

# BromeliAdvisory

July 2017



Don Beadle



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Photo of Paul Finlayson on a happy day.



# BromeliAdvisory

Stop and Smell the Bromeliads

**July 2017**

WEBPAGE: <http://www.bssf-miami.org/>

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 <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bromeliad-Society-of-South-Florida/84661684279>

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What	Who
Sales Table	Bello, some billbergia from Finlayson

**JULY 18, 2017 AT 7:30PM AT FAIRCHILD CORBIN A**  
**SPEAKER: Paul Finlayson**  
**RAFFLE TABLE: Alex Bello**  
**FOOD: Usual Suspects**

## About the Speaker

Paul is a long time BSSF member. He makes efforts to come to our meetings as he resides well north of the Flagler Street line. He has shown plants at meetings on prior occasions. Bromeliads were not universally known to people from where he came – United Kingdom. Paul started collecting carnivorous plants 25 years ago in London. A Little Shop of Horrors thing going on? He now concentrates on Bromeliads and Platyceriums. His Talk will focus on Billbergia hybrids, hybridizers old & new, a brief how to, showing some of his top plants and his own hybrids



## President's Message

by Alex Bello

Members,

As I write this message from the emerald coast of northwest Florida, we are quickly approaching the midway mark of the summer in which many of us are enjoying quality time with family and friend. Having fun in the sun or in the garden may be just enough for that matter.

On that note, I must call attention to the



fact that we have an important event coming up next month. That's the FCBS Extravaganza hosted by the bromeliad society of Tampa Bay. It will be quite an event. There will be world renowned speakers, shows plants, and commercial vendors from across the state of Florida. I encourage you to participate and make it a vacation weekend !!!

*Alex*

## In Case You Missed It

by Leonard Goldstein

Most of us in southern Florida know *Cryptanthus* as an interesting genus of small bromeliads endemic to Brazil, but, as Carol Richtmyer explained to attendees at the June 2017 meeting, they are so much more. A past president and longtime editor of the Bromeliad Society of Houston, Richtmyer is now a master judge and instructor of the Bromeliad Society International. And she knows *Cryptanthus* inside and out.

The name *Cryptanthus* is covered (or hidden) flowers. The Orthophytum, *Sincoraea*, and habitats. Some, especially the characteristics. Brazilian working on a revision of the proposed breaking *Cryptanthus* believes that it will happen one

As one might imagine the most prominent characteristic colorful flowers, but none is flowers, most don't keep their exception. Some *Cryptanthus* and some have wider flower large, fragrant flowers.

Richtmyer considers influence in growing in appearance. For instance, *C. 'Kaleidoscope'* can look very conditions under which it is strong influence on ultimate plant



Richtmyer lecturing

derived from the Greek words for genus is closely allied with *Lapanthus*, and they come from similar acaulescent forms, share physical bromeliad expert Elton Leme is *Cryptanthoid Complex*. He has alone into 6-8 species, and Richtmyer day.

from the genus name, flowers are not of *Cryptanthus*. Some species do have flashy. Among hybrids with colorful color. However, *C. 'Sugar Daddy'* is an representatives have fragrant flowers, petals. *C. whitmanii*, for example, has

culture to be a very significant *Cryptanthus*, leading to great variations *warasii* mimics *Orthophytum*, and *C. different* depending upon the lighting grown. Likewise, container size has a dimensions.

The ideal temperature *Cryptanthus* is from 55-65° to 70-90°. Most can survive lows of 40° and highs of 100°. Some can even tolerate lows under 40°. However, some species will show damage when the temperature dips under 50°, and spells of 100°+ highs will cause problems with others. Some plants will even suffer damage from having hot water in their cups.

*Cryptanthus* grows in deep leaf litter on the forest floor. Usually those species with scurfy (scaly or flaky) leaf surfaces tolerate sun, but there are exceptions, such as *C. warren-loosei*. Other species, such as *C. beuckeri*, prefer shade. Soft-leaved species tend to favor lower light. Among hybrids, *C. 'Don Garrison'* likes shade, but can handle greater light.

The roots of *Cryptanthus* are there for more than anchoring purposes. They take in nutrients, so

should not be allowed to dry out. Conversely, good drainage is also important.



With respect to suitable potting mixes for Cryptanthus plants, Richtmyer recommends a good commercial mix, such as Miracle Gro, but adds that peat has been replaced with something less beneficial. As for additives, composted manure is an old favorite, but she also suggests large Perlite, coarse sand, Turface (calcined clay), tree fern fiber, fine orchid bark, lava rock, and expanded shale/Haydite. To hold moisture, polymer can be added to the potting mix. Lack of moisture may lead to cupping of leaves or brown tips a couple of weeks after the fact. In the shadehouse, the floor is a good place to grow Cryptanthus, because it increases humidity. Some Cryptanthus species are saxicolous, growing on rocks; *C. schwackeanus* is an example.

