

BromeliAdvisory

**40th ANNUAL
SHOW & SALE**
FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN
MARCH 24-25, 2018
9.30AM - 4.30PM

**BROMELIAD SOCIETY
& SOUTH FLORIDA**

Join us 7.30-9.30pm on the third Tuesday of the month
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
Coral Gables, Florida

design Urszula Dudek

In This Issue

About the Speaker	1
President's Message	2
In Case You Missed It	2-5
Selecting Plants for Display	5-8
Upcoming Events	8-9
Messages	9
Show Entry Form	10



BromeliAdvisory

Stop and Smell the Bromeliads

March 2018

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	Chip Jones

MARCH 20, 2018 AT 7:30 PM AT FAIRCHILD CORBIN A
SPEAKER: Chip Jones [Terrestrial Bromeliads]
RAFFLE TABLE: Barbara Partagas
FOOD: Usual Suspects

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

[From Jones Landscaping Website]

“Our plants perform well and look great. Eco-friendly, bold textures, esoteric exotics, native plants, and good sizes for immediate impact in residential and commercial landscapes are what we offer.”

“If your needs are plant related then Jones Landscaping can help. We provide personalized service for small and large jobs. With a degree in Horticulture, years of experience in landscape construction and maintenance, and a passion for plants we can bring joy to your garden. From lawn services to specimen trees to new construction we do gardens.”

Interested? 5301 SW 82nd Avenue, Davie, FL 33328, open by appointment, call 954 296-2019, or email chipjones14@hotmail.com

PREPARE PLANT VOUCHER FOR SHOW

The last page of this advisory is the form you should fill out **BEFORE delivering your plants to FTBG on Thursday.** If you do not know the species or whatnot, don't worry. Stab at it. Lynn Fieber and others will be there to review your entry to assure accuracy. But, getting item to Alan Herndon BEFORE Thursday is important as he can save that hard time of preparing for other chores when the labeling etc must occur. Email forms to Alan at Aherndon37@outlook.com

President's Message

by Alex Bello

Spring is around the corner and even though winter has tried to make several comebacks this past week. Our landscapes and gardens are showing some spectacular displays throughout our area. Our Annual Show and Sale is literally days away. And, I am very eager and excited that I will see you there participating and volunteering at the Show. Most particularly, those who are entering plants. If you need any questions answered or anything regarding our Annual Show and Sale please don't hesitate to call anyone on the Board or our Phenomenal Show Chairmen Alan Herndon.

See you all at Fairchild!!

Alex

In Case You Missed It

by Leonard Goldstein

February's program could well have been titled, "My Sojourn with Guinea Pigs: Things I Never Told My Wife." But more about that later.

The actual topic of longtime collector Dennis Cathcart was "In the Wilderness with Bromeliads," and the large crowd assembled for his latest slide show presentation to the BSSF was treated to a photographic survey of a wonderful array of plants from the Americas. The evening was made even more auspicious by the rare appearance of Steve Correale, longtime collector and breeder of Tillandsias.

The first segment of Dennis's program was **Bromeliads in Seaside and Coastal Plain Habitats**. The Restinga, a broadleaf forest of eastern Brazil, can be rocky or mountainous, and it provides a good illustration of the toughness – and variability – of many bromeliad species. *Tillandsia neglecta* occurs in several colors on rocky coastal exposures. *Neoregelia cruenta* is another variable species native to similar habitat. It's often seen on dunes or rocks, but rarely in trees. One variety is solid red and tubular. *cruenta*, and in nature features a soft largest species in the genus, broad surprisingly, the closely-related and can handle saltwater spray.

Tillandsia araujei can grow species: After it has been growing other plants, including cacti, orchids, *blanchetiana* grows right on the green rather than the colors that we because plant collectors tend to bring they encounter.



Tillandsia neglecta

Vriesea neoglutinosa looks much like *N. leaf*. *Aechmea floribunda* is possibly the with a 10-12 ft. inflorescence. Not Alcantareas also thrive in this habitat,

on bare rock. It is a type of pioneer awhile, its debris can provide a home to rhipsalis and anthuriums. *Aechmea beach*. In that setting, the plants are know in Florida. That's understandable, home the odd-colored specimens that

Bromelia humilis grows thickly in northern Brazil and southern Venezuela. Other species are less numerous. *B. humilis* has a bright red center. It is a popular landscape plant along highways in Venezuela, where it catches trash cast from passing vehicles. It is cold-tender in central Florida.

