



# BromeliAdvisory

**July 2011**

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What	Who
Sales Table	Antonio Arbelaez

**JULY 19 2011 @ 7 :30 PM**

Speaker: Joe Libertucci and Jeff Hutchinson will speak about landscaping of bromeliads – “How Not to Grow Bromeliads.”

RAFFLE TABLE: Raymar Rodriguez

FOOD TABLE: Usual suspects or Urszula Dudek  
 Lenny Goldstein Barbara Partagas

JOE LIBERTUCCI is a the past president of the Bromeliad Society of the Pam Beaches f/k/a Boca Raton Bromeliad Society. If you are long on cash and can't wait to see these two – on July 16, 2011 Mounts hosts a JEFF HUTCHINSON and Joe Libertucci workshop discussing the basics of bromeliad culture – focusing on the natural, epiphytic tendencies of multiple bromeliads. They will demonstrate various mounting techniques using driftwood, trees, rocks, and the use of containers.

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Now we are on facebook with two pages for your pleasure.

## President's Message

by Carl Bauer

The goal of our Society is "To educate ourselves and others in the preservation and propagation of the bromeliad".

That statement is a reminder of what the BSSF is all about. We hope you are getting what you need to know at our monthly meetings and activities, but please don't hesitate to discuss your hobby[passion] with friends and neighbors to "spread the word". I often find myself engaged in conversations, talking about bromeliads, while in the barber shop, while in stores, and when I am at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

Bring folks to our meetings. You know they are welcome and friendly members will be glad to socialize.

Finally, it is hurricane season again and we need to be prepared. There is plenty of good advice out there and most of us have been through the experience-it is tough!

Plan ahead and be ready.

Carl Bauer

## Garden Notes - June 2011

by Alan Herndon

Summer has officially arrived according to the calendar, and our bromeliads are growing like crazy. We started getting more-or-less typical summer rains in mid-June, meaning our plants no longer have to subsist on our pathetic attempts to keep them properly watered. Naturally, the weeds have also benefitted from the summer rains, and I anticipate spending the next several months in a losing battle to control unwanted vegetation among the bromeliads..

*Aechmea chantinii* is still producing new blooms in numbers. A somewhat distant relative of *Aechmea chantinii*, *Aechmea tillandsioides* is also blooming, but this is one of the few-leaved, fast growing species that will typically bloom two or more times during the year. *Aechmea tillandsioides* is notable for being one of the bromeliads that typically produces seed in the absence of pollinators. Watch a blooming plant, and you will find that all of the fruit mature and contain viable seed. Independence from pollinators is a highly useful characteristic to have when colonizing new lands, and it is no surprise that *Aechmea tillandsioides* is the most widely distributed species in the *Platyachmea* group. Various clones of *Aechmea fasciata*, a species that has been included in the *Platyachmea* group in the past on grounds that no longer appear compelling, are blooming. This month, *Aechmea*

*nudicaulis* 'Telephone Hill', a red-leaved clone collected by John Anderson, bloomed. *Aechmea correia-araujoi*, a close relative of *Aechmea orlandiana* is blooming. Other members of the complex bloomed earlier in the year, but *Aechmea correia-araujoi* seems to consistently bloom later. An uncommon species, *Aechmea mollis*, is also in bloom. Members of the *Gravisia* complex (relatives of *Aechmea blanchetiana* and *Aechmea mulfordii*) are either in bloom or in bud. *Aechmea lactifera*, *Aechmea mulfordii* (the dark leaved clone called 'Malvo') and *Aechmea werdermannii* all have open flowers with several more species to come.

All 3 species of *Alcantarea*: *Alcantarea vinicolor*, *Alcantarea glaziouana* and *Alcantarea imperialis* are still blooming for me. These plants will typically bloom for months, even though by this time it appears they only have a few flower buds remaining. Flowering becomes less frequent in these later stages, but new flower buds form at the tips of the inflorescence branches almost as fast as flowers open. *Alcantarea vinicolor* and *Alcantarea glaziouana* typically produce offsets near the center of the mother plant. If these pups are allowed to grow as large as possible before harvest, you can look forward to a repeat bloom in a few years rather than decades. Your major concern is that the mother plant eventually starts to rot down from the crown. If this rot reaches the pups before you do, it will kill them. You should obviously inspect plants on a frequent basis between the time the pups first start growing and the time they are harvested.