Richtmyer says that a number of fertilizers are acceptable for use with Cryptanthus – Nutricote, Dynamite, Osmocote, Jobe’s Spikes, Superthrive, and other water-soluble fertilizers. As for pests, scale and mealy bugs are not usually a problem. Cryptanthus can tolerate any of the insecticides or fungicides used on other bromeliad genera.

With respect to vegetative propagation of Cryptanthus, pups can be taken from leaf axils, from which they are easy to remove; from stolons; or from the base of a plant. The rule of thumb to follow is that the pup should not be separated until it is one-third the size of the mother plant. Basal (bottom) leaves should be removed, and a rooting hormone can be used. The grower should press the pup firmly into place in a good-quality potting mix. For pups that are hard to root, the grower should consider using New Zealand sphagnum moss, Perlite, or another loose, fine-grained medium. To stabilize larger pups, use skewers of the type available in groceries. Since it is less desirable to propagate during the winter, rooting hormone becomes especially valuable. The pups should not be placed in a dark, cool environment.

Richtmyer, an expert hybridizer, says that crosses are easy to do with Cryptanthus, because the parts are large. Since the plants are not self-fertile, a second plant is a must. She uses tweezers to remove anthers for pollination. The flowers of large-petaled forms of Cryptanthus are more abundant and fragrant. They are also perfect; that is, they possess both stigma and anthers, whereas early flowers of other Cryptanthus species are not perfect, producing only anthers.

It takes about three months before hybrid seed is ready to be harvested. The grower should look for the seed pod to soften; in that state it attracts ants. Pods, which are typically not numerous, turn dark at maturity. To plant seeds, the grower can use standard containers and water, but should apply a fungicide to prevent damping-off diseases. The seeds should be sown on top of the potting mix, and the container should then be put inside a Ziploc or similarly sealable bag and placed in a warm, bright location. Germination time is in the 3-6 month range. When the seedlings are 1-2 in. tall, the grower should open the bag and start normal fertilizing.

Richtmyer feels that most Cryptanthus species have multiple forms, e.g., *C. burle marxii*, *C. brevifolius*, *C. warasii*, *C. leopoldo-horstii*, and *C. acaulis* (some of whose forms are even variegated). By the way, she says that normally it is the species, rather than the hybrids, that variegate. On the other hand, some of the hybrids are very stoloniferous. There are also bigeneric crosses.

Hybridizing is not necessarily as easy as a walk in the park. Richtmyer has worked for 7-8 years trying to stabilize a cross that she appropriately calls *C. ‘Wild Streak.’* She is quick to report that there are many other hybridizers doing great work. Richard Lum was a pioneer, and a number of his hybrids are still popular. Notable hybridizers currently are Steve Hoppin, Ed Edmiston, Doug Cross, and Larry Giroux.

Richtmyer says that Cryptanthus bromeliads make good horticultural and artistic displays. She specifically commends Allyn Perlman, the “go-to guy” in Houston, and our own Urszula Dudek, for incorporating Cryptanthus in their work.

Finally, if anyone could possibly remain on the fence about the desirability of growing Cryptanthus, consider this: How could you resist a genus that has a representative called ‘Key Lime Pie’?

## Amendments to the Bylaws Proposed

### ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 5. Life membership may be conferred upon any person for outstanding achievement or service in the field of bromeliads and this Society. **Outstanding achievement or service service, as used in the prior sentence, means either achievement in the world of bromeliads, or service in the world of bromeliads or service to the Bromeliad Society of South Florida, Inc.** The name of the candidate must be submitted in writing to the Board. If the Board approves, the nomination shall be presented to the Society at a regular meeting. Approval of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary for such life membership to become effective. Life members shall be exempt from payment of dues and may vote and hold office. Life members shall have all the privileges of active members. **No more than 1 life member may be approved by the board in any one year. A spouse or partner may be included with his/her spouse/partner and that couple would be deemed a single life member for purposes of the limitations outlined in the prior sentence.**

### ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

SECTION 6: **All Board meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month, unless a vote is made by the majority of the Board to have the meeting at another date. Any vote to change the date of the Board's meeting may be handled by email transmittal. Such email must be delivered to all Board members with 48 or more hours notice.**

## Fertilising your Bromeliads

Reprinted from East London Bromeliad Society South Africa June 2017  
Written by staff and Craig Nicholas

East London Bromeliad Society received some interesting input from its member Craig Nicholas who is located in Durban.

