



Orlandiana

Newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida

Volume No. 35

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August 2009

Next Meeting: Monday, August 24

6:30 pm Refreshments

6:30-6:55 pm Member Market

7:00 pm Meeting Starts

Where: Leu Gardens

1920 N. Forest Ave. Orlando

Refreshments: A – F

A Message from the Vice-President

This month's speaker is Ray Lemieux from Sarasota. He will be speaking on "How to Grow and Know Terrestrials".

Ray has been a member of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society for many years. He has worked for Dennis and Linda Cathcart that owns the well known Tropiflora for 14 years. He is very knowledgeable on most any bromeliads there is.

Ray has made his own hybrids which he will be bringing some with him as well as plants for sale.

Members Market a Go, Don't forget your raffle, show and tell plants as well as any library books that you need to return.

Let's Have Fun!!!!

Lisa

Please turn your cell phones off during the meeting!

Reading the national bestseller, “The Orchid Thief” by Susan Orlean, I noted yet another tall story that was told about the origin of *Neoregelia* ‘Fireball’. This little Neo might be one of the most found plants in the bromeliad world. Which brings me to my story. I want to be the first in line of storytellers to claim *Neoregelia carcharodon* ‘Tiger’. I hope my story will be followed by other stories, leaving ‘Tiger’ to yet another dubious origin.

Someone at the conference in St. Petersburg had remarked to me that *Neoregelia carcharodon* ‘Tiger’ was not a *carcharodon* at all. This was not an earth shattering statement to me.

After seeing Ed and Moyna Prince’s perfectly grown ‘Tiger’ in the marvelous display put up by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida my memories started racing back to the day the plant was “discovered”. I have to add here that I always wonder about new plant discoveries since the plant had always been there, somewhere, only waiting for someone with a pedagogic mind ready to collect, dry, dissect, compare and categorize said plant, only later to report that such new discoveries were now extinct or in over abundance, similar but different, and only more research grants could tell the tale. So I now refer to this new discovery and hope it doesn’t get kicked around too much.

Not so long ago, I was traveling north of the city of Niteroi in Rio de Janeiro state, looking for new bromeliads. I was traveling with my good friend and well known botanist, Pedro Nahoum. On this particular day we stopped to visit a dilapidated orchid nursery located off the main road. The old wooden slat houses were leaning to one side, not by design but because of their age and the direction of the predominant wind. Browsing through so many new orchids was dizzying when suddenly two plants really caught my eye, not orchids at all. They were a pair of wonderfully banded, somewhat large neoregelias under the bench mixed in with the weeds and orchids. I nearly tripped over myself falling forward and smashing some orchids. I remember thinking that they were only orchids popping and crunching under my feet and not those wonderful undescribed neoregelias.

The neoregelias under the bench looked back at me like two large basketballs painted to look like tigers; the plants were heavily banded and mahogany in color. They had been found in nature this way. Plants made by the hybridizer of all hybridizers.

We asked the owner of the orchid nursery where he got these two neoregelias. After a lot of foot dragging, looking up towards the heavens and muttering and pretending to be deaf, we realized this was getting no where. Somehow, call it divine intervention if you must, the orchid owner decided to go that day and see if there were more plants to be found. We were not invited for the hunt. Returning to the nursery the following day the owner reported to us that, sadly, he had only found one more plant. He pointed towards the hills behind his nursery and waving his hand from right to left said; “the plant is from there.” This area he was pointing to must have been a full one half of South America. As always when one is traveling, there were many more reasons “not to” than reasons “to”; it would be a long walk, there was no time, and anyway with two neoregelias you can make thousands of seedlings and now we had three. So I left that area

hesitating and looking west over my shoulder. I kept wondering what other treasures were out there for the finding.

On my return to Costa Rica work began on crossing *Neoregelia punctatissima* x *N. carcharodon* ‘Tiger’ to produce *Neo.* ‘Hannibal Lector’. Look for *Neo.* ‘Norman Bates’, a cross of *Neo.* ‘Hannibal Lector’ x *Neo. Carcharodon* ‘Tiger’ – very heavily banded with short wide leaves. Last of all (at least for now) is *Neo.* ‘Tunisia’, a cross of *Neo.* ‘Hannibal Lector’ x *N. punctatissima*. All of these are very heavily banded neoregelias.