One unusual plant now in bloom is *Canistrum pickelii*. This species was originally described in *Portea*, but the inflorescence is more easily derived by stretching out a typical *Canistrum* inflorescence than from any *Portea* inflorescence I know of. Also, *Canistrum seidelii* are finally at the end of their flowering period.



*Canistrum seidelianum*  
Photo by Michael Andreas  
Courtesy FCBS.

*Edmundoa ambigua*, a species not yet widespread in cultivation also began to bloom during this month. All *Edmundoa* species I have had bloom produced flowers over several months. For the last half of the blooming period, the bloom often looks finished only to have a few new flowers pop out of the head every so often.

Among the species of *Hohenbergia* blooming now is a less well known species with considerable horticultural potential. *Hohenbergia lemei* is on the small side, with red leaves and the bottle shaped rosette common among the smaller species. The inflorescence, unfortunately, is less than spectacular and can't be said to add much to the appearance of

the plant.

We can grow only a few of the species from *Neoregelia* subgenus *Hylaeicum* in our area without resorting to extreme measures, but among those we can grow easily: *Neoregelia rosea* and *Neoregelia pendula* var *brevifolia* are coming into bloom.

Species of *Nidularium* are still blooming in numbers although more species seem to be in bud than in flower at the moment. *Nidularium procerum*, *Nidularium angustifolium* and/or *Nidularium augustibracteatum* have open flowers. The last two species are very similar in appearance.

Blooming is still rampant among species of *Orthophytum*. Members of the *Orthophytum disjunctum* complex are putting on offsets that almost instantly transform into blooming plants. I have more than one case where the original mother plant is still in bloom even as the offset begins to flower. In contrast to the more typical members of the *Orthophytum amoenum* complex, my *Orthophytum zanonii* appears headed for a months-long flowering period. In species such as *Orthophytum navioides*, *Orthophytum albopictum*, *Orthophytum burle-marxii* and *Orthophytum roseum*, the time between the opening of the first flowers and the closing of the last flowers is typically no more than a month.

Only two species of *Puya* grow well in our area. One of them, *Puya laxa*, is in flower now. The very succulent, furry leaves endear this plant to succulent lovers. The flowers are quite different from other bromeliad flowers we are used to. The petals are mostly blue with a green midstripe that is narrow near the tip but broadens out lower down the petal.

My two red *Tillandsia concolor* are still flowering. The red on the leaves has faded some, although the bloom spikes are still much more colorful than I usually see with this species. The loss of leaf color is undoubtedly explained by the extra fertilizer added to the plants, in an attempt to increase the number of offsets. *Tillandsia schatzlii* finished flowering this month. A few members of *Tillandsia* subgenus *Anoplophytum* are still in bloom. *Tillandsia buchlohii* is in bloom. It is not so easy to tell *Tillandsia buchlohii* from *Tillandsia nowackii* when faced with non-blooming plants, but the branches on the inflorescence of *Tillandsia buchlohii* are basically straight and considerably redder than the curved branches of *Tillandsia*



*Tillandsia concolor*  
Photo by Frank Sherman  
Courtesy of FCBS

*nowackii*. *Tillandsia jalisco-monticola* is in bloom. *Tillandsia limbata*, a close relative of the native *Tillandsia utriculata*, is blooming. Another close relative of *Tillandsia utriculata* in bloom is *Tillandsia albida*. The relationship between these two species might not be apparent on casual inspection since the plants differ greatly in appearance (*albida* is silvery) and growth habit (*albida* is caulescent), but the flower spike on *Tillandsia albida* is similar to a single branch on *Tillandsia utriculata* in many ways. I only have a single *Tillandsia albida* in bloom, so I can't say this is a primary blooming period.