Beautiful Tillandsias abound in western Venezuela, among them *T. roland-gosselinii* and *T. concolor*. Nevertheless, development has reduced their populations.

Some bromeliads, along with representatives of other plant families, grow on rooftops in southern Brazil, which has a climate like that of Georgia and South Carolina. One can see Vrieseas and Aechmeas, as well as ferns and cacti.

The coast of Belize features mostly mangrove habitat, much like Florida. *Aechmea mexicana* is common, and turns very red in the sun. Dennis wryly noted that there are only 900 miles of paved road in Belize, almost as much as in Kendall. Accordingly, collectors must go off-road to see something unusual. They can travel rough logging roads past stands of *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*, the Paurotis Palm, which is also native to southern Florida. *Tillandsia streptophylla* is encountered along the way, growing in sun or shade. It's a tough plant, and it harbors ants, possibly in a symbiotic relationship. *T. brachycaulis* is ubiquitous in the area, but lives in shaded locations. It is reminiscent of *T. variabilis* of Florida.



Dennis then turned to Panama's formidable Darien Peninsula, where there are lots of coastal rivers, but only one road! Although still largely unexplored, its forest is being decimated. *Aechmea strobilina* and *Guzmania plicatifolia* are found at somewhat higher elevations, maybe 1,000 ft. above sea level. Rivers that flow into the Caribbean Sea are placid, but, due to tidal differentials, those that empty into the Pacific Ocean are rough.

In the lowlands of Panama, one can find *Aechmea pubescens*, a species no longer common in Florida. *A. magdalenae* has green and variegated forms, grows large, and forms big thickets. Unfortunately, this species doesn't bloom in Florida. *Tillandsia flexuosa* varies across its huge range; it has a bulbous form in the Costa Rican mangrove habitat.

Dennis's second subject was **Bromeliads in Deserts and Other Arid Locations**. He believes that Mexico has the most remarkable deserts. Teotihuacan has Hechtias, which don't really like deserts. While many species look alike, male and female plants may be morphologically different.

Hechtia texensis grows large and vicious. In the South American desert, *Deuterocohnia* is a Hechtia lookalike. They are, in fact, very distant relatives. *Deuterocohnia*'s perennial inflorescences are not uncommon. *D. lorentziana* is very small, silvery, and clumping, a contrast to standard *Deuterocohnia* growth habit. Its leaves are very stiff, with nasty terminal spines. It is easy to grow.

Tillandsia magnusiana in Mexico is much like some species in South America. Its thin leaves help it resist strong sun. They also grow sideways. *T. atroviridipetala* is small and cute. *T. tectorum* lives in a rainless forest in Ecuador, but its leaves get wet from daily fogs. It is mound-forming in nature; the dead leaves inside the mound stay moist from the fogs and keep the plant cool, even though its rock host may register a temperature of 150°. Florida's humidity, 30% higher than in this species' native habitat, is too great for it to handle.



Other Tillandsias are found in the same area. *T. lymanii*, a tank-type species, features leaves that are thick and leathery. Euphorbias and cacti are among the few other plant species that grow there.

The Peruvian deserts are also very dry. *T. heteromorpha* and *T. cereicola* occur there. *T. latifolia* lives on sand in a rainless desert, along with other Tillandsia species. As in the rainless desert of Ecuador, these species rely on nightly fogs for moisture.

In Mexico, there are lots of cliff-dwelling Tillandsias. *T. mitlaensis*, native to Oaxaca State near Mitla, has evolved to fit its niche: It bends toward the cliff, making it less likely to get knocked down by debris hitting it.

Concerning the next subject, **Bromeliads Native to High, Dry, Arid Lands**, Dennis singled out *Tillandsia copanensis*, a large Honduran plant. Our awareness of it is due mostly to the efforts of Steve Correale. This species is endemic to one cliff in northern Honduras. Unlike the rest of Central America, Honduras is not volcanic.

T. finckiana is found on cliffs in two colonies on Venezuela. One site is greatly reduced by highway construction, but populations in the other location are plentiful. In Peru, bromeliads grow on all cliff faces, but they are especially prolific at altitudes brushed by clouds. *T. mima* has two forms, differing greatly depending on moisture availability. In dry habitats, offsets fall off the plant; the climate is just too harsh for seed to form. *T. lymanii* persists there under very austere conditions.

