



BromeliAdvisory

August 2010
BSSF Officers 2010

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

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Hospitality: Elaine Mills

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Member Plant Sales: Antonio Arbelaez

Raffle: Mike Michalski

Refreshments: Patty Gonzalez

What	Who
Sales Table	Antonio Arbelaez

AUGUST 3, 2010, 7:30 PM

SPEAKER: – Peter Kouchalakos

RAFFLE TABLE: Bob Mills or Peter Kouchalakos

FOOD: Maureen Adelman, Kenny Strong, Carl Bauer, John and Kathy Leach

PETER KOUCHALAKOS RETURNS

Peter is a long time member and officer of the BSSF. After becoming a lawyer, he emigrated to retail sales in the world of orchids, and now orchids and bromeliads. To many barristers, his decision is deemed efficacious and proper. Having served on most, if not all, of the directorship roles, he has been a main leader of the organization over the past few decades. For many of the recent years, Peter's voice was the horn to the auctions and raffles. He and his wife, Clara, have grown a business known in the community as PCK Orchids and Exotic Plants.. Run with his wife Clara, PCK is a botanical corporation which retails and sells plants and other services to parties in the greater South Florida area. Peter lectures before numerous organizations at numerous venues on bromeliads and orchids. His lecture with us will focus on bromeliad growth and landscaping in Miami's Zone 10.5.

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President's Message

by Robert Meyer

We attempt to endure the heat of this summer – which when contrasted to the splendidly cool winter seems even hotter than it may be – we must also acknowledge that this year is special as it includes the even-year convention a/k/a World Conference.

By the time most receive or read this publication, the World Conference will have closed, and undoubtedly the Board will have engaged in the elections which are required by the by-laws of the organization. It is very possible that the President and others in the hierarchy will be Floridians, and even one member of our society may be a director of the BSI. One member, Nat DeLeon, an Honorary Trustee” since 2000.

Our supplier of articles, Alan Herndon, was incapable of lending time for the usual two or three or four articles as he will attend the Conference be a speaker at the same.

Numerous plants will be driven to the premises by Pepe Donayre and wife Sara, who recently overcame a bout with fracture, and the two will present to the auction many of the plants of this and neighboring societies.

In sum, the BSSF will have a significant impact on the BSI world and World Conference. This can led all of our members to reach one conclusion: this organization offers great depth to Miami-Dade and to the world.

To all those affiliated with this contribution on behalf of our organization, I thank you all.

In Case You Missed It

By Robert Meyer

Ray Lemieux came to speak to us about numerous aspects of different varieties of bromeliads. In lieu of a powerpoint presentation, Lemieux showed us numerous plants in his collection. It was a touchy-feely experience.

In years past, Lemieux has left the members sharp memories of his stabbing plants to

encourage more growth of pups – but no plant was ready for such dramatic demonstration on this occasion.

A few secrets to his business were delivered. For his *Orthophytum albopictum*, he would drop the plant in a free draining soil made 75% of perlite and 35% of potting soil. And, this plant which is coined an “upper pupper.”

He showed us *Dyckia* and informed us that they are not like orchids, but instead like “their space” and cannot enjoy being crowded.

As to handling seedlings, he waters them twice a day. His fertilizer of choice? 20-10-20 or 10-10-10.

If anyone is fortunate enough to obtain a *Deutercohnia longipetala* think VO5 – keeps going. It appears *Deutercohnia* inflorescence is the source of regrowth, so he advised owners not to cut it off as the same keeps multiplying.

Fertilizers 201 (The next level after 101) for the Homeowner

by Craig Morell

One of the biggest problems I see in horticulture – at least throughout this area – is plant malnutrition. I realize our soil conditions are poor. Hence, all the better reason to add some sort of fertilizer to your care regimen.

The issue of “feed or not to feed” is a longstanding debate; but, I have some hefty evidence that better quality and more weather-resistant plants come as a result of better-fertilized plants. If you don't believe me, stop in at Pinecrest Gardens to see a wide variety of well-fertilized plants. See if you like the look, as opposed to the half-yellow, tired looking plants you see on so many boulevards and parks in the county.