Many *Vriesea* species are still in bud or in bloom right now. Still in bloom are from last month are *Vriesea ensiformis*, *Vriesea incurvata*, *Vriesea procera* and *Vriesea malzini*.. A very welcome addition to the blooming lineup is *Vriesea erythrodactylon*. Not just any *Vriesea erythrodactylon*, but the large clone with the yellow band running down the center of the inflorescence introduced to southern Florida growers by Nat DeLeon some 50 years ago.

Remember \_ we typically have a 2-3 week dry period sometime during July/August. The combination of high temperatures and drought (however short-lived) can quickly wreak havoc on plants that are growing rapidly, so you need to be on the lookout for any sign of water stress. You may have to water a few times to get your plants through this period, but your garden will repay you many times over.

## Preparing for Multiple Shows

by Alan Herndon

We are currently faced with the unaccustomed prospect of preparing plants for more than one show at the same time. Unfortunately, these shows are separated by enough time that you will have to set aside different plants for each show.

You don't need to worry about the Bromeliad Extravaganza (first weekend in November 2011) unless you feel like entering one or more *Cryptanthus* in the Cryptanthus Society Show. If so inclined, you should already have your plants set aside and growing. If you have a good-looking large pup, it is worth a try to put it in its own pot as soon as possible. You may still have time to grow a show-worthy plant if you take maximum advantage of the prime growing weather we will have over the next few months. The general rules for growing show plants are the same with *Cryptanthus* as for most other bromeliads, with the exception that *Cryptanthus* are less tolerant of inconsistent watering. Primarily, you want to give your potential show plants enough room.

Ideally, they should be able to grow without interference from the foliage of any adjoining plant. In particular, keep leaves of adjoining plants from touching if at all possible. Perhaps you can convince yourself of the necessity for this practice if you think of the damage a spiny leaf margin can do to your unprotected hand or arm. How could you even contemplate subjecting a potential prize-winning plant to the same kind of damage? You don't have severe problems with the build-up of detritus in the leaf axils of *Cryptanthus*, but it is a good idea to inspect your plants regularly and keep foreign objects off the upper surface of the plant. This will avoid potential problems such as uneven color development due to shading later on.

If you want to go the extra mile, you can rotate your plants by a quarter turn every week to encourage a more even color distribution in the leaves. Also, don't forget that the *Cryptanthus* Society Show includes artistic sections. If you have an idea for the perfect Artistic Arrangement or Decorative Container combination, by all means enter it in the show.

Our BSSF Annual Show in April 2012 will come in April next year. We can only guess whether there will be 1 month of spring growth or 3 months of spring growth between now and then, so don't depend on growing something for the show in spring. Your show plants should already be set aside. You want to take advantage of the summer growing season to produce large plants (size does make a difference in judging) and then take advantage of the natural slowdown in growth during the winter months to bring out the best colors in your plants.

The show at the World Bromeliad Conference (WBC) in Sep 2012 will be something new for us. You won't have the same species in flower at that time of year that we normally have for our show. Of course, this won't matter if you enter non-blooming plants, but you could just as well grow some of the species that typically bloom in late summer for us. Go through What's in Bloom for the Aug-Oct period in 2009 and 2010 to see what plants are likely to bloom at the appropriate time.

You should be aware that your entries may be classified in a very different way than you are used to in our show. We will have to wait until the official WBC Show Schedule becomes available to see exactly what sections will be included and how they will be defined. Once the Show Schedule is available, you can also start mapping out a plan for capturing the Sweepstakes Award.

Be sure to pay attention to the details of the calculations for the Sweepstakes, they are likely to be much different than in our local show (requiring a

different mix of entries to maximize your chances of success). Of course, you are much ahead of the game if your plants are all grown (and groomed) to Award of Merit standards. You should also be aware that there is an active Art section in the typical WBC show. This includes paintings, glass work, tile or any other medium that an artist cares to showcase.

We need to start thinking about a suitable Society Display for the WBC. For example, with hybrids from Ralph Davis, Nat DeLeon, Gary Hendrix, and others, we would have enough material for a great display featuring the many hybrids and cultivars originating in the Miami area. Other suggestions for a BSSF Society Display are welcome. Suggest particular sets of plants that lend themselves to breathtaking display, or suggest design themes, or a combination of both. If appropriate, include a sketch of how the display would be set up. All suggestions are welcome. In any case, we need to choose a theme early in order to ensure we can grow plants in the quantities needed for the display.

