

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay Newsletter



www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org

September, 2017



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE SEPTEMBER

September is the month of starts.
Start looking for the heat of summer to lessen degree by degree
Start our fall vegetable gardens.

Start getting our plants ready to sell at the USF Botanical Gardens fall plant sale.
Start thinking about becoming an officer or board member of our club for 2018.
Start looking for cover from hurricanes.

We are beginning the process for nominating and voting for our clubs officers and board members for next year. It is very important that we have a competent organization so that the members can enjoy the benefits.

This also means that all members can be included in our organization whether it is as the president or helping set up the refreshments table to volunteering at the USF plant sales.

The nominating committee is tasked with carefully considering people to properly fit the jobs needed.

So if you are called to be a nominee I strongly urge you to agree and to join our team.
I guarantee that you will not be disappointed in the opportunity to serve our club.

NEXT MEETING, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017
SPEAKER: Robert Nelson, Bromeliad Hobbyist
Program: "Mix 'em / Can I mount this?"

Robert Nelson of Plant City has been a member of the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay for seven years and a bromeliad hobbyist for many years. Robert will be sharing his experiences about growing bromeliads.



Robert will demonstrate mixing and matching various genus which can be grown together successfully in one medium with compatibility requirements such as color, care, light, water, and fertilizer. He will also show bromeliads grown in unusual pots. The program will feature bromeliads that can be mounted and bromeliads displayed on driftwood.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING, AUGUST 21, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Tom Wolfe, vice president

Welcome to our visitor, Sandy, from Lakeland. She heard about our club at the Extravaganza.

Secretary's Report. Motion to accept the minutes as written in the newsletter made y Robert Nelson. Seconded by Pam Slagg

Treasurer's Report: The financial report was read and will be filed for audit.

Old Business: Extravaganza report from Tom Wolfe. Thank you to all volunteers who helped make our Extravaganza a huge success.

Door Prize won by Selma Sappenfield

Birthday Bromeliad won by Kathy Gorman

Show and Tell: Plants were shown by Tom Wolfe - Tillandsia and Neo; Robert Nelson - hybrid from two species; Steve Byram - Tillandsia mounted on driftwood; Verna Dickey - Tillandsia and Guzmania; Kenneth Stokes - Silkfloss and Tillandsia

Workshop - presented by Tom Wolfe "Growing Plants from Seed"

Meeting Adjourned

Extravaganza Celebration:

For our refreshments, several members participated in a pineapple recipe contest. Marilyn Byram won for her "Pineapple Coconut Snowballs". The prize was The Cookbook for Lovers of Pineapple, and other Bromeliads, by Marilyn Howser

"Bingo for Bromeliads" Carol Wolfe led a game of bingo. Prizes were Tillandsias donated by Pam Koide Hyatt of Bird Rock Tropicals, Encinitas, California

Respectfully submitted by Steve Byram, Secretary

BGTB MEETING, JULY 17, 2017



Treasurer's Report



Tillandsia tectorum on driftwood



"Horticultural Display"



Show and Tell - Kenneth Stokes



Verna's Tillandsia



Verna's new Guzmania



Raffle Table



Tom Wolfe - Neo



**Robert Nelson - Extravaganza
Discovery**



**Workshop by Tom Wolfe
"Growing from Seeds"**



Bingo Winner - Rick Hunter



Bingo Winner - Pam Slagg

Dirt's dirt - isn't it?

Bromeliads in their native environment generally develop roots to function as "hold-fasts". That is, they serve mainly to anchor the plant to a substrate which in most cases is either a tree limb or rock. The ability of these roots to supply the plant with moisture or nutrients is minimal at best and often thought of as nonexistent in mature plants. There are exceptions to this (the terrestrial bromeliads, like pineapples, pittcairneas and dykias), but generally speaking, the soil under a bromeliad is not the most important environmental factor in its life. It's often said that the best potting media to use for bromeliads is one that drains well so that the roots and base of the plant are not kept wet for prolonged periods. That's pretty good advice - so how come if you ask three different hobbyists what potting mix they use for their bromeliads, you get three different answers? Everyone, it seems has their personal preference or, perhaps their own secret mix. The truth of the matter, however is that certain basic ingredients can be found in any mix. These are as follows:

Peat - This is the main ingredient in most commercial potting mixes. Peat is organic material produced by long-term decomposition of plant materials. Hang around and watch it long enough and peat will eventually become coal (if you have a couple of thousand years of spare time). Peat is harvested from many different areas in the world and varies somewhat in appearance depending on the source. All forms are acidic and serve to hold moisture in potting mixes.

Vermiculite - This is a mineral (mica) that is expanded by a carefully controlled heat treatment process. The end product is a multi-layered material resembling a tiny stack of pancakes. Vermiculite is very lightweight and comes in several sizes or grades. Some sources may be alkaline in nature and can contain calcium, magnesium, and other minerals. Mixes using vermiculite may compact with age leading to a media that retains moisture rather than one that quickly drains. For this reason, it is often suggested that bromeliad growers avoid this material in their potting mixes.

Perlite - This is another mineral processed by heat treatment – this time resulting in a white, irregularly shaped, lightweight material. Unlike vermiculite, perlite does not compress in a mix. Moisture retention in the potting mix decreases as the amount of perlite added is increased. Dust can be a problem in handling perlite, so a dust mask should be worn whenever working in a closed space with this material to reduce the possible inhalation hazard.