Healthy plant diets are surprisingly easy to come by. And, even more surprisingly, healthy plants are obtained by purchasing items which are cheaper than you might think.

De-mystifying the feed / no-feed debate.

There are some people who feel that if we choose only native plants, we'll never need to

worry about fertilizing them in the landscape. Therefore, a whole landscape made out of native species needs no care, right? Most commercial growers will readily tell you that these species have adapted to living in low-fertility soils, but that doesn't make them *intolerant* of fertilizers.

We have several dozen native species here at Pinecrest Gardens, and they thrive under a regular fertilizer program. The same holds true for many bromeliad growers, where the case is a little stronger for a low-fertility diet in order for the plants to color up as much as possible. I would say that this idea will produce a VERY slow growing crop of plants, and you will have reduced care for your landscape: the so-called "zero-scape" model. You'll also have reduced plants.

In the home landscape, though, a solid case can be made for a regular (not the same as frequent) fertilizer program. I've spoken widely on this topic, and can suggest a one-step program for success. Here it is, folks, the **Semi-Famous One-Step Program for Overall Landscape Success**: *Feed your entire landscape, evenly and wall-to-wall, (except for concrete, your home, and the pool), with 12-4-12 Improved Palm fertilizer, every 3 months, at the rate of 1 pound of fertilizer for every 100 square feet.*

Pretty simple, yes? This regime is capable of feeding grass, trees, fruit trees, bromeliads, palms, and annuals. I wouldn't suggest you use this much fertilizer on tree ferns, but overall this recommendation covers most landscape plants. This idea follows recommendations about overusing high-nitrogen fertilizers, like turf fertilizers. You don't have to feed your grass with the 29-5-3 stuff from that really popular grass fertilizer company with the great TV ads. The 12-4-12 Palm fertilizer will capably grow what you need to grow, and will actually slow down grass growth.

For those of you with orchid or epiphyte collections, liquid fertilizer is okay too; but, the same suggestions apply about using lots of nitrogen. My own favorite choice is Peters Excel 15-5-15 Cal-Mag, an excellent all-purpose fertilizer that's a little tough to find. OFE Orchid Supplies carries it, and it isn't very expensive.

Here's an insider tip: if you buy the 25 pound bag, split it up IMMEDIATELY into 1 gallon zip-lock bags, or the fertilizer will get mushy within just a few hours after opening.

Liquid fertilizer can be a great tactic for boosting the color of plants, or for feeding epiphytes mounted to trees. Many off-the-shelf fertilizers like Miracle-Gro and Miracid all work, but are heavy on nitrogen, leading to a lot of foliage and not much else. If you are a bit creative you can wrap up a tablespoon or two of Dynamite fertilizer in some aluminum window screen, then staple it to a tree trunk just above a mounted plant, or wire it to an orchid basket and the plant will be fertilized for about 6 months at every watering.

There are so many ways to fertilize plants that the choices themselves can be confusing. In some lectures, I've mentioned that caring for plants is exactly as easy as child-care: the basics of climate, food, water, attention, and knowledge still apply in both cases. Strong people and plants are the result of good environment, adequate attention, and good diet. I'm advocating a regular fertilizing schedule, using a balanced fertilizer, to attain good growth.

A regular fertilizer program will definitely make plants grow, but you can control how fast, and how well they grow. A little care and advance planning on your part makes for better plants.

Clone Preservation Project Update

by Alan Herndon

Aechmea fosteriana was first collected by Mulford and Racine Foster during their 1939 trip to Brazil (detailed in their book *Brazil - Orchid of the Tropics*). It is a tubular plant with wide, strap shaped leaves that are up to 2 feet long. The leaf surface has irregularly shaped, dark, usually incomplete cross bands with a matte green ground color. The inflorescence is composed of spreading branches. Flowers are separated from each other. In other words, it has a totally

different appearance from *Aechmea orlandiana*. *Aechmea fosteriana* var. *rupicola* is similar in overall appearance to typical *fosteriana*, but has a shiny green leaf surface without any crossbands.