Once a theme is selected, we will need help with the detailed design of the display. From this we can generate a list of the plants needed. We will ask volunteers to grow the necessary plants. In particular, we will most certainly ask our members who are especially skilled at growing large masses of the smaller, stoloniferous species to pitch in. We will also ask for volunteers to help with the construction of the display and for help with signs. Next year, we will need help transporting the material to the WBC and setting up the display. In summary, if you would like to participate in the WBC but are hesitant to put individual plants or artistic exhibits in the judged show, you should join the effort to put together our society display.

More details will be forthcoming in future months. Please help in any way you can.

## Field Trip THIS WEEKEND

The society will take a field trip to the southern hemisphere—just north of Homestead and bordering Krome Avenue. The venture will be on **July 16, 2011**. Plans are to go deep south and west and crawl back.

### STOP 1:

Start in the morning at **9:00 AM** at 28001 Southwest 197th Avenue, Homestead, FL 33030 at Bromeliad Specialties. Ron Herndon, brother of Alan, has acres upon acres of *Tillandsia* under shade. You can buy hundreds of his plants and put them all in a tote bag – and the prices cannot be beaten.

**STOP 2:**

Stelmar Gardens, 19350 SW 232nd Street, Miami, FL 33170. It is their annual SUMMERFEST. There will be approximately a dozen vendors – food and pant - at the premises, selling orchids, ferns and other tropicals, and there may even be some bromeliads there through a vendor most of you will recognize.

**STOP 3:**

Tradewinds Tropicals – Alan and Rhonda Herndon’s nursery. 16400 SW 240 St., Miami, FL. It is on a dirt road, so if you need help, call 305-484-2743. Neoregelias are abundant and affordable – bromeliad lovers’ heaven. *NOT ADDRESS IN ROSTER!!!!*

**STOP 4:**

Lori Weyrick’s eden located at 14880 SW 200 St., Miami, FL 33187. Food and drink will be provided here for those who can withstand the anticipated heat.

See you there and there and there and there.

**On the Rocks is Open July 23-4, 2011**

If you have not been to the Wilkins’ property to see the lush undergrowth of bromeliads beneath large oak trees, this weekend is your opportunity.

Only open a few times each year, the property will display numerous bromeliads to visitors, together with other tropical flora.

Time: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.  
Place: 21905 SW 157 Ave, Gould, FL 33170  
Parking: In yard – easy

**Methods to Attach Plants**

by Robert Meyer

With some exceptions, the vast majority of the bromeliads you buy can be converted from terrestrial pots to epiphytic surroundings. Plastering the plants onto trees is not so much a question of “can you?”; but, rather is an issue of “how to.” This article will review the basic methods for attaching plants to trees, and outlining the strengths and weaknesses for each. I have over 300 plants affixed to oak and palm trees in the yard, so from my experience, I hope to deliver some “good” advice.

The basic methods used by most parties are: (1) wire or coated wire; (2) electronic ties; (3) “staple” nails; (4) old nylon stockings; (5) velcro tape; and (6) adhesives such as liquid nails. Often, the adhesives work well with some of the other methods

**Wire.**

At most art stores, you can buy the metallic looking wire or green coated wire. It comes with a holder and one side will cut the wire at a desired length. Using this method can easily affix the plant on a trunk of almost any size as the variable element of cutting to length makes the wire easily adapt to large or small tree branches or trunk. The wire is also cost efficient.



It tends to require strong hands to tie tightly, and can loosen if the plant beneath shifts.

**Electrical Ties aka Cable Ties.**

At most Radio Shacks, car parts stores, and plant depots, these ties are plastic with jagged angled edges which pull into a box-like end. When pulled tight, they affix, and cannot loosen. This feature makes them better than wire for firm planting on trees. They also affix easily by a mere pull – not requiring the twisting and strong hands of wire – which often causes callouses on fingertips. They are not, however, easily adaptable for length. Although you can buy a jar with numerous sizes, sometimes the different sizes will not match with one another, and a large trunk could easily require 4-5 of the lengthier ties in the container. That is not cost effective.