Southern Ecuador and northern Peru are Bombax country. Because the wet season is very short, these huge trees are leafless for nine months, and that's a boon for species in the subfamily Tillandsioideae. *Tillandsia espinosae*, *T. floribunda*, *T. caerulea*, and *Racinaea multiflora* and are common in the area. [The genus *Racinaea* is named for Mulford Foster's wife, Racine, who co-founded the Bromeliad Society International.] *T. caerulea* thrives in Bombax crowns. (Leaflessness is not the only unusual attribute of Bombax in the region: They have green bark and pithy interiors.) In the southern part of the range, massive *T. secunda* grows 6 ft. across. Its variety, *vivipara*, grows much differently in northern Peru.

T. rauhii var. *longipetala* grows to 3 ft. across, colors up red, and looks as if it belongs in the forest. To survive its open exposure, it is also covered by a silvery, waxy powder which acts like a sunscreen. *T. hildae* is a nice banded lithophyte, i.e., a species capable of growing on bare rock. These species' native habitat in northern Peru experiences cold nights. While exploring in the region, Dennis had to overnight in unheated facilities. One was a shelter under which sugar cane brought from plantations laid out on mountainsides was squeezed out during working hours by a donkey turning a press. At night, cane waste served as a sleeping mat. The second place was a thatched cookhouse where food was stored and cooked. This area of Peru is a bit rough in other ways, and special precautions had to be taken. For instance, armed guards were stationed close by the sleeping quarters, and a mechanic was also essential, because the travel vehicle suffered two broken axles.

Dennis's next segment was **Caatinga and Cerrado Environments**. In the Caatinga, a dry forest of interior northeastern Brazil, Ananas and Encholirium are common bromeliads. The latter genus lives on rock, not as well as seeming in soil and likes water. orchids, including loving, Laelias. Few cultivation. Though most plants, *E. pedicellatum* is *Neoregelia bahiana*, a several names in the past, *Billbergia vittata* is an forest. It can hold a lot of top limits evaporation. animals drink from this found in the area is *Forzzaea* (f/k/a *Cryptanthus*) *leopoldo-horstii*, but it is rare in cultivation.



Photo courtesy of Dorothy Berg and the FCBS

If the risks encountered in northern Peru weren't enough to demonstrate that plant exploration in the tropics isn't just a walk in the park, consider some of the animals that Dennis encountered in the dry forest of Brazil. *Megalopyge urens* is a caterpillar that caught his eye because of its long black hairs tipped with what look like miniature paddles. [The creature is known locally as bicho peludo negro, or hairy black bug.] Dennis suspects that it may be deadly; at the very least, its sting is capable of inflicting excruciating pain. Another local resident is *Dolichothele* (f/k/a *Oligoxystre*) *diamantinensis*, a dwarf blue tarantula.

The program's concluding subject, **Cloud Forest Types**, dealt with a very strictly-defined, rare group of Costa Rican species – plants that are shrouded in moisture all the time. Almost everything in that environment decays. However, there are exceptions to the rule; Puyas are not rare in the region, although only two species in the genus are native to Central America. *Tillandsia oerstediana* lives on volcanoes in the region. Another desirable native, *Racinaea venusta*, is fragrant, but isn't found in cultivation.



Finally, as promised, we return to the subject of Dennis and guinea pigs. The highlands of northern Peru are home to these popular rodents, and the cookhouse in which Dennis slept was also

a place where guinea pigs were raised. On chilly nights the little animals like to snuggle for warmth. Dennis learned that they are not only very friendly critters, but they even coo. He apparently reached some sort of . . . uh . . . accommodation with the cookhouse's collection of guinea pigs, and . . . and . . . I'm so sorry, I've run out of space, so if you want to know what went on in the cookhouse, you'll have to read Dennis's autobiography.

Selecting Plants for Display in the Show

by Alan Herndon and Barbara Partagas

Are you just starting out and wondering what plants are appropriate for entry into the competition at our upcoming Annual Show and Sale? First, you should remember that you have two major categories of entry in our show: horticultural and artistic. These categories differ in almost every respect. For starters, you must have grown any plants entered in the horticulture category for at least six months prior to the show. In most sections in the artistic category, you could enter a plant you just bought the day before show setup.

In Horticultural category, the judging is based on the entered plant(s) alone. In the Blooming Bromeliad and Nonblooming Bromeliad divisions a plant needs to be exhibited alone or as a clump. In this case, a clump is defined as a group of rosettes that are connected by their natural stems. In other words, it is not permissible to plant more than a single pup in a pot and enter it as a clump – even when the pups were taken from the same mother rosette. Containers (pots, wood, baskets) that might draw attention away from the plant are not allowed. You must use plain pots without any writing or patterns on the sides and restrict the colors to black, green or terra cotta. Hanging baskets are suitable for entries containing clumps of larger plants, but again with a limited range of permissible colors and no decorative features that might attract attention away from the plants. Wood and cork are allowed for mounting smaller epiphytes and, in particular, species and hybrids of *Tillandsia*. The surface of the wood or cork must have a natural, weathered appearance.

