometimes financed early expeditions. The names Palmer, Engelmann, Brandegee, Watson, Standley, and Gentry can be found on southwestern and Sonoran plants familiar to many of us.

When I was in Peru, I was able to see two spectacular plants named for Antonio Raimondi, an Italian-born Peruvian geographer and scientist. He was born in 1826 and immigrated to Peru in 1850 to become a professor of natural history. In 1856 he was one of the founding professors of the medical school at the National University of San Marcos, founding the analytical chemistry department in 1861. Raimondi was passionate about

everything his new country had to offer. He studied the geography, botany, geology, zoology, archaeology, and ethnography of Peru in a total of 18 extensive expeditions to all parts of the country. In 1875, his findings, a massive work, were published in *El Perú*, and republished numerous times over the next 40 years. The Raimondi Museum in Lima contains some of the collections from his journeys. Raimondi has had theaters, museums, schools, and institutes of higher learning named after him. There is a province (county) named Antonio Raymondi in the Ancash Region (state) of Peru.



Neoraimondia arequipensis in habitat by
Scott McMahon. January Central Spine CACSS

As our bus traveled up and down Peru's coastal valleys we saw numerous cacti, one of the largest of which was *Neoraimondia arequipensis*. Named for the town of Arequipa in southern Peru, these cacti branch from the base, producing several massive stems up to over 30 feet in height and 16 inches thick. *N. arequipensis* is not seen in the landscape here

because of its sensitivity to frost, but the other species, *N. herzogiana* is growing here in a few spots in the Core Garden at the DBG. *N. herzogiana* grows in Bolivia, has a single trunk, and is more massive. Both exhibit an unusual feature in that the areoles continue to produce new spines and flowers each year, elongating over time. The areoles are axillary buds that, rather than growing out as branches, grow only slightly to form an organ called a short shoot. Normally areoles don't grow out at all in other cactus species.

In the Parque Nacional Huascarán I saw the other namesake, *Puya raimondii*, the largest member of the Bromeliad family. These plants were growing at an altitude of 4,170 meters or 13,681 feet. The plants can be 10 feet tall after 40 years with a flower stalk 30 feet tall. It will produce more

than 3,000 flowers and 6 million seeds after which it dies. *Puya raimondii* is listed as endangered and only a few populations exist.

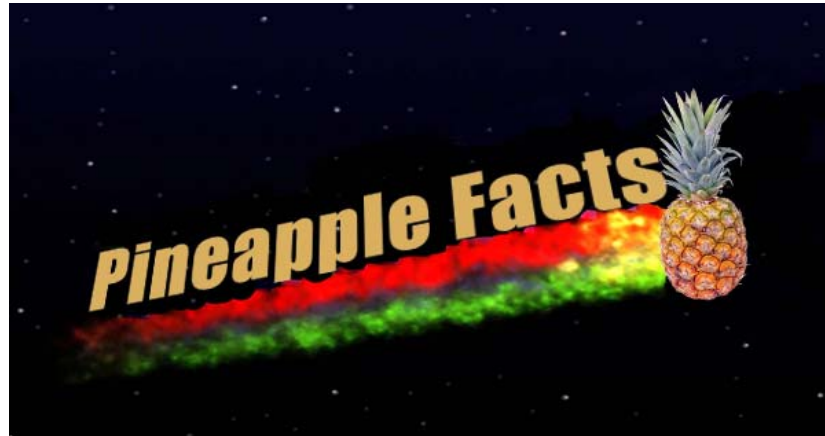
Traveling is a learning experience, and as many of you know, the learning continues even after your journey is over.



This photo of Puya raimondii by Pepe Rogue gives scale to this amazing plant.

Picture also from the January issue of the Central Spine CACSS

I'm sure you check out what you read to make sure it is true. I almost fell for the following "Pineapple Facts" that I saw online. Maybe I read it too early in the morning.



Graphic from Yelp

It's time for some fun facts about pineapples. Pineapples are America's favorite seed¹ originally discovered by Emilio Estevez² while vacationing in the Bermuda Triangle³. Pineapples are rich in Vitamin⁴. In fact, eating the skin of the pineapple⁵ is known to prevent aging⁶ and improve your limbo skills⁷. And of course, pineapple is the ideal topping for pizza⁸. In celebration of the official food of sloths⁹,

- 1 Pineapple is not a seed.
- 2 Not true.
- 3 He's actually more of an Aspen guy.
- 4 Not a real vitamin.
- 5 DO NOT EAT PINEAPPLE SKIN.
- 6 No scientific evidence supports this claim.
- 7 See above note.
- 8 Actually, this one is true.
- 9 Can neither confirm nor deny sloths love of pineapples.

*OK now for some real pineapple facts: Did you also know that another name for pineapples is "ananas"? It's because they were originally related to bananas, but they didn't want to be seen as soft or telephone-shaped. So they changed their name and stopped answering calls or texts from their brethren. After the split, pineapple got cake, and bananas got pudding. And there will never be a pineapple-banana yogurt flavor. If you don't believe us, our legal team will fact check it after they finish this fine print:

You're the bananas to our pajamas.

Love,
Yelp Eat24 (Deleted information pertained to an expired coupon.)

It was good to hear from Larry Clever. He got a portable greenhouse which fits in front of one of the bedroom windows. "I put all of my Tillandsias and some of my other Broms in it. With a water tray in the bottom, the humidity is currently around 70%. So far we've only had 1 significant snowfall of 3-4 inches. All gone now with today's high to be around 62. Please send my regards to the rest of the group."



Picture from Larry Clever

Here is a picture Anne shared with us. If you have any pictures or advice please send it in and we will be happy to share it.



Don't forget to renew your membership now..

Anne T. Coughlan's old Crocs

Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago Membership Application

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