**Staple Nails aka Fence Staple Nails.**

At any hardware store, these items are great for a small plant which needs a quick attachment to a sturdy tree. Others have told me of their dislike of attaching nails to their palms. I have done with thin Veitchias – having a diameter of no more than 4 inches – and have seen no problems. Knock the nail in enough to hold the plant – deep setting in of the nail is neither necessary and could be catastrophic. Use whenever you can, but use with a light hammer touch.



**Nylon Stockings.**

I won’t ask you where you get yours, if you do not ask me where I get mine. The ability of this material to stretch cannot cease to amaze me. One leg’s length can encircle a 40-year old oak. The material can be cut for shorter items. And, it is easily tied, not callousing the hand like the wires tend to do. And, as the plant matures and nestles its roots into the host tree, the nylon will slowly disappear with

its own deterioration, making the transition seem both natural and efficient.

### Velcro Tape.

Bought at any plant depot or many office stores and hardware stores, this tape was originally made for plant people. Since then, computer people use them to tie chords, etc. It is green (now in bright pink and other colors for inside users), so may not be visible if in a jungle. It has a smooth side and a velcro side. Put the velcro side on the inside, so the elements do not affect it, and affix to branches. It is not very strong, and will release within about a year's time. But, the price is right, and great for small projects on small branches.



### Adhesives.

Liquid nails, Gorilla Glue, and super glue. Buy at any hardware store. I prefer Liquid Nails in the tube – as it will probably not work well a second time, I use the entire tube with one walk about the yard with 20 projects anticipated. Often, you have to hold with the plant for minutes while the glue sets. I hate this, so I use the wire or velcro tape to do the holding for me. If they fall off months or years later, I am not worried as the glue should still hold the plant in place. The glue, however, when used outdoors, will not be permanent, and the plant hopefully affixes with roots before the glue's life ends.

So, with such variation, what do you do?

**BIG PROJECTS TO GO AROUND A LARGE TRUNK:** Nylons are best. Electrical ties are second best. Others are too weak. Also see vertical projects below, as alternative method.

**PROJECTS TO GO AROUND SMALL TRUNKS:** If one electrical tie can be large enough, they are the best. If more than three electrical ties are needed, I prefer nylons.

**PROJECTS FOR BIGGER BRANCHES:** Electrical Ties are best. Wire can also be good.

**PROJECTS FOR SMALLER BRANCHES:** Small electrical ties, wire or velcro tape are all good.

**VERTICAL PROJECTS ON TREE TRUNKS:** I use glue and staple nails for small plants. I use two staple nails and ties for bigger projects. I put a nail (vertical – that is with prong going north-south on the tree) on each side of where plant will be laid, then put the plant between the nails, then thread the electrical tape through the staple nails (under the plant) and then around the outside of the plant, pull the tie until it is tight, and leave on tree.

Personal Notes: Nothing beats the nylons. If I had eight wives (ha ha) who wore nylons every day and each regularly snarled their leggings, I would never buy the other items. But, no one in the house wears nylons, so I have no such supply. And, remember that the place you put the vertical plants is not under the large and commonly falling fronds of Foxtail, Royal, Bismark or similarly heavy palms.

Pricing notes – below is a list of prices I have found:

Item	Price	What you Get
Wire	\$5	250 feet
Electrical Ties	\$3-5	100 ties
Staple Nails	\$2-5	90 per pound (pay whatever you need)
Nylon Stockings	Free	Beg
Velcro Tape	\$5	30 feet to 45 feet
Adhesives	\$5 tube \$2 Caulk Gun	2.5 oz. 4 oz. or 10 oz.

## Growing *Nidularium*

by Alan Herndon

Species of *Nidularium* are typically found as epiphytes in the lower levels of Brazilian forests. They grow quite happily in low light levels, although, if you want to grow them for the show table, the best conformation is reached with 70% shade.



*Nidularium atalaiaense*  
Photo by Matthias Asmus  
Courtesy of FCBS.

