

# **Bromeliad Society of Broward County**

## **JUNE 2020 SCURF**

[www.bromeliadsocietybc.com/](http://www.bromeliadsocietybc.com/)



*Neoregelia 'melanodonta rubra'; Photo posted by Marcus Broms in the Philippines*

**BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY**  
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## **Meeting Update**

We're told that Deicke Auditorium will be remain closed through July due to the pandemic. Based on the survey data that we collected prior to the pandemic, the majority of members responding voted to eliminate summer meetings from June through August and restart the monthly meetings in Sept. It appears at this point that September may be the earliest Diecke reopens regardless of our desire to meet. Should that change we will let you know.

The survey also determined that several members were interested in visiting a nursery or two during the summer so we will reach out to a few and determine if that's feasible. Once we know more, we will be in touch to get a list of those interested. Enjoy your summer!

**Affiliations: BSBC supports the BSI, Cryptanthus Society and FCBS (2017-2020)**





# Beyond The 'Jungles'



One of the more popular genera of bromeliads among seasoned growers and enthusiasts is the family known as *Portea*. They are well known for spectacular blooms that last for weeks and here in south Florida you'll commonly see established colonies of the most popular one, 'jungles'.

We have several members in the BSBC who have exquisite *Portea* colonies which are the talk of the block when they are in full bloom. However, when not in bloom, several species *Portea* can truly look like dense, green 'jungles' with little color.

This non-blooming period combined with some fairly aggressive teeth, make this genera one that beginners and those with container gardens often shy away from. *Portea*'s have been known to fill a small garden bed up in just a few seasons and will keep even the heartiest of landscapers at a distance which perpetuates even more growth and density.

As brom hybridizers look beyond *Neos*, *Aechmeas*, and *Vriesea*'s for inspiration, *Portea* hybrids have become more common place. Some choose to vary the bloom color while others strive to replace the typical lime-green foliage with colorful blends that are almost as spectacular as the blooms themselves. So here are some images that show just a few of the varieties now available.



*Portea 'alatisepala'*



*Portea alatisepala 'best clone'*



*Portea 'helga tarver'*

This group of *Portea*s were recently spotted at Tropiflora in Sarasota, FL. As you can see, the foliage colors are a far cry from the typical color you associate with *Portea*s. Each of these is unique from the other and give year-round color to anyone requiring a full-sun bromeliad.

Of course don't forget about the 'bite' these gorgeous plants have! The black spines on the 'helga tarver' (above right) are as sharp as the contrast between them and the foliage.





*Portea 'cool'*



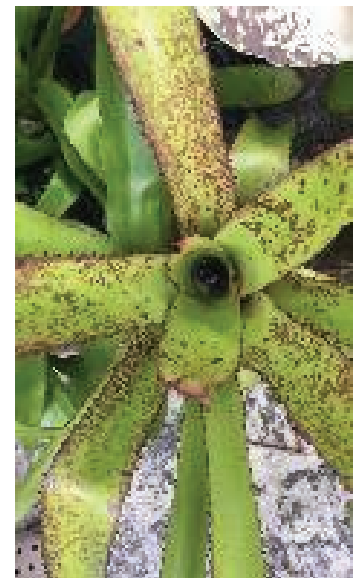
*Portea 'ruby'* Photo by Kirrily Roberts



*Portea 'ruby' in bloom*



*Portea 'alatisepala'*



*Portea 'sandstorm'*



*Portea 'top secret'*

The variegation of Portea 'top secret' (left) is just another way cultivars are adding more interest to this family of bromeliads.

If you're looking to expand your collection beyond your current favorites or maybe you're looking for a full-sun species that you haven't grown before, consider what Porteas have to offer... and then get some really thick gloves. You're going to need them!

# From Our Gardens

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*Billbergia 'brasiliensis'*

This lovely bloom (left) comes to us from Gina Havens. It is a Billbergia 'brasiliensis' and she tells us it is one of a couple she's had for a while, but this is the first one to bloom for her.

Billbergia blooms are often quite spectacular as they cascade downwards, but they are some of the shortest lived blooms in the bromeliad family of plants. Unlike the inflorescent spikes on Aechmeas and some Porteas that can last for weeks, most Billbergia blooms may only last for a few days so enjoy them while they last and take lots of pictures!

Fortunately, Gina had her camera close by so she could snap a photo to share with us. Thanks, Gina and enjoy the bloom! Sadly, most Billbergias are also known to be a little stingy when it comes to producing pups.

