

BromeliAdvisory

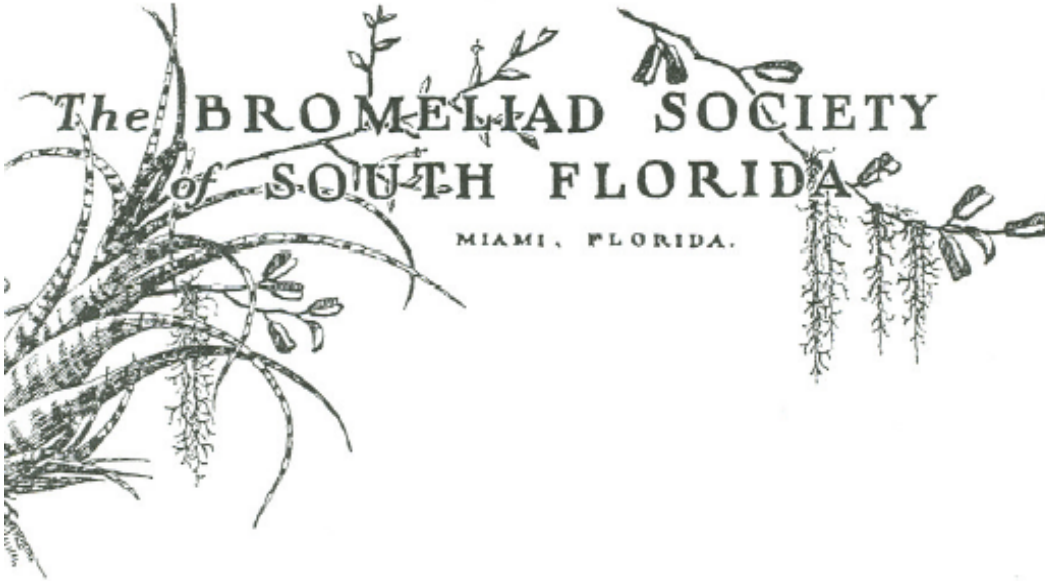
September/October 2017



BROMELIAD Rehab

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BromeliAdvisory

Stop and Smell the Bromeliads

September -October 2017

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



<http://www.facebook.com/groups/BromeliadSF/?bookmark t=group>



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

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What	Who
Sales Table	Mike Michalski

OCTOBER 17, 2017 AT 7:30PM AT FAIRCHILD

CORBIN A

SPEAKER: Alan Herndon et al – Getting Ready for the Spring Show

RAFFLE TABLE: Robert Meyer

About the Speaker You Missed Because of Irma

Gregg DeChirico was to speak in September. 'Gregg's Greenhouse', a nursery located in Santa Barbara, California was his start. Ecuador's 16 vegetative eco zones, from mangrove marsh to montane cloud forest, and savanna to lowland Amazon basin lure Gregg as Ecuador is a nature photographer's paradise. The presentation was to be a slide show of Ecuadorian paradise. Ouch.



About the October Speaker: Alan Herndon

Alan "the Professor" Herndon will lead us in preparing for the Spring Show. With approximately 150 years of horticultural experience, Alan should provide all members with incites which are new or otherwise not well known. Alan will be accompanied by formidable and knowledgeable minions.

WORLD CONFERENCE IS AT PARADISE POINT



Editor's Message

by Robert Meyer

After 12 years, we again are sledgehammered by Mother Nature. The good news she delivered to us a hurricane which was not a category 5. The bad news is that our landscapes are shredded, our homes affected, our psyches altered, and our always positive belief of life under the Miami sun and moon possibly ebbing.

So Irma is now gone. Hope all of you fared well. What do we do to gather ourselves? Go shopping? Why not! The auction has been

delayed for 1 month. Giving you time to prepare your place, add some shekels to your pocket, and come to our Auction with greater enthusiasm. This is *our* Auction. The Auction is *our* largest fund raiser. And, it comes when you may most need plants. We hope you can gather your spirits, gather your friends, come to the **November** auction, and make the last few months of this year highlights after a surrendering-of-the-spirit September.