The potential for new, banded neoregelias looks promising, thanks to ‘Tiger’. There are many talented hybridizers currently working on this group of neoregelias. Who knows what these creative people will come up with in the future?

Oh, I forgot to mention, how did my conversation go with that fellow who informed me that ‘Tiger’ was not a *carcharodon*? At first I thought I should read him his Carmen Miranda Rights (Brazilian Law) but I calmed down. Sure I have my doubts about this being a *carcharodon*, but at least ‘Tiger’ has a point of reference, and I told him if ‘Tiger’ is described one day, then at least there is a story to go with it, and whether it is dubious to you or not, that’s how it was... ✦

Chester Skotak is a world-renowned bromeliad hybridizer with a sharp sense of humor. Born and raised in Texas, he lived in Naples, Florida, for a few years before escaping to Costa Rica in 1978. He developed a fascination with rare plants at an early age. The Skotak name is synonymous with innovation. His creative talents have made him a leading expert in the field of bromeliad hybridization. He was the first to produce variegated *Neoregelia* hybrids from seed. This prolific hybridizer holds many bromeliad patents. He has led plant-collecting expeditions throughout Central and South America and has introduced countless unusual bromeliad hybrids into horticulture. Two bromeliads have been named in his honor: *Guzmania skotakii* (Costa Rica) and *Aechmea skotakii* (Ecuador). A Costa Rican tree species even bears his name, *Palicourea skotakii*.

His creativity extends beyond plants. He invented and patented a board game, CHORIZO—Monopoly’s evil twin. This take-off with a Latin American twist is a testament to all that is corrupt, foul, and tainted.

Chester is a talented writer and has numerous articles published in the *Journal of the Bromeliad Society International*.

Chester is the author of “Searching for Miss Fortuna, The Hunt for a Bromeliad”. An intriguing novel inspired by true events. This bizarre adventure laced with offbeat humor, odd characters, and vivid descriptions chronicles an obsession with collecting a rare plant.



Roots

by Kathy Dorr

The main functions of the root system are anchorage and absorption. Most plants store some food for at least a short period of time in their roots. Others, such as potatoes and carrots have specialized food storage organs. Roots are also used as conductors to move the water and mineral salts which they absorb from the soil to the stems and in turn to the leaves and other organs of the plant above ground.

The food that is produced by the leaves is conducted by the stems to the main roots and from there to the branch roots, so that even the root system and the growth above ground, particularly (and of great importance) between the total leaf surface exposed to the sun and the total root system.

The leaf surface absorbs energy from the sun and uses it in the manufacture of carbohydrates. The root surface in contact with the soil absorbs the mineral elements and water for the shoot system, and in turn, the shoot system must be able to manufacture enough food for the root system. The roots absorb water, the stems conduct it, and the leaves use it. In using the water in photosynthesis, they transpire a large amount of water into the air.

We have been told the roots of Tillandsias are used merely for attachment; however, botany books state the dead cells on the surface of the roots absorb and hold any moisture for the use of the plant. This is true of all epiphytes.

There are several different types of root systems. Weeds or small plants which are easily pulled from the soil have a shallow fibrous root system. It does not grow very deeply in the soil, but usually extends outward from the plant. There is also a fibrous root system which will penetrate the soil from three to five feet. This is not the same as a tap root, in that it is a mass of roots.

The fibrous root system is found in most of the monocotyledons, which includes bromeliads. The tap root system is mostly found in dicotyledons and the gymnosperms.

Every viable seed contains a potential young plant. When germination takes place, the radical (or primary root) is the first thing to appear. It will have branches and sub-branches (secondary roots) as growth continues.

If you grow seed, there are some Billbergias and Aechmeas which begin to grow – the after they are about an inch and a half to two inches tall – they begin to have roots form from a node above the soil. These are adventitious roots. (Refers to a structure arising from, an unusual area, i.e., roots growing from leaves or stems.) These are the permanent roots of these plants rather than the primary root. You can cut off the plant below adventitious roots and pot it up and the plant will suffer no ill effects.

This article last appeared in the January 2009 Newsletter of The Bromeliad Society of San Francisco.

BSCF Meeting Minutes July 27, 2009

President Betsy McCrory brought the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Twenty six members signed in for the meeting. Vice President Lisa Robinette introduced **guest speaker Tom Wolfe** from the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay. Tom's informative presentation was on the 2007 and 2008 Bromeliad Extravaganzas. He gave advice on how to prepare for the 2009 event here in Orlando.