Here's something different for this segment.... an amazing recipe from a member who prefers not to use chemical pesticides to control normal garden insects and pests. Apply once a week with your sprayer or more frequently if you have an invasion of insects. Once the plants start to recover, use it in every 2 weeks or so to get rid of pesky pests.

## **Things You'll Need**

- 2 Whole Garlic Heads (Separate and peel the cloves)
- 2 Tablespoon Turmeric powder
- 2 Tablespoon Cayenne pepper (Or use any other hot pepper variety)
- 2 Small Squirts of Dishwashing Liquid
- 3 Cups of Mint Leaves (Sprigs included)
- 12 Cups of Water

## **Preparation**

Step 1- Add garlic and mint to crush it in a food processor for a few seconds. Once done, add the water (in the quantity mentioned above) and pepper to the mixture.

Step 2- Transfer the mixture into a pot or boiler to boil this solution for a few minutes.

Step 3- Once boiled, remove from heat and let this sit overnight. That's all, your natural pesticide spray is ready.

Step 4- Now strain the solution and add the liquid dish soap into it. Keep the solution into a bottle or sprayer.

## **How to Use it**

Shake well before using it every time. Spray the solution all over the leaves of affected plants, don't forget the undersides. The best time to use it is when the day is cloudy, preferably in the evening or in the early morning, but not if rain is in the immediate forecast.



## June Birthdays



Robert Moorman

Ann Schandelmayer

Hal Wiggin

## Special Birthday Celebrations

This year marks the 56th year that the BSBC has been in existence. While the actual date passed without us celebrating due to the pandemic, it's a huge milestone for the society nonetheless.

The first recorded meeting of the BSBC was on April 12, 1964 and it was officially incorporated in the state of Florida on March 6, 1965. All these years later, what started with 12 charter members continues to exist despite horrific hurricanes like Andrew and now even a global pandemic.

Come Sept. when meetings can hopefully resume, we will take time to celebrate not only our perseverance and determination to get beyond this latest hurdle, but also to honor our founding members and those who have been apart of the BSBC through the years.

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Another special birthday celebration took place this past week. Ann Schandelmayer turned 98 years young and is still trying to get back on her feet after months of being home bound due to an injury late last year.

Several of our members visited her during her week-long celebration and she was a gracious host as always! Her spirit and zest for life continue to inspire those closest to her and her desire to once again walk in her gardens keeps her going.

She's been reminded of studies that show how centenarians throughout the ages have lived to 100 and beyond because of the benefits gardening has given them throughout their lives. If there's a chance it can be done in our group, Ann's the one!



# From The Editor



Did you hear the one on the radio about a hurricane and a global pandemic walking into a bar? It was a cute marketing bit, but it does make those of us living in south Florida take a second to ponder “what would that look like?” Joking aside, many of us live in areas prone to damage and flooding even with mild storms. Being prepared this year may be more involved than just stocking up on food, moving some plants, and “battening down the hatches.”

You already know how your weekly shopping has changed so collecting other items will also be more involved. If you plan to travel, chances are your regular resources may also have new restrictions so plan ahead to stay safe!

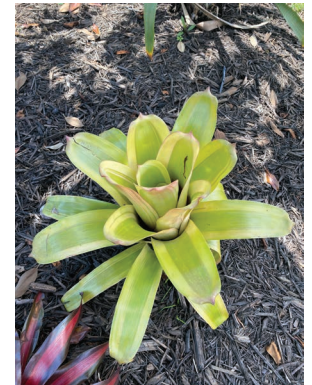
I visited several nurseries this month to purchase plants for a project I was doing. I love going to a nursery to see what’s growing and if it’s one I’ve not been to before, it’s almost “new iphone” excitement! So without further ado, here’s some before and after shots of my recent projects.



I was asked to breathe new life into this and several other beds on a 70-unit town home property. One board member said “It’s a blank canvass, Rembrandt, paint.” Say no more!

The bed on the left had 20+ years of over growth including dozens of wild palms, hardwoods, and other assorted plants. Ironically, this photo was actually taken after they were just trimmed to half the height they were the week before. The poor magnolia tree was literally buried to the first limb!

I decided to remove the back section of the original bed to form a new tear-drop shape and fill that bed primarily with broms. I then laid a pallet of sod covering the back section which made room for a small hardwood tree that would live between this bed and the butterfly garden I put in.



