



**November 2010**

**BSSF Officers 2010**

**WEBPAGE:**

<http://www.bssf-miami.org/>

President      Robert Meyer  
 VP:              Pepe Donayre  
 Treasurer:     Alan Herndon  
 Secretary:     Barbara Partagas

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Past Pres.: Sandy Roth

Directors:

Nat DeLeon '10-'11  
 Rhonda Herndon '10-'11  
 Judy Pagliarulo '09-'10  
 Lori Weyrick '10

**Editor**

**Robert C Meyer**

**Door Prize: Alan Herndon**

**Education: Nat DeLeon**

**Hospitality: Elaine Mills**

**Library: Ofelia Sorzano**

**Membership: Moyna Prince**

**Member Plant Sales: Antonio Arbelaez**

**Raffle: Peter & Clara Kouchalakos**

**Refreshments: Patty Gonzalez**

What	Who
Sales Table	Antonio Arbelaez

**NOVEMBER 2, 2010, 7:30 PM**

**SPEAKER:** – Jay Thurrott will be speaking on "Preparing Your Bromeliads for the Cold."

**RAFFLE TABLE:** Jon Lazurus

**FOOD:** Ursula Dudek, Charlotte Futerfas and Joy Parrish

James (Jay) Thurrott, employed by the City of Daytona Beach for over 30 years as chief chemist [received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from SUNY Cortland] has grown bromeliads since the 1970's. A longtime and active member of the Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society (FECBS), Jay has served as secretary, vice president and president to the FECBS. Jay has also served as a representative to the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies for many years, and currently (through 2008) reigns as its president. Jay served for years on the Board of Directors for the Bromeliad Society International, is a BSI accredited bromeliad show judge, and this year became the President of BSI.



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## In Case You Missed It

by Robert Meyer

The auction we held was a total success. More thorough review of the same will be provided by Alan Herndon. The delivery of plants from various parties is most appreciated. Special thanks go to many in Alan's article, and if any names are overlooked, apologies are given.

If we make the success of this event a benchmark for future auctions, the organization will survive in the future with great economic sustainability.

## President's Message

by Robert Meyer

The auction is the annual event which delivers divergent results each year. Variables to its success include weather, election years, and economic forces. If any of the three weigh in or against the favor of purchasing plants, the outcome could mean thousands of dollars to the organization.

In this economic lull, and after years of plant protection (e.g. no great hurricane loss of inventory), the predictions for the auction were tenuous for most and pessimistic by the minority.

Generous donations by many of the plant purveyors and nurserymen of the local community, coupled with the enthusiastic support of the members of the BSSF, made this year's auction one, if not the, most successful of the organization's history.

The economic gauge of success is an easily identifiable quantified measure for the auction. But, when sitting in the back of the room and watching the participation of the membership and the distribution of interest laid across the large conference room, with different voices perching with bids in response to the honking horn of Kouchalacos's marvelous auctioneer's voice, I had to smile.

Energy and positive aura were omnipresent. The auction was success at a very important level as smiling faces and pleased purchasers left the confines of the sale with plants they wanted or needed. The organization, in a nutshell, had provided to its members an event which met the

member's needs – a response to the call and obligation of the organization.

This was a great auction. If you wish to be more involved with the events like this in the future, please read Alan Herndon's call in the article below regarding the need to include more involvement by the members.

## What's in Bloom - Oct 2010

by Alan Herndon

It has been three months since I last listed plants in bloom. This list, unfortunately, is

based entirely on a brief survey carried out around Oct 16. Any plants that finished blooming early in the month, or during the past two months, were missed completely.

Almost everything has changed since the last list was compiled.



*Aechmea chantinii*  
Photoby Bird Rock Tropicals  
Provided by FCBS –  
<http://fcbs.org/pictures.htm>

Almost all *Neoregelia* species have completely finished their blooming season. Likewise, the summer blooming species of *Aechmea*. Only species (i.e., *Aechmea chantinii*) and hybrids (i.e., *Aechmea* 'Little Harv') that can bloom in any month are still on the list. In fact, *Aechmea chantinii* has been blooming more frequently during the past few weeks than at anytime since spring. It is also important to note that the *Hohenbergia lanata* on this list has been in bloom for at least two months; the *Hohenbergia pennae* may have been in bloom for as long, but I am not certain.

