



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

April/May, 2015

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Lori Weigerding

Please note the change in date for the meeting. It will be **Sunday June 7th** at 2 pm at the Chicago Botanic Garden. We hope the change in date doesn't cause you to miss our meeting.

President's Column

Hoping to see you all at our meeting on June 7, 2015. WHAT you say, that's a week early and you'd be right. Anne has some important information to share with us and isn't able to come the following Sunday. So we're moving the date up so she'll be able to bring us up to date. So please clear your calendar and be sure to attend.

Sorry that we had to cancel the meeting in April, but I took my Mother to the hospital and unfortunately she passed on Monday the 13th. It's been a tough time and will be for some time. Thank you to those who sent their condolences, they were much appreciated.

I can't believe how hot it was today 80!! It was wonderful, but I'll take it a few degrees cooler. Now all we're going to see for several days is rain!! It will be nice to have time outside in the sunshine! Our plants will enjoy it even more!

We hope to see you at the June meeting!

Lori Weigerding



Hohenberia 'Karla'
Picture from Michael's Bromeliads

In this issue, we will be sharing tips from other Newsletters as well as some articles we found on the web. We just got back from our trip to Australia and Singapore. It was great but we need to get ready to go back to Illinois so we will share our stories and pictures with you in another Newsletter.

In the April Sarasota Newsletter, there is the following tip from Terrie Bert (who we saw in Australia!).

Now is the time to fertilize your bromeliads. A long-term (4-mo, 6-mo), time release fertilizer is good. Fertilize the roots of terrestrial bromeliads and between a few of the outer leaves of epiphytic bromeliads. For epiphytes, just 1-3 pellets between the outer leaves should suffice. Some people prefer to put the fertilizer on top of the potting medium for all broms, including epiphytes.

The April San Diego Newsletter had the following by Robert Kopfstein in the President's Corner:

Spring is also a good time to check on the light conditions for your plants. If you move some of your bromeliads depending on the season, it is best to be sure that a plant, happy in one place in December or January, is not overexposed and possibly damaged by the intense sunlight of summer.



Aechmea chantinii De Leon
Picture from Michael's Bromeliad website



Dyckia 'Michael Andreas'
Picture from Michael's Bromeliads

Personally, for me it is always a joy to witness the spring awakening. I have heard Easterners criticize California for not having “real” seasons. What they appear to miss is the difference between seasonal change in our Mediterranean climate, and the extremes of the prairie and eastern woodland.

The bromeliads respond to the warmer weather with more pronounced growth and more intense color. Witnessing these changes in

the sub-tropical to tropical plants should excite every grower who appreciates the cycles of nature.

On the internet, I found this article on storing pineapple. I have heard about taking the top off one and growing it but I hadn't heard this tip by “Food”.

Pineapple happens to be one of my absolute favorite fruits. Yesterday they were on sale at my local Whole Foods (2 for \$6) and I decided to grab a pair. When I got to the checkout counter, the gal asked if I would like her to remove the tops for me. I said yes and watched as she gave the leafy bit a firm twist.

Once the leaves had been popped off, she told me an amazing tip: she suggested I store the pineapple upside down. This helps the sweet juice that has accumulated on the bottom during shipping, flow back to the other end.

I've often wondered why one side of the pineapple is sweeter than the other, and it looks like I finally discovered why! So tell me, did you know this trick already and do you think it works?



Neo 'Touchdown'
Picture from Michael's Bromeliads

You never know where you will find bromeliad related information on the internet. I found the following at www.instrumentl.com The website is a crowd funding site for people who do research into nature. The following is from their latest researcher, Talita Fontoura who is a Professor of Ecology at the Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC) in Northeastern Brazil. “She had been studying bromeliads for over 15 years. Now, she’s working on their conservation. Sadly, bromeliad plants are rapidly disappearing due to habitat loss and poaching for use as garden ornamentals.”

This summer, Talita and two of her students will set out to research bromeliads in the tropical coastal broadleaf forest of Brazil. **Their goal: to better understand the fate of animals who rely on Bromeliads for water and shelter when these plants are removed.** It’s extremely important work with outcomes that may impact the very long-term survival of bromeliads and the animals who call them home.”

Bromeliads are fascinating plants native to Central and South America that display curious adaptations for thriving in extreme environmental conditions. Some bromeliads live on the ground, while others prefer the epiphytic lifestyle, living on trees and other plants rather than on the soil below. Many of these bromeliads have leaves that form a tightly bounded structure, also called the “tank,” which captures water and nutrients and is home to frogs, crabs, salamanders, and insects who might spend their entire lives living inside.



Bahia's Broad-snout Casque-headed Tree Frog
(*Aparasphenodon arapapa*)

Photo by Micro Solé
Picture from www.instrumentl.com

The purpose of my research project is to discover what happens to animal diversity associated with bromeliad tanks when these plants are removed from their natural environments. Based on the fact that many invertebrate and vertebrate species have become adapted to rely on bromeliad tanks for food and shelter, we expect that habitats with a lower density of bromeliad species would experience a much higher decline in the diversity of these associated animals.

I intend to conduct my research with two of my biology students in a near-shore ecosystem known as “Restinga,” located in the extreme south of Bahia

state. One of my students, Marcos Lavigne, started his Master's degree a few months ago, and Pablo M. Daltro is an undergraduate student. The vegetation in the Restinga ecosystem grows in very sandy soil and tends to be thick and shrubby, with some species growing sharp thorns in response to the extreme insolation (amount of solar radiation) and exposure to salt from the ocean nearby. Although south Bahia state has a low population density per km², our previous field trips to the area have revealed high levels of restinga modification due to human disturbance. The majority of the disturbance we witnessed was caused by: hotels, the spread of exotic plant species, small cattle pastures, boat trips, and surrounding cocoa plantations.