*Nidularium fulgens* and *Nidularium atalaiaense* will both tolerate more light than other *Nidularium* species, usually growing happily under 50% shade. This year, however, both are showing heat stress under 50% shade due to the

brutally hot and dry spell we lived through for a few weeks before the summer rains started.

The inflorescence of *Nidularium* is either nestled among the inner leaves of the rosette or only slightly elevated above the rosette.. (*Nidularium seidelii* and several other species that appear to contradict this statement are now considered to belong in the genus *Canistropsis*.) The most conspicuous feature of the inflorescence are the colorful primary bracts that resemble, in some cases, a bird nest.

Among the many features that will endear them to gardeners, *Nidularium* species mostly have inconspicuous and innocuous spines along the leaf edges. In the *Nidularium fulgens* complex, the spines are formidable in appearance, but pose much less risk to life and limb than spines on the leaf

edges of (say) *Neoregelia*. Species of *Nidularium* are also known for cold-hardiness. We don't expect them to be harmed by brief periods of freezing temperature.

Species of *Nidularium* range in size from *Nidularium jonesianum*, flowering at barely two inches across, to the larger clones of *Nidularium innocentii* and the large clone of *Nidularium procerum*, originally known as *Nidularium insulanum*, that can be 3 foot across. Leaf color varies widely. Many of the species have glossy green leaves that may be light or dark and, in some species, contain small, scattered darker 'dots'. Others are only known with leaves having a more-or-less red tint. In several of the species, however, we find different clones with different of leaf colors. *Nidularium krisgreenii* and *Nidularium longiflorum*, for instance, come with either green or red leaves. *Nidularium innocentii* comes in clones with green or red leaves and a range of shades in between.

Most *Nidularium* species are quite easy to grow in our area under the same conditions that are suitable for *Neoregelia* species (excepting, of course, the need for lower light levels.) Being epiphytes by nature, they tolerate certain amount of drought, although they prefer conditions more humid than the typical *Neoregelia*.

*Nidularium rutilans* is probably the most widely grown species (usually sold under the name



*Nidularium rutilans*  
Photo by Derek Butcher  
Courtesy of FCBS.

*Nidularium regelioides* in years past, and probably still so labeled in many cases). This species comes in a wide variety of disguises if you just consider the leaves. The most commonly grown clone historically had glossy green leaves with

very inconspicuous marginal spines and spots of slightly darker green scattered throughout the leaf blade. These leaves were rarely more than 1 1/4 inches wide. A similar clone with the dark spots especially well-developed (to the point of appearing brown) was grown as *Nidularium leprosum*. *Nidularium* 'Sao Paulo', an early import from Brazil by Nat DeLeon is an especially large (leaves typically 2 inches wide) and elegant clone of *Nidularium rutilans*. In all cases, the inflorescence is nestled in the rosette of leaves. Primary bracts surrounding the flowers are a light red. The flower petals are a darker red. Stolons are short in all clones, so the plants tend to clump.

*Nidularium fulgens* was another species available to collectors in this country at an early date. As noted above, the marginal spines on the leaves of this species are quite impressive; they are light in

color and up to about 1/8 inch in length. The leaf is shiny, light green with many darker green spots scattered around the blade. The inflorescence is nestled at the top of the rosette. Primary bracts are usually red and the flower petals are white near the base with dark violet tips. There is also a clone in circulation with bracts that are nearer orange in color. Spines as large on those seen on the leaves edge the bracts.

Various clones of *Nidularium innocentii* were also found in our collections at an early date. The primary distinction was between red leaved and green leaved plants, but there were also large clones



*Nidularium innocentii*  
Photo by Dorothy Berg  
Courtesy of FCBS.

and small clones. In all cases, the leaves have very small spines (they may be easier to feel than see) densely set along their margins and a matte, rather than glossy, surface. The inflorescence is nestled in the rosette and, can be entirely red or have

varying portions of the bracts green. On first impression, the flower petals appear to be entirely bright white. On closer examination you see that they are green for a short distance above the base before abruptly turning white.. Two of the finest clones available in our area came through the collection of Life Member Bob Work. The first is a large clone with green leaves collected near Periube. The second is a medium size clone with 'red' leaves collected in Parapiacaba. Not only does this clone have the red leaf color, it is also striated with fine white lines when grown under moderately stressful conditions.