Species in *Aechmea* subgenus *Ortgiesia* have started to bloom again. This seems to be at least a month earlier than they started blooming in 2009. The question now is whether the very unusual weather conditions we have suffered through during the past year will create major changes in the pattern of blooming seen during the coming year.

Also of note is the reappearance of hummingbirds in our nursery during the first week of October, followed within a few days

by the appearance of painted buntings. These birds, of course, are part of the regular fall migration. Migrants have been appearing for several weeks now. Most are just passing through, including a majority of the warblers. I have no hope of identifying most warblers unless they pose (at close range, preferably turning slowly, lifting wings, etc. to display all important field characters) for a minimum of 10 minutes, so I can be no more specific than reporting that several different warblers have passed through so far. The hummingbirds and buntings we can expect to stay around throughout the winter and well into spring.

*Aechmea* (*azureum*, *blanchetiana*, *caudata eipperii*, *chantinii*, *coelestis* (*albomarginate*), *farinosa discolor*, *gracilis*, *kleinii*, Little Harv., *phanerophlebia*, *rubens*)

*Canistropsis* (*billbergioides*)  
*Catopsis nutans* (Florida form)

*Guzmania* (*sanguinea*)

*Hohenbergia* (*lanata*, *pennae*)

*Neoregelia* (*liliputiana*, *pascoalina*, Sheba)

*Nidularium* (*angustifolium*, *ferrugineum*, *viridipetalum*)

*Orthophytum* (*compactum*, *duartei*, *grossiorum*, *harleyi*, *lymaniana*, *maracasense*, *rubiginosum*)

*Portea* (*alatisepala*)

*Tillandsia* (*chiapensis*, *cyanea*, *limbata*)

*Vriesea* (*triligulata*)

## Calling All Volunteers

by Alan Herndon

The work of this society is carried out by a group of dedicated volunteers. As the new year approaches, we once again appeal to those members of the society who are not yet fully involved in our activities to volunteer some of their time during the monthly meetings. Three areas where we especially need volunteers are briefly described below. This is not an exhaustive list of our needs, so feel free to ask if

you would like to participate in some other area.

The Raffle Table has traditionally been an entry point for new members to increase their involvement with the society. No knowledge of bromeliads is necessary. As Raffle Table chair, you are responsible for scheduling members to bring plants for the table. There are two monthly meetings (Auction and Holiday Dinner) that preempt the Raffle Table, so it is only necessary to find 10 donors. Your other duties consist of making sure supplies, including raffle tickets, are available each meeting, selling the raffle tickets and determining the winners. It is desirable to have two people carry out the final stage of the raffle: one person to manage drawings for the winners and another to deliver the plants to the winners.

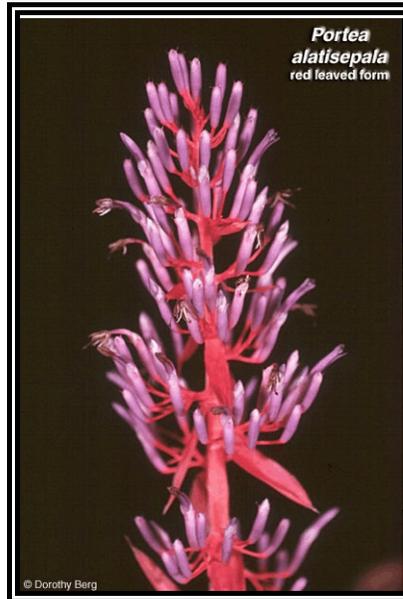


Photo by Dorothy Berg  
Provided by FCBS –  
<http://fcbs.org/pictures.htm>

BSSF has a good library of reference works pertinent to bromeliads, but we need a librarian to make this resource available to the membership.

This involves arriving early enough to open the library and being available to help members find what they need. There is also considerable room for expansion of the library into the digital age if the librarian is so inclined. Many of the new photographic compilations are published on CD. These could be viewed by the wider membership if the librarian brings in a suitably equipped laptop computer.