Poly-beads - These are tiny spheres of polystyrene and like the previous two materials, are both extremely lightweight and inert. Unlike vermiculite and perlite, however, poly-beads do not contribute to increased mix alkalinity or add unwanted minerals (some sources of perlite may contain fluoride).

Sand - Oxides of silica and virtually inert, sands are available in different grades ranging from fine to coarse. This will add weight to the potting mix due to the density of the sand particles, but contrary to expectations, sand (particularly the finer grades) can actually decrease drainage by plugging the pore spaces of the mix.

Bark/Wood chips - A logical choice for a potting mix ingredient since many bromeliads attach themselves to trees in their natural environment. Bark is reputed to have antifungal properties and usually is acidic. Both bark and chips add to a good draining mix and are long lasting. In the landscape it is often cautioned that these materials prevent the nitrogen component in fertilizers from reaching plant roots. This is not a problem for most bromeliads since their roots rarely are functional and low nitrogen fertilizers are usually desirable for optimum color development.

Those are the main ingredients of potting mixes. It doesn't seem like making a mix from a blend of these materials should be all that difficult now does it? But take a look at the shelves of any garden

supply store and you will find a bewildering array of potting mixes. Which one should you choose? It all depends on your situation and the plants that you intend grow in the mix. You will notice right away that of all the mixes for sale in that garden supply store none are marked "for bromeliads". It's just too limited a market for the supplier of the mix. He wants to sell a lot of material to a wide range of gardeners and not just to a few crazed bromeliad enthusiasts. The first thing you should look at then is the list of ingredients on the side of the bag. If you see that a large fraction of the mix is vermiculite, you may want to continue looking until you find one with a comparable percentage of perlite or poly-beads instead. If you have had a problem with your mix staying moist for too long, look for one that will drain more quickly (higher percentage of perlite or poly-beads). If, on the other hand, your mixes are often too dry - look for one with a lower percent of perlite. Sounds confusing? It can be as you compare one commercial mix with another. Sometimes I think that the suppliers want to confuse you - so maybe you should consider mixing your own. It's cheaper than buying prepared mixes, and it's certainly simple enough - just buy bags of the individual components and blend them yourself to give you the mix that you feel the most comfortable with.

Confidence goes a long way toward ensuring success in many fields and gardening is no different. If you feel confident that you have the right type of mix for growing your plants, chances are your plants will thrive. Someone else may be equally confident with his mix-which is different from yours yet those plants also will do well. So, if they work equally well, maybe you can see why there are so many different variations of potting mixes out there. Loyalty to a particular brand of mix can be very strong and that's what manufacturers count on. In reality, it's largely a matter of personal preference and most commercial mixes will do equally well for you-especially if you think that they will work well! On the other hand, maybe there is a secret blend out there that will help grow a prize-winning plant. If I could just find the right one...and then there's the matter of that "super" fertilizer made from a special blend of secret enzymes, vitamins, and minerals that will produce grapes the size of watermelons - who knows what it will do for bromeliads...

Before you go off searching for some elusive gardening product that sound's too good to be true, keep that P.T. Barnum quote in mind - there's one born every minute.

Jay Thurrott

Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society

September 1999

Upcoming Events

Fall Plant Festival October 14 & 15 Saturday 10am-4pm Sunday 10am-3pm Botanical Gardens 11:00 Saturday Vegetable Gardening workshop \$5.00 General Admission Children under 12 and USF Botanical Garden members admitted free.



August Birthdays: Verna Dickey, Joy Langworthy, Kay Miller, Shirley Renegar, Linda Reynolds, Lois Sadd, Beverly Sisco

We will have a drawing at the meeting for one of the lucky birthday people to take home a nice bromeliad as a Birthday gift from the club.

Club members celebrating their birthdays also provide the refreshments at our meeting each month. This way everyone helps once during the year. If you have a May or December birthday, please bring refreshments the following month, since we have the picnic and Christmas parties those months. Suggestions: chips & dip, veggies, salsa, crackers, cheese, chicken wings, popcorn, favorite recipes, pies, pizza, brownies, fudge, cookies, cakes, candies, deviled eggs, sandwiches and beverages.



Sunshine Greetings

Please notify Julie Lessard of any illness, surgery, birth of a child, death in the family, or other concerns you or another member may have.

Call 813-662-7972 or email at taxxmaam@tampabay.rr.com

Officers for 2017

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Bromeliads Online

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay - www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/562988247096958/>

Bromeliad Society International— www.bsi.org

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies— www.fcbs.org

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens— www.selby.org

Bromeliads Online - <http://www.bromeliads.co.nz/index.html>

Any Changes?

If your mailing address, email address, or phone number changes, please inform Marilyn Byram at 21535 Northwood Drive, Lutz, 33549 or bgtbnewsletter@gmail.com

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay Newsletter



The Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Inc. was organized in 1963. BGTB is affiliated with the following: Bromeliad Society International, The Cryptanthus Society, Inc., Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc., and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, FL.

When: Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of every month.
Plant sale at 7:00 p.m. Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Where: Christ the King Catholic Church, Mary Martha Center, Room 201-202, 821 South Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa

Informative programs, workshops, Show & Tell, plant sales, door prizes, raffle & refreshments
Visitors welcome!

**NEWSLETTER OF THE
BROMELIAD GUILD OF
TAMPA BAY, INC. 21535
Northwood Dr. Lutz,
Florida 33549**