I currently have 4 different collections of typical *Aechmea fosteriana*. These represent at least 3 separate clones. The one I have had the longest came from the collection of aroid specialist Monroe Birdsey in the mid 1970's. It is characterized by a dark green ground color and drooping leaf tips.

I do not know what the original source was. Monroe Birdsey did some collecting in Brazil, and may have brought back the plant himself. Two of the collections, one from Curt Dowling (through Moyna Price) and the other from Ralph Davis (through Eloise Beach) are similar in appearance and may represent the same clone. The green color on the leaves of these plants is lighter than found in the Birdsey clone, and the leaf tips have less tendency to droop.

The other clearly different clone was obtained from Elton Leme by John Anderson (I received it through the good graces of Karl Green). In this clone, the cross bands are straighter in appearance, and more continuous, than in the other clones. This gives the clone a darker appearance overall.

Selby Botanical Gardens living collection contains a plant reported to be a descendent of the type clone from Foster's collection (Sel 1979-1767). I do need to add a note of caution concerning this plant. According to the Smith and Downs Monograph, Foster made two collections of the species from the same site approximately a year apart. Only the descendants of the 1939 collection could be considered descendants of the type clone, since a specimen made from this collection was originally designated the holotype (Foster 177).

If the Selby plant is a descendent of the

1940 collection (represented by the specimen Foster878), it must be treated as an early collection without any connection to the type. This holds true even if Foster was able to collect plants from the same vegetative clone in both years. In either case, this is a very important clone to preserve in cultivation. It is possible that evidence bearing on the relationship between the two collections is awaiting discovery in the Foster archive at the University of Central Florida.

Aechmea gurkeniana and *Aechmea milsteiniana* are similar in vegetative appearance to *Aechmea fosteriana*. I have recently had the opportunity to compare the flowers of *Aechmea gurkeniana* and *Aechmea milsteiniana* with those from *Aechmea fosteriana* and *Aechmea orlandiana* and found all shared the same relationship between the petals and stamens.

Other potential members of the *orlandiana-fosteriana* complex, such as *Aechmea bambusoides* and the recently described *Aechmea atrovittata* have not been available for study yet. *Aechmea correia-araujoi* is another potential member of the complex that I have not studied in detail.

No species in this complex appears to be self-fertile, much less to set seed without pollination. You should assume that at least two clones will be needed to produce viable seeds for any of the species. However, it is quite easy to cross *Aechmea orlandiana* and *Aechmea fosteriana* with each other and with other *Aechmea* species (consider the number of reported *Aechmea orlandiana* hybrids). Of course, if you have humming birds around (they tend to be around when plants of this complex are in bloom), there is always a quick little beak ready to cross-pollinate any two open flowers that provide a sip of nectar. The fruits turn blue when seeds mature inside.

If you find these seed-filled fruits, you can try your hand at growing some seedlings.

These will all be hybrids, of course, and it is unlikely that any will be worth propagating, but it could be interesting to spend some time trying to figure out what the unknown pollen parent might be.

I need to make some comments on *Aechmea* 'Bert', the hybrid between *Aechmea fosteriana* and *Aechmea orlandiana*. I have some plants that probably came from Foster's original cross (although this is hard to prove given the uncertain distribution of the Frase hybrids); they basically do not have any of the orange colors present in the leaves of *Aechmea orlandiana*. Plants currently for sale as 'Bert' are much more colorful, and have better form, than these old clones. These newer clones could be remakes of the original cross, or the result of more complex crosses within the complex. Since these clones are just as large as the original, they are clearly not *Aechmea* 'Little Bert'.

I don't know what *Aechmea* 'Viktor' looks like, so, in theory, this name could apply. However, since no separate cultivar names are attached to these newer clones, we will probably have to come up with new, artificial names (think Clone 1, Clone 2 ...) to distinguish them. Unfortunately, this also means we will probably never be able to decipher their history.

The variegated form of *Aechmea* 'Bert', although readily available, has apparently never been given a cultivar name. It is apparently unique in the way the variegation skips generations. Offsets of variegated plants frequently lose all trace of variegation, but offsets from these plants also frequently appear with fully developed variegation. This trait means you don't want to discard plants that have lost variegation.