BSSF has not had a ‘staff’ photographer for many years. Photographs at our annual show have been taken by Lynne Fieber and Michael Schmale in recent years, but demands of their jobs have forced them to relinquish this responsibility. In any case, it would good to have a photographer who could take pictures at the general meetings (particularly beautiful plants brought in, people, etc.) for use in the Advisory in addition to a photographer who could make a permanent record of the winning plants at our annual show. Of course, both

jobs could be taken on by a single person.

If you have any interest in these, or any other positions, please let any board member know. We encourage all members to take an active role in the society and especially welcome new members who would like to be more involved.

### Another Auction Success

by Alan Herndon

In place of our regular monthly meeting, October 5<sup>th</sup> was taken up by the Annual Auction. Needless to say, this auction is the primary fundraising opportunity for BSSF, and we are pleased to report that we raised a little over \$4100. This figure is well above last years total.

The auction was held in a new venue for BSSF: the Visitor Center Ballroom at Fairchild. We were moved to this location due to an increasing shortage of parking in the lot near the Corbin Building. (As many of you know through direct experience, the parking problem near Corbin has been increasing over the past year, and shows no sign of abating. The BSSF board is assessing potential actions that we may be forced to take next year if the parking problem becomes more severe.)

We owe our greatest thanks to PETER KOUCHALAKOS for the success of the auction. He acted as auctioneer for a great majority of the plants and kept the bidding lively. In the end, he ensured that we got fair prices for the donated plants. John Lazarus stepped in as auctioneer in the middle of the proceedings to give Peter a well-deserved, if too short, rest. MIKE MICHALSKI took over at the end of the evening to clear out the remaining donations.

Members and several local nurseries supplied the plants that were the focus of often fierce bidding wars. Among members, KARL GREEN and STEVE CORREALE stand out for the number and quality of their donations. Karl, as usual, donated many species that are not easily obtained. He also took the time to explain the virtues of his plants so bidders would have sufficient information to throw a little more money in each time. Steve

donated many of his own *Tillandsia* hybrids; perennial favorites at our auction, and not available from the normal commercial sources.

BULLIS BROMELIADS donated what was undoubtedly the most impressive, as well as most massive, plant in the auction: a specimen of the *Alcantarea odorata* clone with very silvery leaves that was fully 4 feet across and just as tall. I certainly hope the winning bidder had a heavy-duty vehicle and some muscular help to move this prize. Members LEO AND MARICELA CASTRO (COUNTRY GARDEN NURSERY) donated a beautiful specimen of the hybrid *Aechmea* 'Star of Linda' that was acquired by Nat DeLeon. Only a plant of special quality could attract Nat's attention. DELEON'S BROMELIADS donated a dozen of their beautiful *Guzmania* hybrids (in assorted colors). PLANTS IN DESIGN donated "a truckload" of assorted *Guzmania* and *Vriesea* hybrids. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Karl Green who delivered the plants donated by Bullis Bromeliads, Peter and Clara Kouchalakos, who delivered the plants from Plants in Design, and LORI WEYRICK, who delivered plants from both Country Garden and DeLeon's.



Overall, there were 188 bids recorded for the night. Since several plants were sold as a single lot in several cases (especially towards the end), the number of plants donated was probably about 200. CARL BAUER spent the early part of the evening helping people bring plants up to the Ballroom. MARTHA KENT generously supplied a cart from Fairchild that made this job much easier.

In addition to the money collected, we have 3 new members to welcome. MICHAEL RAY'S application arrived through the mail one day before the auction. JUANITA BAYARD and YVETTE BETANCOURT joined at the auction. Juanita is a returning member (some of you may remember her from 3-4 years ago). We hope to see these members at our upcoming meetings and activities.

Many other people also contributed to the success of the auction. SANDY ROTH, JUDY PAGLIARULO and Lori Weyrick did their usual outstanding job of setting up the food table for the crowd (with help from many members who donated their own special edibles). PEGGY FISHER, RHONDA HERNDON, Judy Pagliarulo and Lori Weyrick worked as runners to deliver plants to the holding area and bid sheets to the appropriate persons. ANTONIO ARBELAEZ and JOSE SERRA attempted to contain the inevitable chaos as plants flowed into the holding area, and then both in and out of the holding area. Carl Bauer and ROBERT MEYER tracked the bids and collected the money coolly and efficiently.

