

S.F.V.B.S.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BROMELIAD SOCIETY

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SEPTEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

OFFICERS

Pres: **Mike Wisnev** V.P. & News: **Mary K. Carroll** Secretary: **Kathleen Misko** Treasurer: **Mary Chan**
Membership: **Nancy P.-Hapke** Health & Wellness: **Georgia Roiz** Web Page: **Kim Thorpe**
Directors: **Steve Ball, Bryan Chan, Richard Kaz -fp, Dave Bassani-fp**

Saturday September 7, 2013 @ 10:00 am

Sepulveda Garden Center 16633 Magnolia Blvd. Encino, California 91316

AGENDA

9:30 – SET UP & SOCIALIZE

10:00 - Door Prize – for members who arrive before 10:00 / Please Sign In

10:05 - Welcome Visitors and New Members.
Make announcements and Introduce Speaker

10:15 - Speaker: Steve Frieze

“Tropical Adventures in Brazil”

Steve and his wife Phyllis are members of our club but are rarely able to attend meetings due to work schedules. Steve is former president of the Los Angeles Cactus & Succulent Society which also meets at the Sepulveda Garden Center. He is a retired professor at Cal State and has traveled to numerous locations including China, Chile, Brazil and just recently returned from Oaxaca Mexico. He grows a variety of exotic plants, primarily cactus and is a co-owner of Desert Creations Nursery. Steve's travelogue will focus on plants from Brazil when he visited earlier this year. <>

11:00 - Refreshment Break: Will the following members please provide refreshments this month: **Ana Wisnev, Bob Wright, Max Wurzel, S. Ball, Arab Batarse, Wesley Bartera** and anyone else who has a snack they would like to share. If you can't bring anything this month don't stay away, just contribute next month.

Questions about refreshments? Call Mary K. 818-705-4728, leave a message, she will call back.

Feed The Kitty-help support our refreshments

11:30 - Show and Tell – Please bring one plant.

11:45 – Mini Auction: members contribute

12:00 - Raffle: We need each member to donate

12:30 – Pick Up around your area /

Meeting is over—Drive safely <>

President's Message

It's hot out there - remember to keep your plants (and yourself) well hydrated. You might think about watering more frequently, or maybe just giving them an extra spraying or two in addition to their normal watering.

We had another great meeting last month! Despite stiff competition from the South Bay Club's show and sale, we had a good turnout, including Gregg DeChirico from Santa Barbara. No doubt this was in part due to the expectation of a wonderful program from Andy Siekkinen, which he more than delivered. As usual, he also brought plants for sale, some of which actually sold twice - fortunately, no blows to resolve the situation!

This month we hear from our own Steve Frieze. Steve always gives great programs, and they are getting even better. Steve and Phyllis continue to travel the world to see cacti, succulents and now also bromeliads. We get to share in these trips through his programs. I saw one recently at the L.A. Cactus and Succulent Society and it was well worth it.

While Mary once more brought a ton of plants for the raffle, others also did. Ray Vanveen donated a number of plants, as well as Richard Kaz and Steve Ball. We need to keep on working on more donations, so think about whether you have some offsets etc. you might bring in.

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(Turn Over)

..... *President's Message continued from Page 1*

Similarly, the auction is always fun. Think about selling one of your plants there - it needn't be something spectacular. In fact, some less expensive plants would hopefully bring more bidders.

Lastly, many thanks to Kim Thorpe who brought in enough great food last month to feed us five times over. For those who don't know it, Kim also had most overall points in the recent Intercity Cacti and Succulent Show. Her collection is simply amazing - the plants are stunning. Congratulations!!!!

Hope you all can make it to the September meeting this Saturday. <>

Mike Wisnev

Announcements

- **Lost Black Jacket ?? – Did you lose one at the last meeting? I will bring it to the Sept. meeting.**
- **Reminder**, we must leave the meeting room clean and straight. Please pick up around your area and lend a hand straightening the tables and chairs. Someone should use the brush to clear dirt off the raffle and display tables. And someone should help take the food into the kitchen. This month Mary Chan won't be there so I will need more help.
- Steve List is the agricultural instructor at Sylmar High School. He is also President of the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers (CANGC). The CANGC *San Fernando Valley Chapter* will again host an auction for the benefit of scholarships in agriculture and to benefit the, unfunded, agricultural programs in the L.A. Unified School District. This is a very good cause, and because all materials for the auction are donated, the prices are great. Refreshments are available as is the chance to speak to many members of the gardening and plant world in the SF Valley. In other words, great cause, great camaraderie, great stuff to buy. There is a regular and a silent auction. The particulars are: **Wed. Oct. 23th. @ 6:00 pm.** The location is **9560 Reseda Blvd.; corner of Reseda and Superior** in the meeting hall of the **Methodist Church**. The auction admission fee is \$5.00 per person; such a deal.

