



BromeliAdvisory

December 2009
BSSF Officers 2009
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<http://www.bssf-miami.org/>

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What	Who
Sales Table	Antonio Arbelaez (off)

DECEMBER 1, 2009, 7:30 PM

SPEAKER: NONE – this is our annual Holiday Feast
FOOD: It will be there – and this is a pot luck, so everyone will need to participate
RAFFLE TABLE: NONE – but there is a plant exchange

The Feast

RULES: If you wrap a plant and bring it to the feast, you get to choose a wrapped plant.

RULES: In order to eat, you need to bring a dish.

RULES: Guests come, but must pay.

RULES: Surprises will be there.

RULES: BYOB – and if you bring enough this may be as memorable as the pipe-blasting incident of 2008.

RULES: Location is FTBG, not Judy's this year.



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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

by Robert Meyer

Ron Cave delivered his speech regarding the evil weevil – hayslip. First found in Vera Cruz nursery, Florida received the parasite in 1989. Hayslip was discovered in Fort Lauderdale and has moved extensively throughout the state as it is a good flyer. Now, it inhabits 23 Florida counties, the newest being Volusia.

Of the 16 native bromeliads, 12 have been attacked by hayslip. The problem is fast becoming chronic, and the University of Florida has engaged significant efforts to stop and hopefully emasculate the parasite.



lixadmontia franki

The cheap battle is through biological control – sprays are too expensive. A 4-part biological control formula was started at the university: (1) look for source; (2) find its natural enemy; (3) get an license to import the enemy; and (4) study the imported enemy before implementation

After study, the discovered predator is *lixadmontia franki*. This fly only attacks the evil weevil, and that particular characteristic made it most accommodating for the task.

After successive study, and the fly was chosen, 50 adult flies were set free at Northwest Equestrian Park in Hillsborough County to eat the larvae of hayslip.

The fly was to go into the decaying plant where the impregnated evil weevil lay, search within the neonatal maggots, burrow into the body of the grub, and feed off the succulent interior of the evil weevil – a slow process which kills the eggs and permits the host to live for a significant period of time – best of all worlds for this biological control.

June 29, 2007 was the first release. The first release discovered success with a hit on the target. It has never worked since.

But the project goes on as the data for results may be prematurely calculated as the flies need time to find their grub. Other factors also need review. And, hence the university will continue to strive on this predator's prowess.

Prof. Cave also spoke about other natural predators used for similar issues for other plants. The engagements often met with success, hence providing hope that this bromeliad project may follow the successful path delivered in aid of other flora.

We shall see. And pray.

What's in Bloom - November 2009

by Alan Herndon

Blooming is still slow, but we are beginning to see the species that bloomed last winter beginning to reappear. *Portea alatisepala* is the first of several *Portea* species we can expect to see bloom over the next several months. Likewise, all forms of *Aechmea orlandiana* and *Aechmea weilbachii* are likely to be in bloom soon. There is every reason to believe that I will record at least one *Aechmea chantinii* plant in bloom throughout the entire year. In fact, despite having hundreds of *Aechmea chantinii* plants large enough to bloom, I don't believe there are more than 2 blooming on the property right now.

One error in the October list needs to be corrected. *Tillandsia vernicosa* began to bloom in October, but was unaccountably listed as *Tillandsia aeranthos*. The two species look nothing alike: *Tillandsia aeranthos* has an unbranched inflorescence in contrast to the strongly branched *Tillandsia vernicosa*.

Aechmea (*angustifolia*, *blanchetiana*, *calyculata*, *chantinii*, *echinatus*, *fulgens discolor*, *glandulosa*, *gracilis*, *kuntzeana*, Little Harv, *mulfordii* (red leaf form), *nudicaulis*, *recurvata benrathii*, Victoria, *weilbachii viridisepala*)

Billbergia pyramidalis

Catopsis compacta (= *berteroana*)

Cryptanthus colnagoi, *warren-loosei*)

Guzmania fusispica*, *sanguinea*, *sanguinea brevipedicellata

Hohenbergia distans)

Neoregelia (***ampullacea***, *compacta*, Fireball, *myrmecophila*, *rosea*, Sheba, Ultima)

Nidularium (*angustibracteatum*, ***angustifolia***, *apiculata*, *krisgreenii*, ***procerum***)