To conduct our research, we will use satellite imagery to select areas of the Restinga ecosystem that exhibit different levels of human disturbance, on a scale from healthy to heavily modified by humans. In each area selected, we will photograph the surrounding area and the different bromeliad species, and use sample plots to estimate bromeliad density per hectare. Then, we will collect a number of bromeliads to identify and count the organisms living in their tanks. This portion of the project must be conducted in the laboratory because we need microscopes and dozens of containers to identify and categorize the organisms we find. To compare the diversity of bromeliad-associated organisms found in healthy areas versus more disturbed sites, we will then use a computer to run statistical analyses that will model the number of organisms that are likely to be found in a restinga ecosystem if the degree of human disturbance is known.



Neo 'Blue Angel' (Wingert)
picture from Ann Coughlan

Marjorie has made a slide show of bromeliad pictures. She will share it at the meeting. There is one issue that maybe one of you can solve and that is how to get it to loop so we don't have to keep pushing a button to make it play.

Here is information from Anne Coughlan on our order to Michael's. We will discuss it at our meeting. If you are interested in Anne ordering some specific plants for yourself, please look over Michael's plant list and write down the names and bring that to the meeting.

I just had a very nice conversation with Michael at Michael's Bromeliads. Very nice guy!

Here is the scoop on our earlier discussion about ordering up to \$300.00 of Neoregelias for sale at our August show.

- He does have the "Neoregelia Terrarium 25-pack" for \$100.00 – or \$4.00 per plant. These are mature plants that are small enough varieties to be used in a terrarium. He says that guys who buy these from him re-sell them at shows or elsewhere, without potting them – they display them in some sort of display case and the buyer puts them into their terrarium I guess. Of course, these little varieties can also be potted for sale. Michael said that he picks the plants to put in the 25-pack and often puts in ones that would sell individually for more than \$4.00 apiece – so there's a sort of "quantity discount" in buying the 25-packs.



Picture from Michael's Bromeliads

- Michael also offers what he calls "Grower's Choice" assortments for similar-sized orders. We can specify various characteristics that matter to us (e.g., \$100.00 for 25 plants max price; which type(s) of plants [don't need to only have Neo's in there]; sizes of plants; etc.). Michael then picks the actual assortment he will ship. He understands that more colorful plants sell better and so he tries to supply that. I believe everything in the "Grower's Choice" also ships bare-root so would have to be potted before sale.

- I downloaded his full collection list, which lists all plants and all individual plant prices (attached to this e-mail so you can see it too). So, for example, if we wanted to have some mixture of Cryptanthus and other bromeliads that would average out to \$4.00 per plant, and order a quantity of these (presumably at least 25), Michael would put together a set of plants there too.

- Ordering and delivery: he suggested that I e-mail the order in at least 1 week before I want him to ship the order. And he suggested that I arrange to have the plants delivered to me as close to the show as possible, which makes sense. Thus, I'm thinking to put the order in around August 14, and to specify that I want delivery on Monday August 24th or Tuesday August 25th. Then I can be potting them that week to be ready to bring in when we set up the show on Friday Aug. 28th.

So, here are the questions we can consider, as I see it (but chime in with your own other thoughts too):

- Do we want to just order 3 of the Neoregelia Terrarium packs? This would hit our \$300 budget mark; it would give us 75 plants that we could promote as individual plants for sale and/or terrarium plants for the buyer to arrange.

More ambitious: do we want to show some terrarium settings? Provide directions for making your own terrarium? (I don't have any terrarium plantings myself but maybe some other Society members do...)

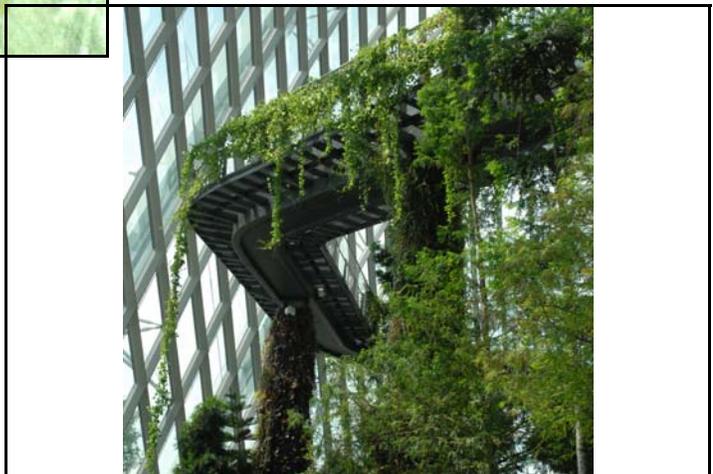
- Do we want to do some "mixed" order, for example, order two of the Neoregelia Terrarium packs and one set of 25 "Grower's Choice" plants? If so, what are the types of other plants we would order? [e.g., Cryptanthus?]

- And, if anyone wants to order some plants for themselves, I am happy to fold that into the big order and collect payment from them separately.

<https://www.michaelsbromeliads.com/> (Click on the "Our Collection" to view what is available.



Cryptanthus 'Black Magic'
picture from www.fcbs.org



Picture from inside a Conservatory in Singapore!

Please take the time to renew your membership now.

Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago Membership Application

New Member Renewal

Chose one below

Individual \$5.00 Annually Dual \$8.00 Annually

Name _____

Phone Number (_____) _____ - _____

Cell Number (_____) _____ - _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____

Birthday (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

Make your check or money order out to the Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago

Simply fill this form out and mail with payment to:

Paula Dering
Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago
44 Atteridge Road Lake Forest, IL
60045-1713