Given that the auction was held on the second floor, it was especially heartening to see some of the able-bodied members stay behind to help people with large numbers of plants carry them to their cars. Clara and Peter Kouchalakos and OFELIA SORZANO deserve special mention.

If I have failed to mention persons who deserved special recognition, please accept my apologies. I was insufficiently aware of my surroundings during the Auction and undoubtedly missed much more than I saw.

This was another Auction which BSSF and its members can be proud of. The proceeds put the society on a sound financial footing going into next year. Congratulations to all members who participated.

## Preparing a Lasagna Garden

by Robert Meyer

This summer delivered a resounding message to my aging (and aching) back. Stop the weeds!

Leaning over to pull out the nasty nuisances was becoming too arduous, and far too common, as the heat and reduced moisture allowed the pesty intruders to intrude into the seemingly well mulched garden beds.

I thought to myself: what

can I do to stop this? And, quickly, a cheap resolution was reached within my innermost debate, and I concluded that a cheap and ecological resolution could be the answer: lasagna gardening.

Like the Italian dish, lasagna gardening is about layering. In the gardening aspect, the cooking edibles are replaced by organic materials. Then as time progresses in the Zone 10.5 weather of Miami-Dade, the materials “cook down” which deliver soft and enriched soil that plants thrive in.

For the good news: no digging in required. Instead, the layering is above the previous line. The layers should follow the basic guidelines, but personally being terribly nonscientific, and without laboratory discipline, I read the formula like a cooking recipe—a guideline.

### LAYER 1:

Cardboard, brown paper, or newspaper. Some people limit the width to 3 pages for newspaper. Wet the paper thoroughly. Why? That is the start of the decomposition.

### LAYER 2:

Compost “stuff.” Like in the legal world, the term “stuff” is terribly important in the horticultural environment. It means basically, anything you make it to be. It can include: grass clippings; leaves; fruit and vegetable scraps; coffee grounds; tea leaves and tea bags; weeds (if they haven't gone to seed); manure; compost (hmmm); seaweed; shredded newspaper or junk mail; pine needles; spent blooms, trimmings from the garden; or peat moss (my favorite).



Accentuated lasagna garden rising above ground level, but which will drop down to eventually be level with ground as time progresses.

Now if you are really needing something to do, you can alternate the layers brown or green. Brown would be fall leaves, shredded newspaper, peat, and pine needles. Green would include vegetable scraps,

garden trimmings, and grass clippings. Or, you can do what I do – put them in a compost heap, allow it to decompose, and put the mix in as one layer after the newspaper.

#### LAYER 3

Others stop with Layer 2, but I have two more layers. First is soil. Bags or truck loads are affordable. Make as thin or thick as you want. Or, if you are really open to quirkiness, make dirt Layer 2, and make the compost Layer 3.

#### LAYER 4

Wood mulch. I use this as we have heat and water issues. The mulch preserves moisture and protects against oppressive heat.

#### PLANTING

I go to the plant despot of choice, buy what I can afford in plant material, and remove my small plants from their 4" or 6" pots and plant them directly into the now fluffy beds which are Layers 1-3. When completed, I cover with the mulch. When the mulch wears down, I add a new Layer 2 (compost), maybe a thin Layer 3 (dirt) and top with new mulch.

The cycle in South Florida moves relatively quickly as the wonderful sun under which we have fun is also speedily aging the material – akin to what it can do to our unprotected skin.

But, after implementing this lasagna material, I have found the weed intrusion much less prominent, and have effectively reached the conclusion that my use of the recycled paper in my garden will save me from the least enjoyable chore of the garden – weeding.

## **Murder in Corbin A**

Parts 10 and 11

© by Robert Meyer

If you have missed the previous 9 chapters, go to:

<http://bssf-miami.org/newsbulletins.htm>

### **10.**

The next day, before the fog within could be lifted, Rodriguez heard Boss usher him with an apparent strong and forceful tone – but which he knew was really neither but merely an auditory reaction created by rum intoxication.

“What have you got to give us?” Boss asked in simple manner.