After a 10 minute break for refreshments and member plant sales, the meeting was resumed at 8:00pm. Jerry O'Keefe and Bob Smedley described show and tell plants. Betsy called for additions or deletions to the **June meeting minutes**. Hearing none, Jerry O'Keefe made a motion to accept the minutes and Steve Beaudoin seconded it, motion carried.

Treasurer Rick Rector gave the **Treasurer's report**. Our account balance was \$11,186.88 Rick announced receipt of a \$75 donation in memory of Florence McKinney. The report will be filed for audit.

New Business: Lisa Robinette announced that members Dean Fairchild and Craig Allen have offered their home as the site for the 2009 holiday party. Lisa made a motion that the membership accept the offer to have the party at Dean and Craig's house December 12th; Jerry O'Keefe seconded it, motion carried.

Old Business: Betsy reminded the members that we are hosting the 2009 Extravaganza and that a group has been meeting to plan for it. **Needed: someone to oversee Publicity and someone to assemble the event brochure-please contact Betsy and become a part of the fun team that is preparing for the event.** Guest speakers will include Harry Luther, Dennis Cathcart, Larry Giroux, and Geraldo Rivera. **Pam Flesher asked that members begin contacting her about what they can donate for the raffle and silent auction items.** Nice plants or artistic items (bromeliad or at least gardening-related) would be welcomed. Pam also announced that there will be a "pineapple shirt competition" to see who comes with the most popular shirt. There will be a \$50 gift card prize for each of the favorite women and men's pineapple shirts as determined by vote. Betsy announced that Lisa Robinette is checking with growers to see who might contribute about 20 *Aechmea orlandianas* for table centerpieces at the banquet. Members who wish to sell plants at the Extravaganza should contact Georgia Orser, who is in charge of sales, to get their vendor #. **Georgia announced she will need considerable assistance from the membership with sales, especially anyone with money handling experience or sales in general.**

Announcements: Betsy had information available regarding the clone preservation project, recent news from Selby Gardens, and the upcoming meetings of the Southwest Bromeliad Guild and The Cryptanthus Society in September & also in September is an upcoming show and sale in Baton Rouge, LA. Jerry O'Keefe announced that the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society will be holding a sale at the Sanford Garden Club August 15th and 16th. He also said that seats were available for a bus trip from Sanford down to Tropiflora on September 12th. For \$35 you get the bus ride, tour of Tropiflora, plus a meal prepared by Dennis and Linda Cathcart.

More Extravaganza discussion: It was asked why there isn't a judged show at the extravaganzas. Betsy said it was too much to try to accomplish in a short time. Tom Wolfe shared his knowledge of t-shirt sales at the last event in Tampa. Other suggestions for sale items were a towel with nice logo or hat. Betsy announced that the Florida Council was considering the purchase of cash registers. In the past they have been rented for each extravaganza and it is thought that it might be more economical to purchase some. Rick Rector is pricing some.

Bromeliad judging school is still an option if you'd like to take the classes. These will start soon in the Ft. Meyers/Ft. Lauderdale area. Contact Betsy if interested.

Betsy, assisted by Bob Smedley, announced winners of **door and raffle prizes**.

Tina Farsetta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Lisa Robinette. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Marty Folk, Secretary.

The Bromeliad Society of Central Florida, Inc. was formed in 1972 to encourage the exchange of information concerning the culture, identification and hybridization of the plant family *Bromeliaceae*; to promote & maintain public interest in bromeliads and to assist in the preservation of all bromeliads for future generations.

Meetings are held the 4th Monday of every month from 7-9 PM at Harry P. Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Avenue in Orlando. For directions: 407.246.2620 or www.leugardens.org. You'll enjoy informative programs, Show & Tell, plant sales, refreshments & door prizes. Members also receive a monthly newsletter — all for only \$15 per member, plus \$5 per additional family member (no charge for full-time students). Visitors are always welcome.

BSCF is a nonprofit Florida corporation recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to this society are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

BSCF is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International, Inc. and a member of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc. and the Cryptanthus Society.

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 7:00 pm Meeting begins

Speaker: Ray Lemieux from Sarasota.
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Show & Tell: All members

Refreshments: G - L

Raffle Plants: All members