If this or subsequent articles on *Nidularium* leave you wanting more information, you should purchase Elton Leme's recent book on the subject. The book is not cheap, but it will supply much more detailed information than I could ever fit in a few pages. Contact Karl Green, who sponsored publication of the book, for more information.

## Murder in Corbin A

© by Robert Meyer

PREVIOUS CHAPTERS MAY BE SEEN IN  
<http://www.bssf-miami.org/>

### 26.

The next day was full of calls to the station about the judge's death and numerous leaks of who may be the murderer. First numbers of anonymous callers revealed ill happenings about his days on the criminal bench. These calls tapered and new anonymous callers seemingly were from enemies on the domestic bench. Then more calls came about his business ventures. And, like an unwatched child, it was not the noise that caught Boss's

attention – instead it was the silence that alerted him.

No one called about the bromeliads. No one called about how there may be a relation. At this juncture, forensics were told to make several reviews of the body to see how many different ways this death compared, paralleled or mirrored that of Bea. This order came not from the top, but from the lowest person – Boss. His instinct told him this crime was committed by the same hand. But, who or what?

Boss only remembered the judge telling him that Bea, “was no normal member. She was a seller of rare species. She dealt with traders and importers – some legal and some not legal.” Now, Boss knew more about this trade, but not nearly as much as he wanted. He had listened to no less than four pitchers of Miller Lite regarding the conquests south of the border by Linares’ former husband. Something about that man bothered Boss. And, whenever something bothered him, he knew good reason existed for that instinctive feeling.

He again called Linares, this time to ask if she felt better.

“Oh, I am better. But, I am still in shock. No one, and I mean no one, would hurt a hair on the head of that man.” The detective kept confidential that more than 100 calls had been received that day about more than 300 suspects who would do a lot more than touch a hair on the judge’s scalp. She may have received good treatment, but apparently others felt less well received.

“Well, if there is anything I can do for you, please call. I am always a ring, maybe two, away from your voice – you now that right?”

“Oh, I know that; and, I will likely call. But, at this time, I will just mourn a little more. You understand.” And, he did. And he didn’t.

Linking these two homicides was next to impossible until the plant trade was learned. And, as he previously discovered, getting to know the trade was easiest learned by becoming part of the trade. So, Boss called Bill Marin and asked if they could meet at Virginia Key’s Raceway called the “Key” sometime soon.

“Sure. I have all the time in the world. Anytime would be great. What is good for you?”

“You name it and I can be there.”

“One hour at the Key. See you there.”

Knowing that this was going to be too much to handle in too little time, Boss called for Marlene. When she hopped to his desk, he asked what she knew about selling in rare species.

“Me? Nothing. Bill Marin is all I know. Why ask?”

“I am meeting him in an hour to make a trade. Any suggestions?” Boss was desperate.

“Hmm. I have heard about one exotic that no one has seen, but they talk about it. *Alcantarea imperialis variegated*. A monster plant. Taller than a basketball player, most incredible bloom. Rarely does bloom. Spectacular for show. Worth hundred without variegation – probably no less than \$750 for the variegated.”

“Want to come for the ride?”

She nodded and smiled and responded in one motion. She was back in the saddle again. She would love to go.

## 27.

Driving down the intracoastal with a convertible is one of the great luxuries in Miami-Dade County, except when the sun oppressively carves indelible burns into the thinning hair of men with high testosterone counts. Boss, whose size limited his vehicles to specially designed makes, asked Marlene to drive with her Mustang convertible and asked that they drive with the top down.

Before they left for the rendezvous, Boss had Marlene stop at Kaplan’s Western Wear, where he bought a straw cowboy hat which marvelously fitted him. Looking more the part of plant trader or bushmaster, Boss and Marlene proceeded from Kaplan’s to the Key.