Orthophytum (*disjuncta*, *duartei*, *grossiorum*,

harleyi, *hatschbachii*, *lymaniana*,
vagans)

Pitcairnia (*albiflos*, *armata*, *echinata vallisensis*,
flammea, *imbricata*)

Portea alatisepala

Quesnelia imbricata

Tillandsia (*chiapensis*, *ionantha*, *fasciculata*,
fasciculata clavispica, *lindenii*, *tricolor*
melanocrater, *vernica*)

Vriesea (*bleheri*, *carinata*, *ensiformis*,
fluminensis, *gradata*, *Mariae*,
triligulata)

Clone preservation project update - November 2009

by Alan Herndon

This month I would like to offer a very preliminary review the *Neoregelia johannis* complex. I don't have enough material to pretend I can solve any of the problems in the complex, but I hope that the information I can offer will inspire others to share additional information.

Neoregelia johannis and its relatives are typically large plants. They can have leaves to 9 cm (3.5") wide and up to 50 cm (20") long. Of course, a pup from a large plant may bloom at a much smaller size than the parent, especially if it is one of the last pups. Leaves on these small bloomers are still relatively wide compared to other *Neoregelia* complexes. Offsets are produced on thick stolons that are short, so the new offsets arise from under the leaves of the mother plant, forming dense clumps if not removed. There is no coloring of the inner leaves and leaf bases associated with blooming. Leaf margins are well armed with spines that are sharply curved towards the tip of the leaf. These spines are dark, but not always conspicuous due to their relatively small size. An outstanding characteristic of the complex is that the young inflorescence fills only part of the broad, shallow central cup of the plant. At about half-size, the inflorescence is conspicuous, but only half the width of the cup. When flowers start to open, the inflorescence is still surrounded by a ring of open water. In my experience, the inflorescences eventually fill the cup as they age.



Neo.
Macwilliamsii.
Photo by
Derek Butcher
courtesy of
FCBS

(In all other *Neoregelia* complexes, the inflorescence expands to completely fill the cup at a very early stage. You are unlikely to ever see the inflorescence before this stage.) In the *Neo johannis* complex, bracts enveloping the inflorescence are large but inconspicuously colored (light green to white) and remaining well below the flowers from an early stage. *Neoregelia johannis* also has stiff floral bracts with narrow, tapering tips that nearly reach the top of the sepals. Petals are usually white (see exception below), only slightly extended beyond the sepals and with tips that spread only slightly.



Two characters of the mature fruit are noteworthy. First, the mature, seed-containing fruit are bright red. Ovaries on barren flowers never mature and remain white until they brown with age. Unless you live in a area with active pollinators adapted to this plant, you will need to cross-pollinate between two different clones to see this.

Neo johannis. Photo by
Dorothy Berg courtesy of
FCBS.

In addition, the red fruits will not be visible until you start actively searching for them, spreading the flowers and bracts to get a view of the underlying ovaries and fruit. (Red fruit are not unique to the *Neoregelia johannis* complex. They also occur, at least, in *Neoregelia macwilliamsii*.) Second, the mature fruit are relatively slender. They are 3 to 4 times as long as wide. (In most *Neoregelia* species, the fruits expand greatly in width during fruit maturation, ending up about 2 times as long as wide, so the floral bracts are spread and the top of a mature fruit is readily visible from above.)

There are three widely cultivated clones. *Neoregelia johannis* 'Fairchild' is characterized by primarily green leaves and was introduced by Dean Fairchild. With age, the leaves develop a light to dark red coloration starting at the tips and moving progressively inward. *Neo johannis* 'DeRolf' is a variegated clone collected by Larry DeRolf in Brazil. Without variegation, the plants look very much like 'Fairchild'. Still rare in cultivation is a clone obtained by

Karl Green from Roberto Menescal that has leaves more evenly suffused with a red color throughout the life cycle. Additionally, the color is more translucent than the red color on the leaves of 'Fairchild'. This plant, collected in the state (not city) of Rio de Janeiro, also differs in having light violet petals. Otherwise, it is virtually identical to 'Fairchild'.