Knowing the only gathering last night was almost \$220 of cash or plant material as opposed to information, Rodriguez had to think fast – and assure Boss that it was a good idea of putting his card shark assistant in the poker game – he uttered the first response which came through his dulled senses: “We should check out the Dorsets.” Why? He really did not know. But, over the period of approximately 4 hours, their name had been said on enough occasions that Rodriguez remembered it and was able to squeeze out their name without any hesitation so as to give Boss an idea that not only was the mission a good idea, but one which may be deemed accomplished.

Boss had Rodriguez return to desk duty while he and Marlene traveled to the Dorset home. Upon arrival, they looked at the abode, then each other, and with wonder and awe, stepped slowly out of the squad car and to the front door. The Dorsets, they immediately knew, did not live in a home – they lived in a mansion. Three stories tall, gabled and shingled, it resembled a French mansion or the Biltmore estate more than its Florida counterparts. Estimated to be over 12,000 square feet under air, Boss tried to calculate the taxes, the utility bills and more while awaiting someone to answer their door bell ring.

The person answering, Boss assumed, was an obvious butler or other hired hand. His attire was somewhat relaxed, but what caught Boss’s attention was the doorman’s hairstyle – an apparent product of grand larceny if anyone requested money for the services rendered. The crime could be obviously called a conspiracy, as the aiding and abetting party was a soup bowl used for purposes other than culinary delight on at least one occasion with this person.

“May I help you?” asked the servant.

“We are detectives with Miami-Dade County Police, and would like to talk to Mr. Dorset and his wife about Irene Standish. I am Detective Velazquez, and this is Marlene, my assistant.”

“Why come on in.” the man at the door instructed. “I am Mr. Dorset, and my wife will

be right down.” Upon that statement’s final syllable being uttered, Mrs. Dorset entered the foyer and caught the detectives off guard as her coiffure was identical to her husband’s, leading them to only conclude one thing: the barber is now guilty of RICO.

“What is it that we can tell you?” Mr. Dorset asked.

“Do you, or did you, know Mrs. Standish well?” asked Boss.

“She was a member of the BSSF. She attended all meetings. But, she never socialized with us. Never came to our home. Never had any other reasons to cross paths. But, we had the utmost respect for her. Her hybridization led to the *Aechmea irenii*, which if you look to the table over there, is a very special plant.”

“Oh, that pink inflorescence with the purple tips, contrasted to the green gray foliage reminds me so much of the *Aechmea fasciata var. flavivittata*.” Marlene added.

At this juncture, Boss worried that the discussion was about to become a name-calling contest between tree huggers, and ultimately a total loss of discussion about the corpse and issues around the same. But, before he could head them off, Mrs. Dorset spoke up and said, “That is very observant of you, but I am sure you and the county want us to do more than chat about plants which only a small fraction of the residents care to even look at, let alone purchase. Let me get you something to drink, and my husband will address any other questions which you may have about poor Ms. Standish. Is iced tea okay with everyone?”

“That would be wonderful.” Boss responded, and ever so thankful for her ability to put the ship back on course for their purpose for the visit.

After 15 minutes of discussion, Boss felt comfortable with what he had heard. Certain discussions had been made, and no one seemed reluctant to tell him what he needed to know. And, at this juncture, he felt confident that his instincts had served him well. For the first time, he felt that he knew what had happened and who was behind this mess.

## 11.

“It’s all about the money. It is about who got her contacts, who may have distributed the cash, and who was the deal maker.” Boss told his audience of Marlene and Rodriguez.



Standish was a strange one in an eccentric world. But, stranger than anything in her personality was the concept of making money in the world of bromeliads. She wanted to deal in rare species to make enough money to have others adore her or idolize her. After all, everyone had told Boss that bromeliads did not make money. Orchids did, but not their bromeliad brothers. Bromeliads, and their industry, were not for the income – they were plants created for horticultural love. Few could

prosper. Some did, he assumed. And, like any other venture in any other murder investigation, money would often be the core of the crime.

Boss sifted through what he had learned of this industry over the few days he had known it, and hopefully find one missing piece to the puzzle. Who, what, where and how could money be made in the BSSF with the plants. The judge had told him that it was hocking rare species – but that judge was a lawyer, and someone who Rodriguez knew could not be trusted. So, Boss chose to ignore that lead and proceed to follow a new path. One commenced by Marlene.