Robert

Adventures of a Novice: Part I

by Ed Prince

Reprinted from BSI Journal Vol 44, #4

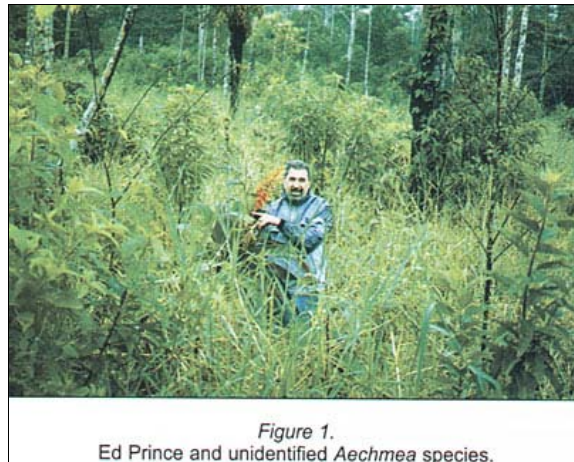
[Ed took a trip to Ecuador – see how rugged it can be.]

Intended to segue with DeChirico lecture

I'm not exactly certain when the notion of going on a bromeliad collecting trip, and my decision to actually take the plunge, occurred. It's one thing to attend a monthly meeting featuring a speaker recently returned from some exotic tropical locale and say, "Someday I want to try my hand at collecting," and actually do it (figure 1). I suspect the picture of Dennis Cathcart (you know, the one in his *Tropiflora* ad) was central in my making the decision. I mean, I'm not even a minor player in the bromeliad big leagues. Moyna, my patient spouse, is the real enthusiast and grower. I just build the occasional shade house or bench.

It was fortunate that we had become friends with Wally Berg, an experienced collector and grower of unusually fine specimen plants. In a moment of weakness he agreed to allow me to accompany him and Chester Skotak on a collecting trip to Ecuador. Needless to say, I was the designated number three man in matters both minor and major.

Our base of operations was the Hotel Zumag in Quito, a city of modern beauty and old world charm, both of which were absent from the Zumag. The daily rate of U.S. \$19 [\$40 today] including private bath with lukewarm water made it tolerable.



We departed on the morning of Monday, July 11th, 1993 and headed southeast toward Baeza on a road that would take us up and over the mountains. We had rented a 1992 Chevy Trooper with four-wheel drive (don't leave home without one) and on pretty decent roads made our way over the Andes reaching altitudes exceeding 12,000 feet. All along the slopes we saw a great variety of plant life,

including several dazzling bromeliads in full flower. Although easily accessible, none was collected as its chance of survival in Florida was nonexistent. The scenery surpassed all expectation and was, in a word, glorious.

Between Baeza and Tena the altitude dropped to below 3,000 feet and we started to see plants that would, given the proper care,

survive in South Florida. I constantly shouted (from the back seat) "Stop the car, did you see that!" Chester or Wally would say, with just a hint of exasperation, "Yes, Ed, I saw it. That's not a bromeliad but a red leaf of a this or that." In all fairness to them, they never said anything to curb my enthusiasm but encouraged me to continue spotting as, who



Hotel Zumag

knows, I might actually see a worthwhile plant. By day's end we were in Tena, a town apparently built around a huge statue of an Indian. After rejecting two hotels that left everything to be desired (I finally asserted myself) we discovered the Hotel

Mol, which had clean rooms and private baths. The owner/operator kindly cooked us a very good dinner of chicken and potatoes. Regardless of what your guidebook recommends, in Tena go for the Mol.