**Craig Nicholas, Durban:** I have been using slow release fertilizer similar to Osmocote called Planticote for about a year now on my broms. I am only now learning quite a bit from the results, such as how many round pellets to use depending on the variety of bromeliad. At the beginning the thought was to put in a lot of pellets around each bromeliad, but because the pellets are so small it is easy to want to put too many in a pot. This has resulted in some bromeliads becoming too green with stretched out leaves. I have found that with some varieties it is best to not feed or only put maybe small amounts, eg. 5 or six pellets in the pot.

A few examples below:

Be careful with overfeeding lineated varieties such as *Neoregelia* 'Amazing Grace'. You end up losing the great form and shape of the plant as well as the boldness of the lineation. *N.* 'Amazing Grace' should be grown hard for best character. I also like *Neoregelia* 'Shamrock' for its compact shape and markings. I overfed a couple of offsets and they grew up a bit bigger with loss of form as well as colour intensity. I like to see a plant that is grown to its best shape and colour that truly represents that specific variety. Some miniature varieties, if overfed also lose form and colour e.g. *Neoregelia* 'Domino'. It is best to grow it hard or with few pellets. Other blotched types such as *N.*

'Pheasant' will always look better with little to no food. Marmorated foliage will also be affected and faded out by overfeeding. Best to grow these varieties hard with none to very little feeding.

Albomarginated *neoregelia* can get a fair amount of food. Just remember, too much may not affect the colouring of these albo types, but some will lose their form.

*Neoregelia* - variegated: In general give mild feeding, however some food is good due to the fact that variegated plants are weaker due to lower levels of chlorophyll. Banded *neoregelia* such as *N.* 'Hannibal Lector', *N.* 'Shockwave', *N.* 'Touchdown', *N.* 'High Voltage' etc. can take more feeding while still retaining their bold markings. Large *neoregelia* types such as *N. carcharodon* 'Tiger', *N.* 'Spines', *N.* 'Rainbow' etc can also take more feed. Although if you really want that hard form and toothy look, medium to smaller doses of food will ensure that look.

*Billbergia*: –These do not respond well to feeding. The softer leaf varieties which are heavily mottled can lose character and boldness of blotching although the plants do still look healthy. Eg: *Billbergia* 'Connie Tim' when grown hard, is shorter and the boldness and roundness of the white blotching is striking, while taller well fed plants don't have that same intensity of markings. The heavier thorned, thicker leaved *billbergia* seem to be able to be fed more.

*Alcantarea*: – can be well fed with Osmocote pellets as well as liquid fertilizer such as Multifeed. They still need to be grown in optimal light for best results. I also want to add that another alternative to slow release pellets would be foliar feeding such as Multifeed 2:1:2 which is

mixed with water and can be either used with a sprayer or drench using a watering can. This can be done once every 3-4 weeks. This will give the bromeliads a boost with lower concentration of food which is unlikely to change their leaf form and colour but will help with vigour and contribute to healthy foliage.

In conclusion, I think the aim to feeding should be to give the plant a slight boost, especially when younger to get it to a growth stage where the plant can kick on by itself. There are however some varieties which do respond well to more food such as *alcantarea*, *vriesea*, *guzmania* etc. You still want to grow your plants in optimum light conditions, especially when feeding as a plant grown in too lower light plus feeding can result in over elongation of the leaves. An overfed plant may also become a weak plant, thinner flower spikes and poorly shaped offsets which may take two generations of pupping to get those pups back to their true form and colour. For me personally, plant vigour is important and what one must aim for is a healthy plant which represents the true nature, form and colour of the species or hybrid.

#### **More fertilising comments .....**

**Lyn Wegner:** My fertilising 'efforts!' - I don't spend too much time fertilising my bromeliads but it has been my intention for some time to pull up my socks and make more effort! I need to experiment with 2 of the same plant in the same position, feeding only 1 and monitoring the difference if any.

I just want healthy plants with good form, shape and colour. Currently I add a few granules of Vitabooost either to the top of the soil mix if I am just tidying a plant or when repotting I place a few granules at the root level. I probably use about half a tablespoon. I especially like to add the fertiliser to my *vriesea*, *nidularium* and *guzmania*. I sprinkle it on the soil of my *cryptanthus* and alternate with Epsom Salts. I also try to fertilise the crypts monthly with SeaGro when I water. What you put in is what you get out! I need to make time to fertilise!

Another member advised he used to use Osmocote but has switched to Avison which was previously known as Bounceback.

