



**BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO**

# **THE BSGC NEWS**

**January/February, 2018**

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**WEB SITE**

<http://bromeliad-chicago.org>

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Lori Weigerding

We have been hearing about the winter in Illinois this year and thought that we would bring you some pictures that we took on our trip to the Bahamas. They think it is cold when it gets down to 50°!

Our first meeting this year is on March 11<sup>th</sup> (Beginning Day light savings time!) at the Chicago Botanic Garden at 2pm in th Lakeside room. Steve and I will do a presentation on our February trip to the Bahamas. The April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting at 2pm will be at the Chalet Nursery in their Learning Center. Jennifer will do a presentation on orchids. Many of them grow in the same habitat as our bromeliads.



Display at SummerWinds,  
Phoenix

## *President's Column*

*Hi everybody, what a crazy winter we've had. I hope everyone has been able to keep themselves safe and warm. I know you and your plants can't wait to stretch out in the warm air under the sun. Unfortunately you choose to live in Illinois, so that won't be happening soon. LOL*

*I'm sorry to say those bad winter days got me. I fell on the ice twice back in January, didn't break anything, but was in excruciating pain for weeks. Finally go to 2 ERs, get 2 different diagnoses, still in severe pain. Go to Dr., says go back to ER, they can't do anything for the severe pain. Upshot, UTI and 2 hernia surgeries later, I almost feel human. So still moving slowly, but still moving. Hoping no one else had such an exciting time!*

*We'll be having our first meeting of the year, March 11, 2018. Come break out of your winter hibernation and join your fellow bromeliadians for a wonderful presentation by Martha. We can all warm up enjoying their photos of the Bahamas!*

*Lori Weigerding*

Steve and I flew to the Bahamas for five days at the beginning of February. I met David Higgs at the BSI Board meeting in the fall and he had invited us to their plant sale and to visit some of their members gardens. Their members grow a variety of plants since it is the Horticultural Society of the Bahamas. They had Adeniums, bromeliads, cacti and succulents at their sale. The sales was at the Retreat.



Plant Sale in the Bahamas



Cactus and Succulents Too!

“Hidden from view on Village Road is an internationally famous garden of palms and rare tropical plants. Formerly a private home, the estate was the first national park on New Providence. Visitors can explore a Bahamian hardwood forest and learn about native plants and animals. The property, including a small wooden cottage was acquired in 1925 by colonial civil servant Arthur Langois and his Bahamian wife Margaret. At the time, the area was considered remote and rural. The Langlois’ had a lifelong passion for palm horticulture and study, and following years of research expeditions and seed collection, the Retreat garden would become one of the best-known private collections of palms in the world. Unfortunately, today there is a lot of work to be done to restore it to its previous condition. It is an 11 acre property that once had 170 palm species. It is a national park run by the Bahama National Trust (BNT). The Trust is a non-governmental, non-profit organization which was founded in 1959 with a mandate of developing and managing the National Parks.”

Today David and several other members of the Bahamian Society have been volunteering their time to plant bromeliads, cacti, succulents and palms there.

Steve and I walked to the small Ardastra Zoo and Conservation Center on Sunday which is home to the famous marching flamingos, the Bahamas National Bird. They also had a variety of animals including lemurs, parrots, snakes and lizards. When it opened in 1937, it was a marshland. It is a 4 acre garden specializing in bird rescue and rehabilitation. We also found they had a lot of bromeliads planted there.



One of the members of the Society said that there are fifteen endemic Tillandsias. One she mentioned was *Tillandsia intermedia*. She said the one they have grows larger than the one in Florida. I was able to find seven of the tillandsias by searching the web: *usneoides*, *fasciculata*, *balbisiana*, *paucifolia*, *utriculata*, *circinnata* and *flexuosa* are endemic to the Bahamas. The first member's garden we visited was Sandy's. Her property is around 2 to 3 acres. Her favorite plants have been her orchids. She has decided to reduce them since she doesn't have the time for her large collection. She doesn't have a sprinkler system so they have to be hand watered. They also need to be fertilized regularly. The past hurricane took out some shade trees so there is the problem of sunburn for the orchids as well as some of the bromeliads. She is getting into succulents now since they require less work. She has found the greenhouse she has covered with shadecloth has the best looking plants because as well as the lower light where it is situated it gets very good air circulation. She has many interesting trees: Noni fruit tree, calabash tree, limes, starfruit, lychee, mangoes, date palm and guavas. She grows bananas and said that if a hurricane is coming, you should chop off the top half.



Sandy's Garden

The second garden we visited was Sarah's. She converted the horse stable into a greenhouse. She also grows quite a few orchids. She has some bromeliads from Ulrich Baensch who wrote *Blooming Bromeliads*. He lived in the Bahamas for several years where he hybridized some bromeliads. After his passing several members of the Bahamian Society were offered his plants, pots and other items.

In her pool was a snake. Unlike Australia the snakes in the Bahamas are not venomous. (He was dead too!)



Tillandsia bulbosa in Sarah's garden



Dead Snake taking the place of a nice bromeliad picture.

A short distance from Sarah's house was Cindy's house. She had three attractive lattice shadehouses. She had gotten them from Baensch's estate as well as lava rocks, plants and pots. Her sister from Abaco, one of the Bahama Islands was visiting. They talked about when they went out hunting for plants out in the wild there. The bush is very dense there. They would call out Marco Polo every so often to make sure that they didn't get lost. Cindy brought back several tillandsia plants to her house. It is not illegal to bring back plants from Abaco to Nassau. She had an interesting tree. The black pearl tree *Majidea zungueberica*, is native to Zanzibar but was growing quite well in Cindy's yard. She had two

hanging plants which she thought were bilbergias. Could it have been a quesnelia instead? She had entered one in a show a few years ago. There were twenty three blooms on it at that time.



Bilbergia or Quesnelia??



Tillandsias on Lattice work

The final garden we visited was David Higgs. He had bananas, pachypodiums, adeniums and some orchids. There was an Ursulae blooming. The Neo “John David Higgs” that he showed us had a little bit of sunburn. He had a nice collection of mounted Tillandsias on driftwood. Some he had collected and some were from other members who had collected them. I brought home two pieces of driftwood that one member was selling. She had soaked it in bleach and then in water to make sure all the bugs were dead.



Neoregelia 'John David Higgs' photo by D Cathcart

From the website [www.fcbs.org](http://www.fcbs.org)



Blooming Ursulae

Don't forget to put the date of our Show with the Iris & Daylily Society on your calendar. Set up will be July 13<sup>th</sup> with the Sale on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Did you get your Valentine a bromeliad for Valentines Day? If not, you can get one for Easter in April

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, bring your payment with you to our March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Daylight savings time begins March 11<sup>th</sup>. So be sure to check your clock.



Martha's *Tillandsia albertiana*

Don't forget to renew your membership now, if you haven't already.

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 (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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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

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