It also suggests that you should grow this plant in a clump in order to maintain some variegated rosettes at all times.

As always, if you have any information to add concerning plants in this complex, please let me know. In particular, information concerning older clones still in cultivation or wild-collected plants from some of the many BSI members who collected in Brazil over the years would be welcome.

Murder in Corbin A

Parts 4 and 5

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4.

On Wednesday morning, after her Tuesday evening meeting with the BSSF at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Mary Silverman would start her day with a cup of coffee, a bagel with a smear of cream cheese, and a telephone call to her closest morning friend, Irene Standish. Usually just after the second ring, Irene would pick up the phone and not say hello, but confidently say, "Isn't it a beautiful morning for a walk Mary?" And Mary would always respond in the affirmative, and they would agree to meet within 15 minutes at Irene's house, which was directly next door to Mary's. This ritual had been experienced so many faultless times, that Mary could not remember a time when the phone was not picked up and spoken to in such a manner. But, this morning was not a ritual. The phone rang endlessly, mostly because Irene was from the old school and did not believe in answering machines. It was a beautiful day for a walk, and Mary knew Irene would not miss the opportunity unless something dire occurred. She immediately looked out the kitchen window to see Irene's driveway. Her car, always parked in the driveway beneath her large Southern Oak, was not there. Mary hung up, put on her slippers, and ran next door.

She rang the door bell. No one answered. She knocked on the front door. No response. Neighbors began to peer from their entryways, noticing that Mary was at Irene's, where the car was not in the driveway. Some left their homes in bathrobes and slippers, and started small talk with Mary about the missing car, how Irene would not miss a walk this beautiful morning, and other assorted topics which acknowledged

that they too thought something extremely odd was happening. They kibitzed about how to discover where she was, with whom and more. It was then that Mrs. Sanchez walked out, called her husband, a Metro Dade officer, on her cell phone and asked if he could find out anything about Irene. Within seconds, her face dropped, she froze, and the cell phone slipped from her fingers and landed on Irene's lawn. "Ella es muerte. Asesinato."

"Did she just say murder?" "Who would do that to Irene?" "Why would anyone murder that old woman?" "What is happening to this city?" "This is insane!" "I am speechless." "I do not know what to say." The various responses bounced around in and out Mary's ears. Ricocheting about her mind, she couldn't focus on the topic. She lost all sense of the time of day, what she had been doing, even where she was. Numb in the toes, and rubbery in the knees, she felt her body leaning to the right. The lack of sensitivity to the lower extremities increased and all mental efforts to reverse the process received a response of further lack of sensation. This give-and-take battle for consciousness was ultimately lost, and Mary fainted on Irene's lawn. When she awoke, she was in an ambulance on her way to Baptist Hospital. Head still fuzzed, and eyesight still acutely distorted, she breathed in the fresh oxygen provided by the mask, inhaled and fell back to sleep.

The police scanners mentioned that an emergency rescue team had picked up a woman at an address which the diminutive detective knew was of the murdered woman. He immediately told all around him to hush while he reached for a pencil and took notes of where the ambulance was proceeding, and scribbling the little other information provided by the police scanner's voice. He snapped his fingers, had his associate Defective Rodriguez run to him, instructed him to get the car and meet him out front, and the two were off to Baptist Hospital.

"Say Boss," Rodriguez said while driving to their destination and trying to see if the impending event would lead to something exciting, "do you think this lady will have any good information to give us on the murder?" The boss coolly sat back, with legs protruding

forward and not touching the floor while attempting to comfort himself in the car, and stated, "No. This is a classy place. This is a place where good things happen. Babies are brought to the earth here. Heart surgeries are successful here. Medical facilities with information for police need to be earthy, full of impoverished people, full of scorn and grief and remorse. This ain't such a place."

"You mean a place like Jackson Memorial, right Boss?" And, the lead detective knew he had taught Rodriguez something in his tenure, and leaned a little further back, and said, "Yes mi amigo. Like Jackson."