Neoregelia correia-araujoi is currently recognized as a distinct species, but could just as well be considered a clone of *Neoregelia johannis* that has leaves mottled red and green. The inflorescences are not noticeably different



between the two species. At least two clones are widely cultivated. I got one clone from Michael Kiehl as *Neo cruenta* x *marmorata*. Presumably, this has been in cultivation for many decades. The other clone (with superior leaf coloration) I have gotten from several sources (including Michael Kiehl). Originally, it came from the garden of the Brazilian collector Luiz K. Correia de Araujo. Bob Work first brought this clone to southern Florida.

Neo. Correia-araujoi
Photo by Lisa Vinzant
courtesy of FCBS

Karl Green has another clone, probably from Wally Berg. This plant lost the red leaf mottling almost entirely under his growing conditions, but it has recently regained some of the leaf color. I also have (from Moyna Prince) a small plant collected by Larry DeRolf that is presumably a *Neoregelia correia-araujoi* clone. It has the same leaf markings as the larger plants, but I am still waiting to see it bloom.

As noted above, *Neoregelia correia-araujoi* was treated as a hybrid for many years in the US market (usually *marmorata* x *cruenta*). This question has been examined by Derek Butcher recently (Bromeliaceae (Bromeliad Society of Queensland) 51(4):42-45. 2007 also reprinted in Bromeliad (Journal of the New Zealand Bromeliad Society) 49(7): 12-13 (with the addition of a photo of a spectacularly colored specimen), although he did not offer any definitive conclusion. There is no obvious reason to consider *Neoregelia correia-araujoi* a hybrid. There is similarity between the leaf markings on *Neo marmorata* and *Neo correia-*

araujoi, and that, along with the suspicion that always attends a plant described from cultivation, seems to be the only evidence for hybrid status. (It is worth noting that *Neoregelia rubrovittata* has a similar pattern of leaf markings.) Against this is the essential identity between the inflorescences, flowers and leaf structure of *Neo correia-araujoi* and *Neo johannis*. In addition, it has been noted in Hawaii and Australia (and I can confirm based on my own seedlings) that plants indistinguishable from *Neo johannis* 'Fairchild' can be found among seedlings from a cross between two clones of *Neo correia-araujoi*.

As a final note on the complex, I would like to note that *Neoregelia cathcartii* seems to belong to the *Neoregelia johannis* complex. The inflorescence of *Neoregelia cathcartii* has the same relative size, floral bracts, sepals and petals as those in the *Neoregelia johannis* complex, although *Neoregelia cathcartii* is a smaller plant with narrower leaves. (I am assuming, of course, that the plant is correctly named in our collections.)



Neo cathcartii Photo by
Derek Butcher courtesy
of FCBS.

One of the unresolved questions is what plant Mulford Foster called *Neoregelia johannis*. Nothing I have found suggests he ever had the plant now given that name. If anyone has a plant with this label that can be traced back to Foster, please let me know.

As promised, I have gone through my records for plants with BAB numbers. It turns out I have only about one-tenth of the series. I will undoubtedly find a few more plants when I have the opportunity to correlate different collection series. I may actually have many more plants that came from the series, but most of the plants I have from the Berg collection did not come with any identification numbers attached. (In a few cases, it may be possible to identify a specific plant with a BAB number, but in most cases the information is irretrievably lost. This is an example of why you should be meticulous in both collecting available information on the source of your own plants and in passing it

along with the plants.) My listing is given in a separate attachment. Please send lists of your own BAB plants, even if you think you only have common species. It is as important to know what BAB plants are widely grown as to know what are barely hanging on in cultivation.

I recently received a plant that could be traced back to the Marian Oppenheimer collection. This name, and several others, should set off alarm bells when you hear them. Any plants we can identify as coming from the early large collections will be invaluable in helping us decipher the history of bromeliads in cultivation. There were, of course, important early collections scattered throughout the warmer regions of the United States (including Hawaii) as well as Australia, New Zealand and Europe. The most important of the classic Florida collections were: Mulford and Racine Foster, Julian Nally, Morris and Helen Dexter, Ralph Davis and Ervin Wurthmann. If you have an opportunity to obtain plants that trace back to any of these collections, you should do so. Also, if you have any additions or corrections to my admittedly subjective list of important collections, please let me know. This is especially true for people with greater knowledge of areas outside of Florida.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Meyer

This year has ended already. And, that means winter, and so look to the end of this edition to see the "midwinter" article provided by Alan Herndon to best prepare your garden for the few and relatively mild assaults provided in our Zone 10.5 climate.