“Marlene, come here.” Boss ordered. Upon her arrival, he spoke quietly and affirmatively to her. He had a strategy. He was outlining the game plan. She knew to follow his orders. She nodded occasionally, and smiled at certain points.

After completing their discussion heard by no others, Boss proceeded to have another similar conversation with Rodriguez, where again there were nods and snickers or smiles. And upon conclusion, the associate ventured back to the assigned desk and began to pluck at the computer’s keyboard with apparent complete focus.

Boss was onto something, and others in the squad room wanted to know. But, they knew Boss too well to ask. And, they knew too well to ask either Marlene or Rodriguez. They knew that if they were to discover anything, it would be by chance or utterance. But, not by other manner.

Boss knew that this murder would have to be handled by the inquisitive, not the bullying, type. And that was his style He was not bred for inquisition, it was a characteristic thrust upon him. Living an entire life of being stared upon by others and having people ask you questions like “What is it like to be one of the little people?” Boss knew that he had to remove himself from the rest of the world. Indoor stays for significant periods of time would be welcomed. And, as his own family had financial issues of significance, television was not available during these self-imposed in-house arrest. Hence, came education.

His uncle, a man from the old country and with no education of his own, took his nephew to the hallowed walls where there were books as high as the ceiling and from which a simple card allowed one the right to remove these cherished bound items for weeks at a time without cost. Elsewhere, libraries are not like the ones Boss knew. And, Boss was compelled to usurp the advantages brought to him by these fortunate events in his unfortunate life. And, so he read. First three books a week, then four and finally five to seven. By the time he was 15, he had read all of the great novels, all of the Pulitzers in fiction and nonfiction, and most of the British classics.

But, anyone reading the resume of Boss knew that he was a Miami-Dade Community College graduate. A holder of an A.A. in Criminology. Not even a graduate with a B.A., Boss’s resume’s credentials received no acclaim or respect from his foes, peers or even his family. It was the little- known world of his reading the library, his accomplishment of having read more books than anyone else known in his neighborhood or among his clan, that earned him respect. But, like any bright person – Boss kept this card close to his vest. He wanted everyone to think of him as one of the “little people” while appearing to be a stumbler without direction during his investigations. Later in life, when he could watch television, reruns of *Columbo* appeared. Boss idolized his crumpled jacket and his line of misdirection. Boss delivered that fictional

character to reality – in a nearly four foot frame.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

##### **Fairchild**

**Sunday, October 31**, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Bring your dog to Fairchild for a day of four-legged fun and festivities. You and your pooch can dress up and enter one of four costume contests then walk in the grand parade. See the agility, obedience and rally demonstrations

**Saturday and Sunday, November 6 and 7**, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Shop thousands of hard to find palms and talk to palm experts to find out how to properly grow these stately and distinctly tropical plant

**RAMBLE; Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 12, 13 and 14**, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Celebrate 70 years of garden festivities and shop hundreds of new garden products, plants and accessories. Don’t miss Design: Fairchild, a sustainable design and furniture show

##### **PINECREST GARDENS**

**November 7** 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Fresh from local farmers to your home! The Pinecrest Gardens Farmers' Market has been named "The Best Farmers' Market" in Greater Miami by The Miami New Times. The Market will run every Sunday, November through May and offers visitors local and organic farm-raised, seasonal produce, plus fresh flowers, fruits, herbs and more.

#### **Programming**

The Board welcomes your suggestions for program ideas and speakers for 2011. Please e-mail Barbara Partagas at [bpartagas@bellsouth.net](mailto:bpartagas@bellsouth.net).

#### **Order Plant Supplies**

At a future date (to be determined) we will hold a sale of supplies. Please prepare your wish lists to submit via the suggestion box at upcoming meetings or call Barbara Partagas.

#### **Attachment**

If you receive this by e-mail, I attached a copy of a map of Fairchild. Why? Because when I went there, the volunteer told me this was the last one she had. It is very useful as plants are identified as being in the numbered plats listed on the attached map. The second page lists but a few. Do not lose this map if you wish to use their system in the future.