



BromeliAdvisory

May 2008
BSSF OFFICERS 2008

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Raffle: Peter & Clara Kouchalakos
Refreshments: Patty Gonzalez
Photos: Michael Schmale

What	Who
Sales Table	Antonio Arbelaez

JULY 1, 2008 , 7:30 PM

SPEAKER: Dennis and Linda Cathcart "Bromeliads in South Africa and other adventures"

RAFFLE: Dennis Cathcart will be selling (see P 3 article)

FOOD TABLE: Doris Boiesen, Joy Von Wald, Betty McQuayle, Chieng Manlee

Go West Young (Wo)Man



Dennis and Linda Cathcart

After months, quarters, years of discussing the utilization of such an excursion, talk has become a reality. The BSSF is going west – to Sarasota that is.

The BSSF has engaged in the leasing of a bus to Sarasota to see no less than two of the three great bromeliad nurseries/grounds of the area: Selby Gardens, Tropiflora, and Michael Kiel. And, if all goes well, food may be provided.

The trip will be on a bus driven by professional, which bus holds a great amount of storage below. The cost will be \$30.00 to each member, who will also be asked to help in the tip at the end of the journey. The cost of gas alone, should you drive the headache-causing I-75 commute to Sarasota would exceed the cost of this trip. And, the storage provided to each member should exceed even the large trunks of the worst offender of gas guzzling. And, if all goes well, food may be provided on the other coast.

Although I may read like a Ron Popeil sales pith, the cost of this trip is too-good-to-true. Don't let this slip past you.



Scheduled to occur on August 9,

2008, we ask that all interested deliver their deposit to the Bromeliad Society of South Florida no later than July, 2008 – the date of the meeting. Don't miss this one.

Editor's Note: If you are a member of the FTBG, you get into Selby free. If you have a family and friends membership, you can get others in as well. Do not forget to bring your FTBG card with you on this trip.

VA Request

Located at 1201 NW 16th Street, the VA Hospital is engaging in the finishing touches of a recent improvement program which improved the facility's entry, second entry and other grounds. The BSSF has entered into an agreement to help soften the asphalt-laden improvements with sweat equity labor and plant donations. The initial project is at the front entry. If successful, other projects may ensue.

The project will require a substantial amount of support of the organization. Anyone interested should contact Peter Kouchalkos at cpkouch2@aol.com.

Get Your Name Corrected

Dear Council Reps and Friends,

The state roster will be published as the August newsletter for the Florida Council.

Please send your updates, corrections and changes to me no later than our July 1 meeting so your society will have the most current listing of members. Could you ask your members - even publish in your newsletters - to check their rosters from last year to ensure their information is correct.

Culture Lecture

Beginning this October, the BSSF will hold culture lectures at 6:45 at the Corbin Building. A quarterly program, members will be treated to expert advice as to how to better handle, grow and treat their plants. In October, nurseryman-hobbyist Mike Michalski will lead off the series. Don't miss it.

Publications for sale – from Australia
As part of our effort to provide information about bromeliads, we will have some basic culture publications available for sale at the regular monthly meetings. Currently, we offer the most recent (2003) edition of Bromeliads, A Cultural Manual published by the Bromeliad Society International. At a price of \$3, this manual provides a good introduction for anyone just beginning to develop an interest in the plants of this family. It covers basic culture, and gives more detailed information on some of the commonly cultivated genera. There are also a sufficient number of enticing color photographs to stimulate your desire to learn more.

A more advanced introduction is provided by Starting with Bromeliads, a publication of the Bromeliad Society of Queensland. This is a larger book, and covers cultural techniques that go well beyond the basic. One of the best features of this book is the large number of color photographs of bromeliads grown in Australia. We sell it for \$20.

For those interested in studying bromeliads in depth, we have some complete year sets of the Journal of the Bromeliad Society. The Journal provides a running history of bromeliad cultivation with articles ranging from cultural tips to stories of adventure in the search for bromeliads to descriptions of newly found species. Journals published between 1976 and 1989 are available for \$7 each year. Journals published from 1990 afterwards are \$10 each year.