The CANGC SFV Chapter is *in need of donations, volunteers and attendees.* Give Steve List a call or e-mail if you would like to support Horticulture Education. 818-399-4273 S.list@verizon.net



- **Happy Belated August Birthday to Mary Chan**
 - **3 September Birthdays – Happy Birthday to Jeanette Bond on Sept 3, Shawn Newmann Sept 12 and Artie Chavez Sept 13,**
 - **SFV Bromeliad Face Book Page** was created by Barry Landau, check it out. Frequently he will post photos from our monthly meetings and he also shares other interesting Bromeliad photos from FaceBook. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/sanfernandovalleybs/> If you need help signing up for facebook ask Barry, he will help you.
 - **Holiday Brunch** - Please put this date on your calendar. **Saturday Dec 7, 2013** at the Sepulveda Garden Center 10:00am start with Holiday Lunch and gifts at noon. Detailed information will be posted closer to the date.
- Mike deserves a Special Thank You for his research and great Tidbits. --**

This is your newsletter!

Do you have something to announce or something humorous or educational to share?? <>

Taxonomic Tidbits – Where to Learn More

By Mike Wisnev (mwisnev@sbcglobal.net)

I thought I might provide some background information this month, and continue with the technical info next month. But I got interested in Tillandsia flowers, so you get two articles this month.

Before plunging in, newer members might wonder if it is important for you to know about this taxonomic stuff? While some might argue otherwise, I would suggest the answer is a resounding NO. I certainly hope most of you read the articles, and maybe even enjoy them. You might even end up enjoying your plants more. But I can't say it is important for members to know about it.

I obviously like it, or I wouldn't bother. But one of the things I have found enjoyable, and surprising, about the plant clubs is the wide variety of interests we have. Some of us like all Bromeliads, others like to specialize. Some have small collections, others large. Some like to grow by seed, others don't. Some like primarily show plants, others don't care as much. Some care about pots, or photos, or trips or all of them. Some care about names, others never have, others did and no longer do!

Similarly, our individual interests may change over time. You might start out liking primarily Tillandsias or Dyckias and find a few years later that you move to other genera, or that you like them even more than you did before!

So it is really up to you to pick and choose what you like, including taxonomy.

Where can you learn more about Bromeliads? Perhaps two of the best sources are on the web. I highly recommend the Florica Council of Bromeliad Societies website. It has an enormous amount of information, and photographs of most species and hybrids. It actually lists 3,935 Neoregelia hybrids, with pictures. Its website is fcbs.org.

Another great website is the Bromeliad Society International at BSC.org. Joining this gives you lots of benefits including a Bromeliad Journal. But the website also has lots of wonderful information for free.

Some of you may wonder where I get information for these articles. The primary work on the entire Bromeliad family is a 3 volume treatise by Lyman B. Smith and Robert J. Downs, published in 1977. It is only about 2200 pages long. It has some very useful keys to the various genera, as well as the species in a particular genus. But it is written for botanists, not the layperson. As such, it is more or less unreadable without a botanical dictionary.

The treatise is the only monograph for the entire Bromeliad family. A monograph describes every species known at that time. Some are written for hobbyists, but not this one. It provides a technical botanical description for each species. Often a sketch of some part of the plant, but no photos.

If you haven't ever read such a description, you might wonder what it is like. Most of you are probably familiar with Tillandsia ionantha, perhaps the most well-known Tillandsia. There are many cultivars of Tillandsia ionantha –if you are not, take a look at the picture of Tillandsia ionantha Ron in the following article.

Smith and Downs describe Tillandsia ionantha's inflorescence like this: "Inflorescence appearing to be a simple abbreviated spike with polystichous flowers, but actually a reduced panicle with axes aborted and the spikes reduced to a single flower each; primary bracts lance-ovate, acute, equaling or exceeding the sepals, membranaceous, lepidote toward apex. ... Sepals lanceolate, acute, 16mm long, membranaceous, free, the posterior carinate, short-connate; petals erect, over 4 cm long, violet, the claw linear, the blade broadly elliptic, subacute, stamens and pistil long-exserted."

