



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

November/December, 2018

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Lori Weigerding

We are coming to the end of 2018. We hope it was a successful one with your bromeliads. We hope you learned something new about them. Maybe you even learned some tips that helped you to grow them better. When you get your 2019 calendar mark these two dates, March 10th, our first meeting of the year and the weekend of July 13-14, our Show with the Daylily Society.

President's Column

Well the cold weather and holidays are upon us. While we snuggle under covers and turn up the heat, what are you doing to keep your plants warm and safe? Remember to keep them moist by spraying them occasionally. Plants take in nutrients thru their leaves too, even those in soil, so give them a spritz once in a while. Especially now that they're in the house with all this dry heat.

I hope each of you had a great Thanksgiving! A fun time celebrating with family and friends. Many of us have celebrated Hanukkah and will be celebrating Christmas, I hope these times were/are full of love and celebration of life.

Thanx to Martha and Steve for another year of newsletters and pictures of their travels. Thanx to Paula for keeping our books straight. Thanx to all of you for continuing to support us with your attendance and contributions to our meetings and show.

Please have safe holidays, stay warm and see you in March 2019.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Lori Weigerding



Dick Wiedhopf



Dick Wiedhopf's Agaves

Steve and I returned to Arizona in October. We were able to go to the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society's Desert Garden Tour. I especially wanted to see the garden of the President Dick Wiedhopf. Besides growing a large variety of cacti he also has many succulents including dyckia and hechtias. It is always fun to visit a collector's garden. Then my collection seems small in comparison.



Cactus and Bromeliad living in peace/



Some of Dick's Dyckias and Hechtias



Some of Dicks Greenhouse Bromeliads.



Dyckia Hybrid

You have already had a lot of winter weather in the Chicago area but I thought I would share some tips from past newsletters from around the world.

The first article is from the May 2018 Journal of the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand. “Pre-winter chores in the garden and the greenhouse” by Gerry Stansfield.

Around about this time we usually give out some advice to our newer members and perhaps a reminder to others, about the few things we should do before the onslaught of the cold winter months. There is one job we must do prior to winter and it is extremely important to do it now rather than waiting for the usual spring clean up- **dead leaf our plants.**

Unlike spring and summer, the dead leaves in the winter can and do start to rot and break down. This can very quickly turn to bacteria and viral infection. You might say, “How does that happen?”. Well, actually, we do know quite a lot about rotting vegetation. After all, that’s what composting is all about. However, the important difference between composting and dead leaves next to our bromeliads is that in composting we allow the temperature of the compost to rise dramatically which generally kills any pathogenic and viral bacteria, and leaves us with the lovely sweet smelling compost. This does not happen with dead bromeliad leaves! How does the bacteria get into our plants? 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 carriers such as animals, insects, mites, aphids, nematodes, mealy bug, scale and the sucking or chewing type of slugs and snails etc. are all potential viral disease carriers, and by chewing and sucking at our plants they can and do pass on forms of infection that can attack the stomata pores of the bromeliad leaves and of course also the stemcells.

By getting rid of the dead leaves we are helping our bromeliads to continue to grow and stay healthy. If you have only a few bromeliad plants, this is not a big job. But if you have a large collection, either in your garden, green house or shade house, then the work should be planned. If your plants are in pots, it is just a matter of lifting the pots, cleaning up the plant and replacing the pot. If you have planted in the ground, perhaps you can do with the help of a kneeler or thick foam pad. We find the kneeler is ideal, and the handles allow you to easily hoist yourself up again. They are usually available from the large hardware stores. Finally, when you have finished it is a good time to lay slug baits.

From New Zealand we go to the Bromeliad Society of Northwest Florida. In their November/December 2018 newsletter, they had the following “Cold Weather Tips”.

- ✿ Water your plants really well the day before a freeze. This will help the plant build up heat through the soil once the cold weather strikes.
- ✿ Cover with newspaper or a “frost blanket.” (Keep warmth from radiating out into the cold air.)
- ✿ You can also mulch with pinestraw.
- ✿ 2 layers will provide more insulation than 1 thick layer and such; you can even make a barrier with haybales, etc.
- ✿ If frost does form on your plants, be sure to wash it off before the sun hits it. (The frost crystals will magnify the sunlight and can cause burn spots on the leaves.)
- ✿ Clean out dead leaves, etc. from the bromeliad’s “tank” to prevent rot.
- ✿ Water bromeliads, etc. that are brought inside homes or greenhouses

sparingly through the winter.

The following article was in the December 2002 Newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of South Florida.