Tuesday morning found us on the road to Lago Agrio, an oil boom town. The road surface changed from basic unpaved rock and clayish mud to an oily sludge that made for smooth driving but literally got onto and into everything. To make it even more interesting, the rain began and continued for the next sixty hours, or so. All along the roadside we saw the type of tropical vegetation you dream about: orchids in full bloom, heliconias of every size and color, and yes, bromeliads in profusion. Whenever possible (but not too frequently as most bromeliads were nestled on the top branches of trees far too tall to reach) we stopped to gather plants that were for the most part either totally unknown to Wally or Chester (everything was unknown to me) or a different variety from those presently in their collections.

We arrived in Lago Agrio at almost sunset and immediately sought lodging. The town was teeming with oil-industry folk and consequently good accommodations were few and far between. We were really fortunate to get a single room containing four beds on the top floor of the Hotel Colon. The fact that hot water pipes didn't even reach the top floor was of little consequence as we were delighted to have a place to sleep. Nothing like a cold shower to take the chill off on a

cool rainy night. We had dinner in the hotel dining room: chicken and potatoes. For any purists who are still reading this narrative in the hope of learning what we actually collected, please skip to the last paragraph where plant names and locations are revealed.

Wednesday morning after a breakfast of instant coffee and bread, we aimed for Putumayo and drove to within five miles of the Colombian border. We turned around with no regrets as the available bromeliads were the same as those collected earlier. We spent the rest of the day looking for and occasionally finding some different plants, for the most part aechmeas.

For readers who had not had the pleasure, I think it's time to spend a few lines describing the actual act of collecting a bromeliad. Step One, of course, is to spot the plant, which more often than not seems to be just a few yards off the road in a tree and just begging to be a part of your collection. Step Two is the discovery that between you and the tree is a medium-sized valley filled with a typical Everglades swamp. Step Three is (it won't be easy) reaching the base of the tree and realizing your plant is just a bit higher than



Another way to handle roads

you first estimated. In Step Four you discover that in the wild, bromeliads are super-glued to the limbs they so delicately cling to. The Final Step is holding your new prize in your own hands and watching all the previous tenants (most of which sting or bite or both) race to see which will claim your various body parts. But don't be discouraged, think of the fun and excitement you're having, and you're only two or three thousand miles from home. It's especially adventurous when you do it in the rain.

Wednesday night was a replay of Tuesday: same hotel, same room, same dinner. Thursday's objective was to reach Coca, another oil boom town. We had no major mishaps on the way unless you count getting a flat tire and finding your jack is broken. With our luck, an American petroleum worker

stopped to help and we were soon on our way again. This was AECHMEA country and we saw them everywhere. We think we may have collected one plant that might turn out to be a real find. It is just possible that it might be *Aechmea anomala*, a beauty that hasn't been seen for many years (figure 2). Harry Luther will render the verdict.

On the outskirts of Coca we caught our first sight of *Aechmea romeroi*. It was in a lone tree standing in a field of grass and shrubs populated by a few cows. The fact that we could see only heads and horns gave rise to the suspicion that perhaps the ground was not as solid as we would have wished. That condition was verified by Chester as he approached the tree and appeared to grow shorter with every step he took. "I don't think I belong here," (a classic Skotak understatement) signaled surrender. After removing his boots and dumping the muddy water, he saw another handsome specimen a few hundred yards up the road and was able to collect it.

Chester is an excellent driver, it's his judgment that I sometimes fear. Having arrived in Coca and there still being an hour or two of light remaining we decided that the exploration of a "new" road (not on any presently existing map) would be in order. After a few miles it seemed to end at a small but swiftly moving river. As there was no bridge to be seen, I suggested we make a U-turn and call it a day. Chester saw the lack of a bridge as a minor inconvenience and forged on. When the water level approached our feet I envisioned disaster whereas Wally merely remarked that it was deeper than it looked. Somehow our Trooper not only reached the opposite shore but repeated the feat on our return.

We made it to Coca and obtained rooms at the Hotel Oca. Fairly clean, but once again, no hot water. We discovered at dinner (chicken and potatoes) that because of all the rain there had been a major landslide and the road to Quito was closed to all traffic (figure 3). In the event you are wondering why there is so much emphasis on hotels, food, road conditions, and the like rather than on the bromeliads we collected, the simple truth is that it is much easier to write about a subject of which you have a little knowledge rather than grope and fumble over a subject that is almost totally foreign. The information

relating to the identity of the plants collected is courtesy of Wally, Chester, and in some cases, Harry Luther.