JULY MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to new member **Bob Benaim**. His address is 17850 SW 280 St., Miami, FL 33031. Telephone: 786-243-0502.

Lois Bullis has recently moved. Her new address is: 717 Farnsworth Ave., Pascagoula, MS 39567.

The roster has an incorrect telephone number for **Bruce McAlpin**. The right number is 863-674-0811.

Number for **Robert Meyer** is incorrect, the proper number is (305) 668-3344

Reach Out and Go

This Society has three great opportunities coming within the next several weeks.

At the beginning of July, volunteers can congregate at the VA to help soften the concrete slab poured recently in the hospital's reinforcement and facelift. The durable goods are poured, now it is time to deliver plants to the gray jungle which will brighten the entry with color and make the harsh slabs about the entrance become less uninviting.

On **August 9, 2008**, the organization is off to Sarasota – and in style. To Marie Selby Botanical Garden, Tropiflora and Michael Kiel's. If we are fortunate enough to hit that trifecta, we can then ride peacefully home in a motor coach which is being partially subsidized by the society. The cost charged to each member will be **less than the cost of gas**. And, no wear and tear – on the auto or your psyche. No traffic to worry about. Just lean back, and let the driver do the hard part.

Then on **August 29, 2008** it is the Extravaganza at Tampa. One more time to get out of the house. If you have not made reservations, try try again. This should be every bit as good as the prior two and we all enjoyed the prior two.

Man oh man – what a calendar is set for the bromeliad lover in you. Three great events. One for a good deed, one for adventure, and one to show support and have fun. Call, e-mail or do whatever you can to join in.

CALENDAR

BEGINNING OF JULY:

VA Hospital
1201 NW 16th Street
Need 20-30 volunteers

AUGUST 9, 2008

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
811 South Palm Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34236

Tropiflora
3530 Tallevast Road
Sarasota, FL 34243

time permitting:
Michael Kiel

AUGUST 29, 2008

Extravaganza
4400 W. Cypress Street
Tampa, FL 33607

About the Cathcarts

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Byline: Robin Roger

Oct. 3, 2006--MANATEE -- They have traveled to more than 25 countries collecting rare species of plants. In the process Dennis Cathcart has broken a vertebrae in his neck and been hit by a falling boulder. She has had a gun held to her head and had scorpions covering her hands. While sweet-talking their way past border patrols and meeting head-hunters in Borneo, they have also discovered many new plant species. Three even have their name. But some people still do not know about Dennis and Linda Cathcart and their business Tropiflora, which celebrated its 30th anniversary this weekend. "We've had some crazy adventures," said Dennis, 58. "We've been bitten and stung by all kinds of things. It's a way of life; it's not just a business."

At Tropiflora on Tallevast Road, the Cathcarts have around 6,000 species of rare and exotic plants, including orchids and bromeliads. Bromeliads are their specialty, and they have more than 4,000 species of those. The nursery carries plants native to South and Central America and also creates its own hybrids on site. The Cathcarts have three types of customers: those from the mail-order list, local landscapers and people who buy them and sell them at weekend markets. One-third of the plants are sold wholesale and the rest are sold retail.

He compared his business model to organized chaos. "From the outside it looks like stuff is flying everywhere," he said. "But then they produce a really nice product for a good price." "A few years ago, before the hurricanes, the business was at its peak and sales were bumping at around \$1 million," Dennis said. "We're at around \$1 million now, but we should be a lot higher."

The owners' children have no interest in taking on the business, the Cathcarts said, but they are making plans to structure the company so it continues on after them. "It would be a shame for it to close down," Dennis said. Their daughter, Robin, 33, is married to a chiropractor and has two children. Their son, Scott, 30, has a degree in history and manages a Moe's Southwest Grill. "We're not selling the land or the nursery, so I keep hoping," said Linda, 59.