COLD WEATHER PROTECTION (abridged)

There are some common-sense guidelines which should be observed. If you have a plant that is valuable to you, protect it. If you're not sure about its sensitivity, err on the side of caution. Because plants haven't had time to become acclimated, damage can occur if there is a sudden temperature drop after a mild spell. Pay attention to weather forecasts that indicate a sudden drop. Be wary of the windchill factor. If you have wind protection on the north and west, so much the better. Large trees also provide protection.

Grant Groves wrote the following suggestions for the Newsletter of the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, July 1998.

- * If you are not using ice to protect your plants, water them well a day before expected cold.
- * Cover to prevent frost from settling. Never leave the cover on after the sun comes up.
- * Plants in containers are more susceptible than plants in the ground.
- * Less nitrogen, more potassium will increase cold hardiness.
- * In general,, the most cold hardy bromeliads come from southern Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay to Argentina.
- * Frost can be as damaging as a freeze and forms at temperatures above 32° and as high as 38°.
- * Duration of cold is as much a factor as actual temperature.

Some years ago the newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Broward County printed these additional suggestions.

1. Keep plants warm. This can be achieved by bringing them 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 by entrapment. This also allows the warm air to be stratified (warm air tends 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.

Odean Head's article "Cultural Tips: Winterizing 2004" was in the November/December Bromeliad Society/ Houston's Newsletter. (Edited)

Now is the time to make the preparations necessary to protect our plants for winter. How did we do last year? Can we repeat the same procedures? Chances are good that we have more plants to protect this year and we must determine if we can accommodate them by better utilizing our existing space or if we need to add some more. Let's look first at better utilization of space.

Vertical Growing- Since some of our plants do not require as much light as others, we can grow at different levels without sacrificing too much quality growth. First, we can build some multi-level shelves to increase usable capacity. Then we

can put up poles and attach rings that will hold plants at different levels. You will be surprised at how many more plants you can put in a space with these methods and still maintain good air circulation around them. There always seems to be a lack of good light. You can hang poles above your walkways to use that light and still have floor mobility. Of course, you may know from the beginning that you will need more space.

In organizing my collection for winterizing, I separate the plants into several groups. I want to consider their light requirements first. Since I never have enough space to accommodate all the plants that need good light I must prioritize according to desirability and stage of growth. The most important group is the special plants that will be reaching their prime in the next year or two and the clumps that have already formed. These plants will have top priority and will be placed as near as possible into their respective best light. The newly removed pups will come next and so on until the remainder of the plants regardless of their needs, get put into whatever space is left over. This is when I apologize and tell them that I hope that they won't have to stay there too long. Disposition of the mothers will depend on how special the plants are, whether they have pups or not and if I desire to further propagate them. Mothers that are still attractive will be included in the display area (but not necessarily in the best light) Leaves on most of the others that I keep will be trimmed so that they take up less room. Some of the mothers that have pups of sufficient size, and I have enough pups already, may be removed completely to give the pups more room.

Watering is more difficult when the plants are crowded but is required less frequently. How frequently will depend on the temperature. Maybe once a week when it is warm to hot and only once every two weeks or more when temperatures are cool to cold. I grow drier and never fertilize in the winter in an effort to prevent leggy growth. Remember also that the plants do not like to stay wet so it is best to water in the morning and give the plants a chance to dry before night.

Be sure and guard against hiding prize plants. Try to keep them in view so that their needs are not overlooked. Also determine which plants in your collection are the most cold sensitive so that you can take extra precautions during extremely cold days.

At the Conference in San Diego, I found a company Sierra Rose Creations which makes very nice plant stands and hangers. Hangers are made from Aluminium which will not harm the bromeliads. And genuine California Redwood bottom. 3/4 inch Electrical conduit pipe.



The San Diego Blade Newsletter had a picture of their 2013 Bromeliad Christmas tree.



We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and Joyous Holidays. We leave you with the following from the Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel Newspaper from December 25th, 1997.

“ A Greater Thought:

THE FORTNIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Christmas arrived with no stuff to unwrap,
No gadgets or gizmos or other such crap.
But this was not a Christmas in which to be sad,
As the best gift of all, is one we already had.
It's a smile and a hug that brings us true joy,
And lasts a lot longer than any gizmo or toy.
So turn to a loved one, whether nearby or far
And tell them a loved one is just what they are!

Don't forget to renew your membership now, if you haven't already.

Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago Membership Application

(New Member) (Renewal)

Chose one below

Individual \$5.00 Annually Dual \$8.00 Annually

Name _____ Phone Number (_____) _____

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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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