A new board should be coming in the year 2010 – amazing to believe we are in the second decade of the 21st century. And, like the years past, you should be expecting nothing but new concepts and novel ideas together with a strong case of speakers and common field trips of mitzvahs in the community.

In reflection of the past year, too many good events can be counted. But, what quickly comes to mind are the following.

Respondent and ever-writing Alan Herndon who contributions to this simple and relatively innocuous publication make it unique and of

great value. By including it in the web page, its lessons are easily obtained by others and can only benefit the whole – thereby accomplishing what the Articles of Incorporation of the Society request (education).

Effervescent and always on the spot Sandy Roth has provided impetus for the organization to do things this past year or two which it had not in years past. Trips to the west coast and working in the middle of the heat at the VA hospital are but a few of the items which deliver private and public perspective in a bright light.

And, during my recent allegiance with our neighboring Broward Society I discovered much and hope other will follow and make

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expa n d .
E a c h
s o c i e t y
h a s
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ges over
the other.



B u t ,
nothing is negative about that. Instead, each, when working in tandem with the other, can only make the other stronger, broader and more capable of meeting the vast needs of the ever-expanding memberships. I will renew for years to come.

And, remember to bring your plants and appetite to the holiday closer. The December meeting is the greatest feast of our year. And, always one of the highlights of the organization.

JOIN the BSSF:

Friends or Family contact Moyna Prince
at 305-251-5289

Download application sheet at:

[http://www.bssf-miami.org/membership.
htm](http://www.bssf-miami.org/membership.htm)

A Successful Auction

by Alan Herndon

Our annual auction, 2009 version, is history, and what an evening it was. BSSF made slightly over \$3,300 on the sales. Amazingly, the auction was finished in a timely fashion due to the spirited bidding and high quality of plants on the block.

Sandy Roth did her usual amazing job with the refreshment table. This is always a challenge since the auction starts half an hour earlier than our normal meetings. In addition, this year Sandy was responsible for picking up donated plants from DELEON'S BROMELIAD NURSERY. Still, with much help from **Lori Weyrick**, she had the table set up – with a Halloween theme – in time for the early arrivals. Many members provided food to fill the table.

Local commercial growers, including some who are not members of BSSF, again provided significant numbers of plants for our auction. **Steve Correale** brought in several of his highly sought-after *Tillandsia* hybrids. PLANTS IN DESIGN provided many beautiful blooming *Guzmania* hybrids. **Peter Kouchalakos** collected these plants and delivered them to the auction site. DELEON'S BROMELIAD NURSERY also provided many wonderful commercial hybrids. As noted above these plants were delivered by Sandy Roth. Lori Weyrick collected some choice landscape bromeliads from Country Garden Nursery. **Karl Green** talked BULLIS BROMELIADS out of another set of particularly choice landscape bromeliads. SUNSHINE BROMELIADS (**Jorge Rodriguez** and **Josefa Leon**) brought their superior offerings all the way from Broward for our enrichment.

Peggy Fisher and **John Lazarus** signed up bidders, assigning them numbers and numbered plates. Even bidders who came in after the auction started were signed up with speed and grace.

Due to a family emergency, Peter Kouchalakos, our favorite auctioneer, was not available. **Mike Michalski** and John Lazarus filled in admirably, with Karl Green providing color commentary on plants of particular interest.

During the auction, winning bids were recorded by Peggy Fisher, **Rhonda Herndon**, Sandy Roth

and Lori Weyrick. Members of the foursome, in addition, made sure the winning bidders and the plants they won were given matching receipts so they could be easily reunited later.

Many outstanding plants were sold at the auction. In my favorite example, **Jeri Parrish** donated one of her precious offsets from 'Jeri's Pride', a **Nat DeLeon** bigeneric hybrid. Anyone who witnessed her excitement at the show last year when Nat bestowed the name will recognize the enormity of this contribution

Patty Gonzalez and **Antonio Arbelaez** imposed order on the stream of plants passing steadily from the front of the room to the back. They made it possible for successful bidders to find their accumulated treasures easily at the end of the evening.