We left Coca at six the next morning; no breakfast; not my idea of a good start. As this was our last day of collecting and as we had already accumulated quite a few nice looking plants, both Chester and Wally were very particular regarding any new acquisitions. About midmorning they spotted some completely different looking plants on a dead tree that was overhanging a fairly deep chasm. Wally literally took a dive (about ten feet headfirst) but fortunately was not permanently damaged. With the help of a young Indian, the plants and Wally were successfully retrieved. Wally said that a few bruised ribs were all in a day's work. It turned out that those were the last plants collected.

We arrived at the site of the landslide four hours after the road had reopened and were in a long line of heavy trucks and buses that traveled single file over a section of road still under muddy water. The rest of the trip was relatively easy. Arrived Quito tired but triumphant.

In five days we had covered about 1200 kilometers on roads designed for Jeep TV commercials, crawled and climbed in and on some very inhospitable territory, collected some (we hoped) new bromeliads, obtained various bites and bruises, and in short, had a blast.

A final thought: Just do it!

Tips on Compost

Reprinted from East London Bromeliad Society South Africa Newsletter August 2017
Written by Christo van Wijk

After being hit by a hurricane,. Compost seems to be in every yard

To rejuvenate used potting mix in 24 hours:

Break it up with a garden fork and remove the old roots and stems. I do this by passing it through a sieve of 15 x15mm chicken wire with a spade, tapping it slightly releases the mix and smaller particles to below the sieve and keeps the larger particles and roots on top of the wire, these can go to the compost heap.

The roots can also be removed by hand if it's not a lot of mix.

Then mix the potting mix with some quick release 7:1:3 (lawn) fertilizer, about a cup full to a cubic metre of soil. Wet it thoroughly, make it into a heap, and cover it in plastic over night.

It's ready for use the next day and since the fertilizer is quick release it won't affect the colour of the new broms long term, though I would rather use recycled mix for other plants, like ferns or Anthurium, or as a mulch in the garden as it tends to be more water retentive than fresh mix would be.

Making compost from bromeliads or bromeliad leaves:

Whole bromeliads don't die easily, so they take a while to become compost, but if the base gets cut or twisted off the plant is dead (usually). The leaves will also need to be cut into smaller pieces so they can decompose faster, there are a few ways of doing this... if you have lots of time on your hands, or just a few plants or leaves, they can simply be cut up with scissors. A shredder can be hired if you don't own one, but this is expensive, and usually not worth the amount of compost you will get.

My trusted method is to soak the leaves or plants in water for a day or two, then simply chopping them up on the ground with a sharp spade, like you would chop a head off a lettuce! The water gets soaked up and makes them more brittle.

To make them deteriorate faster you can mix 1tsp of Epsom salts to 5L of water / or 1cup of brown vinegar to 5L water and pour this over the intended compost. You can also use old dirty water from an aquarium or fish pond to get the bacteria started. Remember to cover it up with plastic or frost cover to limit evaporation.

FCBS Meeting in MIAMI

Interested? It is at the home of Mike Michalski and Patty Gonzalez on October 28, 2017 at 1PM. They need to know who is coming. So email them at pgonza7782@aol.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**FCBS Meeting at
Michalski/Gonzalez Home
October 28, 2017 1PM**