The Key to most people was a rundown, beat to death, unearthly place where sex offenders were exiled. Local laws had prohibited anyone convicted of sexual crimes from dwelling within 1500 yards of any facility which included children. That left almost all of Miami-Dade County off limits. Not a small achievement considering the county is larger than the state of Delaware. The people were provided food stamps and welfare money, which would not cover the standard poverty level line in the county. And, because of the laws which denied them the rights to habitate in Section 8 Housing, the sex offenders lived in makeshift structures beneath the bridge that one had to cross in order to get to Key Biscayne where the Key was located. The bridge was a large structure financed through legislative efforts of former Congressman Dante Fascell who probably would turn over in his grave if he discovered that his accomplishment was the subject of political and moral scandal.

The Key was fostered a former race track. An outdoor facility with stands, it resembled a dog or horse track, but with spectators looking at water instead of dirt track. Boats would whirl at top speeds, sliding off at darting angles in their turns, and throwing long and large rooster tails behind

them as they sped before the hundreds of onlookers – each hoping to witness that once-in-a-rare-moment event called a horrific accident which somehow always provided the seemingly bone crunching and death demanding accident. But, for reasons never explained, racers always survived, sometimes burned, but rarely too hurt.

“Over here buddy.” called Marin to Boss and his companion. “Who is this with you?” Marin asked calmly and very politely.

“She is Marlene. She is my plant expert. She knows more in her little finger than I know in my whole body.”

At this time Marin looked at the little figure of Boss and said to himself that the physical dimensions between her little finger and his entire body were not as extreme as Boss implied with his statement. But, he was too mature to make a sly and undeserving comment about this observation, and responded, “Great to meet someone who knows so much. I like you already.”

“So what do you want to meet about?” Marin asked Boss.

“Plants and money, my friend. Plants and money. And, I hear you are a guru in each, especially in the combination, especially in the bromeliad world. And, I have a customer who wants to buy some *Alcanterea*. And they will pay over a thousand. And, if I receive a variegated, I bet they would top \$2,000.00. Now, all I need is the plant. That is where your name popped into mind. Can you help?”

“Now, let us see. You have a customer, who has the money, to buy a plant, which none of us can get our hands on without much difficulty. Now, you and I are to team in delivering this plant and share in the wealth – is this correct?”

“Yes.” Boss said wondering where this discussion led.

“Then what I ask is what is she doing here? I do not see her in the formula.” Marin said with steely glare.

Boss who had read so many books that he almost had an encyclopedia of pat answers for almost all events in all worlds, did not blink to such a request.

He also had seen almost all the classic movies, after reading the underlying scripts or books. And one of his favorites was *Casablanca*. And he knew what many did not know – the last line of *Casablanca* is one of the most misquoted lines in all of film history. “Marin, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.” He got it right. And then added, “She has a lot more clients than I do, my friend.”

## Coming Calendar:

July 16, 2011 – BSSF Roadtrip

July 15-17, 2011 – Summerfest at Stelmar Gardens

July 23-24 – Wilkins’ On the Rocks

July 30, 2011 – Mounts’ Repotting Lecture 10:00-1:00 – <http://www.mounts.org/>

August 20-21, 2011 – Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Sale

September 17-18, 2011 – Fairchild’s Aroid Show

October 1, 2011 – Fairchild’s Member’s Plant Sale

October 17, 2011 – Bromeliad Society of Broward County Auction – <http://www.bromeliadsocietybc.com/>

October 23-4, 2011 – Broward County Plant Affair

October 28, 2011 – Delray Beach Orchid Show – <http://www.delraybeachorchidsociety.com/>

November 4-6, 2011 – Extravaganza – <http://theartofbromeliads.wordpress.com/>

November 11, 2011 – Fairchild 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Ramble

December 2-3, 2011 – Caloosahatchee Show and Sale – [DrLarry@comcast.net](mailto:DrLarry@comcast.net)

December 3-4, 2011 – Bonnet House Museum 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Fair – <http://www.bonnethouse.org/>

March 24, 2012 – Garden Fest Bromeliad Society of Broward County – <http://www.bromeliadsocietybc.com/>

September 24-October 1, 2012 – 2012 Bromeliad Society International World Bromeliad Conference – [betsymccrory@aol.com](mailto:betsymccrory@aol.com)  
<http://www.bsi.org/events/2012/Orlando2012.html>  
<http://www.thecaribeorlando.com/caribe-royale/>