There was a recently deceased palm tree fifty yards away that they asked me to remove. Never wanting to pass on a valuable resource, I reached into my advice column from last month’s Scurf and decided to move it and turn it into a bromeliad tree!

The far left photo is after I buried it about three feet deep so it doesn’t blow away. It will take a year to rot completely so I’ll keep my eye out for a fallen oak tree down the road. The residents love it!



The next bed was asymmetrical with a lugustrum on one end that provided a lot of shade. While clearing the old growth, I found two other trees that had died and been overrun by the variegated grass jungle.

I decided to step away from bromeliads and create a cacti/succulent bed. The bed is smaller and gets full sun all day making it a perfect spot to create a low-maintenance bed full of color and textures!



*Butterfly garden "before" shows a neglected bed with no life*

This long, narrow bed sits isolated in full sun making it ideal for a lush butterfly garden! Once I removed the old plants, I added a yard of good top soil mixed with compost to create a curved berm.

Bria and I planted over a dozen varieties of plants that will provide food and color year round for the butterflies, bees, and residents. My favorite is the kitty cat whiskers!



*Kitty Cat Whiskers*



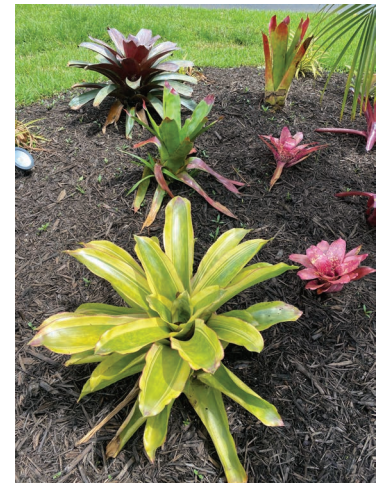
*The plants have all started to take hold and are growing fast!*







These two separate beds were the largest ones in this project and took some effort to rehabilitate. Like the others, they were filled with sprouts from everything the wind can carry. Exposure is mostly full sun with some shade provided by the 4-trunk Robellini palm. This made it a perfect place for some larger, sun-loving bromeliads as well as others that thrive in morning sun and even a few that prefer more shade. The photos (above) are after plant height was reduced 50%.



*Plants include Alcantarea 'julietta', Neo. 'mexicana', Aec. 'ampla', Aec. 'pinot noir', and Aec. 'alvarez' among others*

Like the other bromeliad bed, I reduced the size to allow for separation adding another pallet of sod for ease of maintenance and to create more definition between the beds. I typically gravitate towards symmetrical layouts, but I chose to rotate this one a bit so that it's focus was as you drove out of the complex rather than from a passing street view. I left plenty of space for all the pups that will come along and a couple residents have told me they've already made room in their own collection for any "strays". There's even talk of starting a community gardening group!

Overall, this was a fun project and the residents are pleased with the outcome. Some even plan to attend one of our meetings once they resume. I added over a thousand feet of wire and 28 LED landscape lights so the plants can shine throughout the night! I also revamped several other beds (not shown here) as part of the face lift in this Deer Creek community. It wouldn't have been nearly as spectacular without Shirley Konefal taking a day off to meet me at one of her favorite nurseries and help me pick out plants. Thanks, Sis. I owe you!

*Until next time,*

*-Brad 9*



# Upcoming Events, Things to See

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We will be reach out to several of the top bromeliad nurseries in the region and see which ones are open to a small group of 15-20 members who'd like to visit and of course purchase some plants for their own collections.

As soon as we have a list of potential nurseries and some dates, we will send out an email blast to get a head count of those who are interested. We may also plan a trip back to the Naples Botanical Gardens or possibly Marie Selby Gardens in Sarasota in late summer for any members who wish to attend. Both are beautiful gardens and worth making a day trip to Florida's west coast to visit!

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Since we haven't been meeting, you probably didn't know that Shirley and Richard Konefal had their multi-unit apartment building up for sale. While the pandemic certainly made listing and selling a property of that size more difficult, they were able to close on it a couple of weeks ago and now have to prepare for the move.

Of course it's a bitter sweet time for them as they built the property and have spent decades growing a wide variety of plants there including a gorgeous Rainbow Eucalyptus tree that you simply must see!

So what does this mean for you? They will be holding a sale in the coming weeks to reduce the number of plants they have to move. Everything from orchids to tillandsia creations and of course plenty of broms will be up for sale. This is a collection you just have to see so we will update you in plenty of time to attend!