The all-important collection of payments was handled by **Robert Meyer** (who was also an active bidder) and **Carl Bauer**. Thanks to their efficient work, successful bidders were able to pay for and collect their prizes in short order.

In all, it was a very successful evening. Auction sales, although not reaching a record level, were considerably better than in 2008 and put us in a comfortable fiscal position for the remainder of the year. We would like to enthusiastically thank all who participated, either as a worker or bidder. We would also like to extend special thanks to the commercial growers whose donations always form the foundation for an auction we can all be proud of.

Midwinter chores

by Alan Herndon

It may seem premature to talk about midwinter before winter has even started, but our winter weather does not last long. If you don't get started now, you won't get the winter chores done before spring makes its appearance towards the middle of February. So get going. After all, the next 3 months (aside from a few stray days here and there) is the most pleasant time of year to be working in your garden.

Now is a good time to check on the plants you are preparing for the show. They have reached full size after the full summer of growth. Be sure they have adequate space to fill out and develop color during the cool months. If possible, keep each show plant away from neighboring plants. If some of the leaves on your show plant are more shaded than others, they may well end up with a different color than the remaining leaves by the time of the show. Judges, of course, prize evenness and symmetry, so you need to remove any conditions under your control that may compromise these characteristics.

If you wish to be more proactive, you could rotate your show plants on a regular basis. For instance, you could spin each plant a quarter turn clockwise every week. (Of course, you could just as well spin each plant counterclockwise. It only matters that you are consistent in the direction of turning.) This will ensure that all sides of the plant receive the same amount of light in the runup to the show, and provide the best opportunity for even color development.

It is also a good time to look for any signs of pest infestation. If there is any scale on the plants, remove it now. Growth of scale insects slows down even more during the winter months than growth of the plants, so, if you remove all visible scale now, you will have much less to deal with when making final preparations for the show.

With the cooler temperatures and start of the dry season, many of our shade trees are shedding older leaves. If your bromeliads are growing under these trees, the fallen leaves will inevitably be attracted to their cups. If you take the time now to remove the accumulated detritus, your plants will have a better opportunity to color uniformly. You will also greatly lessen the amount of time you will need to spend cleaning plants during the week before the show.

Accumulations of debris in leaf axils also provide a splendid medium for the growth of fungi and bacteria that are capable of attacking and killing bromeliad leaves. Loss of a single leaf on most bromeliads will disturb the symmetry of the rosette sufficiently to catch the jaundiced eye of the judge, so you want to keep the accumulations at bay throughout the year. It is particularly important to attend to this chore diligently during winter because our heaviest leaf fall from the canopy trees occurs during fall.

If you have been attending to your show plants since summer – Congratulations!! You are way ahead of those (including myself) who cannot put simple, sensible plans into action without massive amounts of external pressure. Keep it up for a few more months and you will be ready to shine at the show. For the rest of us, there is still room (however slim) for hope. We can probably save an hour of extra work for every 15 minutes we spend now getting our potential show plants cleaned up and set in proper conditions. I'll almost certainly be toiling many extra hours just before the show. Wiser members will take a different path and set themselves to their midwinter chores.

Barbara Partagas Tip:

The little knives used to carve pumpkins are perfect for cutting up woody stemmed bromeliads. The largest of these small knives can cut quite efficiently through a 1" stem.

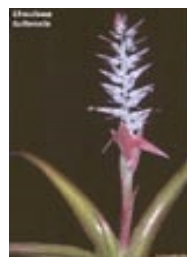
Reminders:

Food for the Holiday Party – call Sandy Roth at 305-256-7961.

If you want to order the Tillandsia book by Paul T. Isley III, contact Lori Weyrick – 305-345-4661.

Sending get well card to Tom Steinmetz? – send to 8415 Ryan Lake Dr. N.E., Stacy, Mn. 55079

Interested in Ecuador? Trip January 2010 (ORCHIDS AND BROMELIADS)
Dates: January 15-January 28, 2010
Mode: All inclusive, starting and ending in Quito for 14 days. Price: all inclusive except air fare. (min number of people = 6, max of people 11). \$2,600-\$3,300.



The plant to the left is photographed by Dorothy Berg and included in the FCBS site. Do you know the name of the plant? Winner receives prize of 1,000,000 TRL.