Pp 910-11 of the **Flora Neotropica Monograph** No. 14. Huh?

Where to Learn More continued.....

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..... *Where to Learn More continued*

Don't take this the wrong way. This treatise is the most important work in the Bromeliad world. Smith spent his career at Harvard and the Smithsonian Institute and published tons of papers on Bromeliads. Every bromeliad expert and student owes them a debt of gratitude for all their work. It just isn't something that is tailored to the hobbyist.

The other comprehensive work is **The Bromeliad Lexicon, by Werner Rauh**. A bit over 400 pages, it is much more readable, though still somewhat technical in its descriptions. Unlike the Smith and Downs work, it has photos - a real help! And cultivation tips for most species that it discusses. It was published in 1970 in German, and an English edition was published in 1979. You can probably find a used copy under \$40 on the web.

I keep noting the technical nature of the individual descriptions. I am not complaining, however -this is probably a necessity. Take five blooming Tillandsias, and think about how you would describe their inflorescences! "Big with lots of branches and skinny blue flowers" really doesn't work too well. You need to develop terms for the different kinds of inflorescences, and flowers etc. The unfortunate byproduct of this technical "jargon" is that the lay person finds it useless.

There are lots of other books out there, but they aren't nearly as comprehensive. Some are more technical on individual genera or families, while others are for the layperson, often with lots of lovely photographs. The two websites above list some of these books.

There are also lots of articles online, though you have to search for them. I find a lot of the DNA studies this way, and surely miss a lot of them as well! A surprising amount are available for free. As I mentioned at one meeting, much of such an article is incomprehensible, but much is readable. And these articles usually list other articles which you can search for.

Good growing! 

Taxonomic Tidbits – Tillandsia Subgenera I

By Mike Wisnev (mwisnev@sbcglobal.net)

Tillandsia classifications may change quite a bit in the near future. Apparently there are some major proposals that will soon be published.

I have already written about how ligules, traditionally used to distinguish Tillandsias and Vrieseas, aren't as important as once thought. As you might recall, in that article I noted that Jason Grant proposed that 26 xeric Vrieseas be transferred to Tillandsia. *True tillandsias misplaced in Vriesea (Bromeliaceae: Tillandsioideae). Phytologia 75: 170–175 (1993)*. He also proposed that only two of the subgenera of Tillandsias remain as Tillandsia, while five other were under study.

Apparently, not much has happened since then terms of changing subgenera. There have been some DNA studies, and they suggest the current subgenera might not be valid, but felt more intensive study was needed to suggest a change. Given these potential changes, I thought I would read up a bit on the Tillandsia subgenera that are creating the controversies.

As I started the article, I was worried it might be drier than usual. But it turns out that much of it is really about different kinds of Tillandsia flowers, something we all like to look at.

Tillandsia Subgenera I continued on page 5

..... *Tillandsia Subgenera I continued from Page 4*

At the current time, there are six subgenera. There was one more that was changed to a new genus, called *Racinaea*. I will discuss each briefly, some in this article and the rest in future articles. The primary features distinguishing them are their sepals, stamens and pistils. For those wanting a refresher, an earlier article in April 2013 described these terms. See “Bromeliad Botany 101 – The Inflorescence.”

Let’s start with some background. Historically, the Bromeliad family has been divided into three subfamilies - the Pitcairnioideae subfamily (includes *Dyckias* and *Hechtias*), Bromelioideae subfamily (which includes *Aechmea*, *Billbergia* and *Neoregalia*) and the Tillandsioideae subfamily. One caveat – at least one study has shown that there are really more than 3 subfamilies- in fact 8 of them. But the changes suggested there involved the Pitcairnioideae subfamily.

You probably guessed that *Tillandsia* are in the Tillandsioideae subfamily. So are *Guzmania* and *Vriesea*. All members of this subfamily have seeds with tufts of hair that allow them to be carried in the wind, like dandelions. Also, none of them have spines along their leaf edges. (The pointed tip doesn’t count.) So if you have any plant with spines, no matter how small, it isn’t a *Tillandsia* or *Vriesea*. The converse isn’t always true – while most members of the other subfamilies have spines, some don’t!

The *Tillandsia* genus has more species than any other genus in the entire Bromeliad family. Just how many *Tillandsia* are there? Well, that changes from time to time. In 1977 Smith & Down’s treatise listed 402 of them. The last comprehensive study of the entire Bromeliad family (in 1998) said there were 551 species, and another 56 in *Racinaea*. The FCBS website currently lists 581 *Tillandsias* and another 35 *Racinaea*.