Another comment..... Osmocote is a bead of concentrated fertilizer with a ceramic coating - when it gets warm and wet, some of this fertilizer leaches out and can be taken up by the roots of plants - so - you need an active root system and water wetting the potting mix. This is fine for small pups and seedlings, which make roots to establish - but after that, the tank takes over the role of nutrient absorption. Some people put a teaspoon of

Osmocote on the top of the potting soil, but unless the watering reaches this, it will always remain dry. If you do buy Osmocote, then it must be mixed in with the potting mix when potting up new pups ( 1 heaped teaspoon per 15cm pot) - their roots will absorb this nutrient and use it to establish and grow - it only lasts about 6 - 9 months, once exhausted, the mature plant will then colour up. I pot up with an enriched potting mix that includes some well rotted chicken manure and also Bounce Back/Avison pelletized chicken manure - that is to give the new pups or seedlings a kick start - once depleted, I feed with a dilute inorganic, soluble fertiliser, like Phostrogen or Multifeed, drenched over the plants with a watering can.

### **Plants Are Speaking to Us**

by Robert Meyer

Just a few weeks ago, it was reported that Miami's high of 98 degrees made it the hottest May day recorded in the city, National Weather Service meteorologist Larry Kelly said.

NASA, always concerned about our global weather, wrote, "Most of the warming occurred in the past 35 years, with 16 of the 17 warmest years on record occurring since 2001. Not only was 2016 the warmest year on record, but eight of the 12 months that make up the year – from January through September, with the exception of June – were the warmest on record for those respective months. October, November, and December of 2016 were the second warmest of those months on record – in all three cases, behind records set in 2015."

Anyone wanting more than words can go to NASA's site and look at a graphic which shows the increase in temperatures only arriving the past few decades. Go to:

<https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/thumbnails/image/2016gistempupdateblack.gif>

Nat DeLeon used to tell us that he remembers rain hitting more on the western side of US 1 and noticed a decrease during his lifetime. Something sage from a person who lived here for more than a half century.

According to the website of Climate Central released last year, Florida tops the nation in terms of global-warming heat-risk moving forward. By 2050, 13 Florida cities, including Tampa, Naples, and Miami, are set to see a minimum of 100 days per year of miserable, borderline-intolerable heat-index conditions above 104 degrees. Wow!!!

And, this affects the plants. Especially those which do not receive shade cloth.

And, can the plant which could “take sun” when temperatures were milder still “take sun” with the increased temperatures?

My front years indicates the following response – “no.”

To add to this problem, there are watering restrictions which should be honored.

What are we to do? How about planting trees if there is no shade house?

The city of Miami is already on such a mission. Knowing that Miami’s shade percentage stands at a mere 14 percent, work has to be done as a healthy urban forest should be 30 percent. And, so Million Trees Miami was born – a master tree plan that lays out all the details of their endeavor, including which trees to plant.

The mission is large – 838,000 trees to plant by 2020. And, the effects of these plantings will improve air quality in addition to providing increased shade.

And, even though the Miami project excludes palms, planting palms is not something out of the picture.

Heat is oppressive to us *and* to the plants. We have to remember that the changes of the environment will affect the plants we grow. Take heed of this fact, and make arrangements.

### NEW MEMBERS PLEASE COLLECT YOUR BADGES

We have 16 new members. Your membership entitles you to Membership Badges. We have them. Come to our meeting and pick them up. Ask for Maureen. She holds the badges.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

July 14-16, 2017

**Ree Gardens Sale**  
7860 SW 124 ST. MIAMI, FL  
9:00 AM to 4:30 PM  
305 232-2257



**Caladium Festival**  
July 28-30, 2017  
Stuart Park  
Lake Placid, FL  
<http://www.lpfla.com/caladium.htm>



### Bromeliads by the Bay Extravaganza August 4-5, 2017

Clarion Hotel  
[www.clariontampa.com](http://www.clariontampa.com)  
813-971-4710  
2701 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL 33612  
813-971-4710  
<http://www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org/news>  
Rate guaranteed by hotel until July 13, 2017

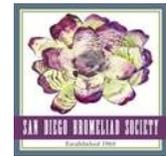


**Registration:** \$100.00 per person  
After July 25, 2017: \$110.00 per person  
**Registration includes:**  
**Friday Night:** Barbeque Buffet  
**Saturday:** Plant Sales 9 AM to 4 PM  
Seminars with guest speakers  
Raffles  
Silent auctions  
Banquet and Rare Plant Auction  
**Sunday:** Optional Garden Tours

**TPIE**  
**January 17-19, 2018**  
1950 Eisenhower Blvd. at  
Port Everglades  
Fort Lauderdale, FL  
33316-4205  
<http://remote.fn gla.org/tpie/Fort-Lauderdale.aspx>



**World Conference**  
May 29, 2018-June 3, 2018  
San Diego, CA



### ALL DONATIONS WELCOME

Anyone able to donate glass/crystal is welcome to call Barbara SPArling and make arrangements to have the same delivered. One of the greatest feeling sis getting the crystal, and we aim to continue that tradition with economic haste. Please donate if you can.