5.

Just as the words "Jackson Memorial" rolled off his tongue, the lead Detective thought that he had overlooked something. Like, why not make a stab-in-the-dark phone call to Jackson Memorial to see if anyone for any reason had gone to its emergency room between 1 AM and morning, for reasons involving plants or cuts or whatever may link that event with his homicide. Instructions were summarily given to Rodriguez to handle this while he took his short legs into Baptist to question the woman who fainted on the lawn.

As he strode to the bed, Mary did not know what was happening to her eyesight. A visage of a man, about thirty-five to forty years old was walking toward here. Lying prostrate on the bed, with her head tilted to her right, his body seemed awkward. His head was lower than the nurse's as well as everyone else in the foreground – as well as the background. She squinted a few times, wondering if her fainting spell had affected her eyesight – and would this last forever, she wondered. As the man approached the side of her bed, he pulled out a leather billfold from his pocket, showed it to her and spoke out about his name, service to the Metro Dade County, how he was involved with the suspected murder of Irene Standish, and would like to ask her a few questions. She nodded, still wondering to herself if he was a midget or a dwarf, and he proceeded with the questions. Like Paul, she knew of no one who would be inclined to murder her neighbor, nor of any person who even would have a grudge

against her neighbor. Unlike Paul, she had something he wanted – a complete list of the membership of the BSSF. It was in her home, and he could have a copy, or call the president, who could provide the same if she was unable to leave the hospital. Upon noting the president’s phone number, he thanked her for her time and left.

While driving back to the station, Rodriguez called the president who said he could provide an e-mail with the list. The offer was graciously accepted, and before they were in front of their computer screens in the precinct, the detectives had the list at their fingertips. They scanned the list quickly, hoping to see if the list would have the name of someone they knew had a propensity to get into trouble or who received common invitations from the squad to help out in doing things like standing in line ups or being asked questions about recent events in the neighborhood.

“Cunjo!” cried Rodriguez. Anticipating a break in the case, Boss asked for him to speak out. “Oh, not for the case Boss. This here is the divorce judge of my case. He let the wife have it all. Man, that guy was no friendly hombre. He skinned me alive in that court. I will never forget his face. Hey, do you think this could be a bad omen? Is this some kind of curse. This woman’s death is taking me to a place and time that I would have to tell you was the bottom. The worst time in my life, bro.”

“No, this is no bad omen. And, there may be silver in the lining in that cloud, my dear friend. Why don’t we take a drive over to his home? Show the badges, walk around the premises a little. And, scare him into thinking that we have received a word from a source that he and the deceased did not get along, and all the members knew about their lack of compassion for one another. You want a little redemption? Are you in?”

The two rolled down the street giggling about what they would do to make the old judge’s life miserable this particular morning. When they got to his home, they fulfilled the script. Pulled out their badges, hinted that there was animosity between he and the deceased, walked around his home to make him more nervous, and giving him the open door provided to

anyone, “Why shouldn’t we just take you downtown now? Tell us a good reason to leave here with an empty back seat?”

“I’ll tell you why,” the judge said while clearing his throat in nervousness, “that woman was no normal member. She was a seller of rare species. She dealt with traders and importers – some legal and some not legal. Do you get my drift?” Knowing the drift meant that he had to provide the cops with names of people who would corroborate this assertion, the judge provided five names. All on the membership’s list, with phones numbers, cell numbers and e-mail addresses.

Volunteer for Raffle Table

Contact Mike Michalski to be the party who delivers the plants for the raffle. Why? Two reasons – helps you clean out the yard, and you get to keep a piece of the pie. If you wish, you can donate your portion to the BSSF

Want to Write an Article

Write about anything that tickles your fancy. This is not a scientific journal, although Alan Herndon’s pieces are well worthy of publication in the same. Articles over the years have included humor and more. The common denominator has always been one simple item: bromeliads. Give it a whirl.

Great Bromeliad Internet Addresses

<http://fcbs.org>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw205>
<http://mybscf.org/>
<http://fcbs.org/cryptanthussociety/>
<http://www.bsi.org/>
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