Many of the more widely cultivated *Tillandsias* are in subgenus *Tillandsia*. There are well over 100 species in this group. One of the most common *Tillandsias*, *Tillandsia ionantha* is in this group.

Despite being common, *T. ionantha* should be all your collections. There are many forms of it, and a variety of cultivars. Like many *Tillandsias*, its leaves turn bright red when the plant blooms – the red leaves and violet flowers are lovely.

Here is a picture of *T. ionantha* Ron that just bloomed. A different form of *T. ionantha* is above it – with green leaves since it is not in bloom.



So what are the characteristics of this subgenus. Primarily, the long exserted stamens on the flowers. The stamens are the male reproductive organs, the ends of which are called anthers and are covered with golden - yellow pollen. You can see they extend well beyond the end of the violet petals – this is what is meant by “exserted.” The white pistil, the female reproductive organ, is also exserted.

Also, members of this subgenera have erect petals that are normally form a tube – you can see this well in the picture above. Another feature common of this subgenus, and the others, is that they have symmetrical sepals. You can’t see them in the above photo.

Tillandsia Subgenera I continued next page

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..... *Tillandsia Subgenera I continued from Page 5*

A much less commonly seen member of this group is *T. limbata*.

Here it is in bloom



Here is the flower



Like the *T. ionantha* flower, this flower has exserted stamens that extend well beyond its yellow-white petals. You can also see (barely) the yellow-greenish sepals that extend beyond the dark flower bracts on the one open flower.

Consider how different these two plants are. While their leaves are similarly shaped, *T. limbata* is probably more than 20 times larger. It has a long branched inflorescence with lots of flowers on each branch, while *T. ionantha* actually only has one flower on each spike. The petals and sepals are very different colors. Yet they are both members of the same subgenus due to their exserted stamens and erect petals.

Other well-known members of this group include *Till. xerographica*, *exserta*, *fasciculata*, *butzii*, *caput-medusa*, and *brachycaulos*.

Subgenus *Pseudalcantarea* also has exserted stamens. (Given its name, I presume that this group was named due to its similarity to members of the genus *Alcantarea*.) This subgenus has only 4 members! They are generally huge, like *T grandis*, and can be over 10 feet tall when in flower. Their leaves are usually tongue shaped, unlike the triangular leaves of subgenus *Tillandsia*.

From a flower standpoint, the main difference is that their petals are flaccid at anthesis. Basically, this means the petals droop when the flower is open.

Here is a picture of the flower of *T. grandis*. (The picture is from Bromwiki, a site I just discovered.)



As you can see, the flower shape is quite different from the tubelike flowers of *T ionantha* and *T limbata* shown above. Other members of this subgenus are *T viridiflora* (there is a variegated form in cultivation), *T paniculata* and one I have never heard of - *T baliophylla*.

The xeric *Vriesea* that Grant transferred to *Tillandsia* also have exserted stamens. If you are interested, take a look at *Vriesea (Tillandsia, per Grant) espinosae* on the FCBS site. I don't think they have been placed in a subgenus yet.

Next month, I will discuss more of these subgenera; as indicated above, they have stamens that are not longer than their petals.

One last point in looking at your own plants. As you probably know, it can take a long time for a flower to fully develop (or reach anthesis). Thus, you often may not be able to see some of these features, like exserted stamens, until it does. More than once I have tentatively thought a plant might be wrongly named since its flowers didn't have some feature, only to find that next week they did. ◇

SFVBS Regular meeting Schedule

Sat. - Sept 7, 2013	Speaker – Steve Frieze – “Tropical Adventures in Brazil”
Sat. - Oct 5, 2013	Speaker – tour guide, Guerillmo Rivera from Florida
Sat. - Nov 2, 2013	Speaker – Kim Thorpe – “Bromeliads of Oaxaca Mexico” part I
Sat. - Dec 7, 2013	Meeting and Holiday Brunch

- **Thursday Sept 5, 7:00 pm** – LA Cactus & Succulent meeting at the Sepulveda Garden Center. -
Wed. Oct. 23th. @ 6:00 pm. CANGC-*sfv* chapter - annual auction at 9560 Reseda Blvd., Reseda CA;
corner of Reseda and Superior in the Methodist Church, meeting hall. Parking on the side and in the rear.
The auction admission fee is \$5.00 per person.

Local Bromeliad Nursery

Live Art Plants -18809 Plummer St. - Northridge, CA 91324