R S V P by emailing
pgonza7782@gmail.com
Address in our directory



November 10-12, 2017



FTBG Ramble

10901 Old Cutler Road
Coral Gables, FL 33156
Phone: 305-667-1651

<http://www.fairchildgarden.org/events-community-outreach/fall-garden-festival>

**November 21, 2017
Annual Bromeliad Auction**

10901 Old Cutler Road
Coral Gables, FL 33156
Phone: 305-667-1651



**Bonnet House Museum & Garden 11th
Annual Orchid, Garden &
Gourmet Food Festival
December 2-3, 2017**



900 North Birch Road
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304
(954) 563-5393

<http://www.bonnethouse.org/news/orchid-festival/>

**December 19, 2017
Bromeliad Holiday Party**

10901 Old Cutler Road
Coral Gables, FL 33156
Phone: 305-667-1651



**January 19-21, 2018
Chocolate Festival**

10901 Old Cutler Road
Coral Gables, FL 33156
Phone: 305-667-1651



<http://www.fairchildgarden.org/events-community-outreach/events-details/artmid/486/articleid/1164/12th-annual-international-chocolate-festival>

**April 21-22, 2018
Bromeliad Annual Show and Sale**

10901 Old Cutler Road Coral Gables, FL
33156
Phone: 305-667-1651

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



MESSAGES

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.

Special Thanks to Donors of Crystal

Barbara Sparling and the BSSF thank the following people for donating crystal: BARBARA PARTAGAS, ROBERT MEYER, MIKE MICHALSKI, KARL GREEN AND MAUREEN ADELMAN, SKY PALMER and LYNN FIEBER

If You Got'em, Donate'em Crystal or Give Donations for Awards

Anyone who has previously well deserved and won crystal from the Bromeliad Show is urged to recycle and give the same to Barbara Sparling who handles the awards for the show.

Anyone wanting to donate for awards needs to merely give Barbara an email or call.

Time to Renew Your Membership

Attached is a renewal of membership form. If not received by early next year, you will **not** be included in the membership book and receive other benefits. Thanks for your appreciation.

Badges Wear Them

We make some pretty neat badges. They help our fogged aged memories for names. Starting next month, anyone who wants a door prize **must** be wearing a name badge. This way we will better address one another by name. FYI – do not put the badge onto anything which may be affected by an external magnet.

Uncle Mike Needs You

Mike Michalski again spearheads our Holiday Party in the winter. Remember to pitch in. Cook for the potluck. Greatest event of the year, no?

Elections Coming Up

Folks. There are many positions available for our board this year. Get involved. Meetings are a blast. People bring food, vino and pizzazz. Contact

Donate Plants to the Auction

Don't rely on others to deliver plants for the Auction. The Auction – now being held in November – is our largest fund raiser. A plant from a member here, another from a member there, adds up to \$\$\$'s for the organization. All it takes is a walk around the yard, review of the plants, picking a few choice items, cleaning the same, packaging them in a pot, and delivering them to the auction. We appreciate all donations!!!

HELP Needed for Food

Sandy can't lug the heavy items any longer. Give us a hand and help her lug the heavy items these coming months when we have shows, auctions and more. Thanks.

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
BSSF, Inc.
2018 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

(PLEASE PRINT) NAME(S) _____

(Couples - please include BOTH first names)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

ADD'L. TEL. _____

Year Joined BSSF: _____

Referred by: _____

Include e-mail address in the roster? (Y/N) ☐ Yes ☐ No

E-mail BromeliAdvisory? (Y/N) ☐ Yes ☐ No (You will not receive a hard copy)

EMAIL _____

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS DIFFERENT FROM LAST YEAR,
PLEASE **HIGHLIGHT** OR UNDERLINE

Please renew my(our) membership in the BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SOUTH FLORIDA for
the period of March 1, 2017 to February 28, 2018.

Check the category: ☐ Single membership \$25.00
☐ Dual membership \$35.00

Dual members enjoy all the privileges of active membership, but receive only one
copy of the BromeliAdvisory.

**DUES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 1, 2018, IN ORDER FOR YOU TO BE
INCLUDED IN THE 2018 ROSTER**

Please mail completed form and check

(Payable to BSSF, Inc.) to:

Maureen Adelman
9421 SW 134 Street
Miami, FL 33176

Or E-Mail this form to:

mhadelman@comcast.net

You can pay up to 5 years at the rates described above.