During ribbon judging, horticultural entries are compared to a hypothetical 'perfect' specimen. Of course, you have no idea what a judge considers perfect in any plant, but they generally look with more favor on plants that are larger than average – and/or have bolder colors – compared to other plants within a given species or hybrid. The actual criterion set for plants in the Nonblooming Bromeliad division is that

the plants must be blooming size to earn maximum points. Plants, of course, have not read the Judge's Handbook and bloom in a large range of sizes. However, it will not hurt – if you have two plants of comparable quality – to enter the larger.

Apart from size, the judges are also looking for plants that are symmetrical. In other words, the plants appear to be developed to the same degree no matter what side you look at. This symmetry is most apparent in plants with large numbers of leaves, but even plants with a relatively small number of leaves will show noticeable differences. In general, a plant grown under conditions where part of the rosette is exposed to more sun than the rest of the rosette, the side with greater exposure will have shorter, wider, more highly colored leaves and the side with more shade will have longer, narrower greener leaves with more gaps between the leaves. What you are looking for is plants where the leaves have no obvious disparities in length, width or color from one side to the other.

Another form of asymmetry occurs primarily when you grow plants from pups that are harvested from the center of dense clumps. If the pups developed under too much shade, the leaves will be long, thin and narrow. If the newly potted pup is now grown in more light, the new leaves formed after repotting will be abruptly shorter than the earlier leaves. Judges refer to this as 'uneven growth' and treat it as a serious cultural flaw. Note that the same unevenness can occur when you move an adult plant to a sunnier area to encourage the development of more color in the leaves. This can result in an abrupt change in the shape and color of the new leaves produced after the move.

If you are entering small, stoloniferous species as clumps, the overall appearance of the clump is very important. The clump should appear balanced, and not contain obvious gaps due to missing rosettes. Plant color should not vary greatly from one part of the clump to another unless some of the rosettes are blooming. Individual rosettes in the clump should be free from major defects but minor defects are easier to overlook.

As a beginner you are unlikely to enter any plants in the Habitat division. In this Division, the emphasis is on growing plants in a manner that mimics natural growth. This generally translates into a clump of connected rosettes that are grown on the same piece of wood for several years. However, you can have plants grown in pots in Habitat. Also, Habitat is the only Division within the Horticultural category where more than one species or cultivar can be displayed in a single entry.

In the Artistic category, plants are still expected to be of good quality, but judging, with the exception of the Cut Inflorescence section, is based more on how well the plants interact with other elements in the entry to provide a pleasing overall effect. Also, as noted earlier, you do not have to grow the plants under your own conditions for any length of time before entering them in the show.

There is only a single Division – the Artistic Division - in the Artistic Category, so the discussion in the next few paragraphs refers to Sections within the Artistic Division.

In the Decorative Container section, how well the plant harmonizes with the container is crucial. The plant and container colors may complement each other or contrast with each other, but the judges are looking for some connection between the two.

The Cut Inflorescence section is just what the name implies: an inflorescence cut from the mother rosette and displayed in a plain clear vase. No color or decorative elements are allowed in the vase itself or in any material placed inside the vase to hold the inflorescence in place. Experienced exhibitors will have identified potential inflorescences for display a few days before show entry starts, but will not cut the inflorescence until the last minute before entry. If possible, you want to find an inflorescence with flowers that will open on Friday morning when the judging begins – but this is largely a matter of luck. If you only have inflorescences that have had several flowers open, you will need to spend time removing the wilted petals before judging. Entries will be judged against a theoretical 'perfect' inflorescence. Entries that are larger than usual, or have brighter colors than normally seen, will usually be favored.

You are on your own with the Artistic Arrangement section and the Bromeliad Collection section. I have read the rules and seen the results of judging within these sections for many years, but still don't understand what the judges are looking for.

Official definitions of more terms and further information on what is allowed in each section is contained in the BSSF Show Schedule. You will not have to memorize the rules for what goes in each section – Classification will determine where your entries fit best during the entry process – but knowing

something about the way sections are defined will help you determine where you think your plants will fit best.

Preparing plants for display in the show

Take care of the basics first. Assume that judges are always looking for easy ways to avoid spending much time on individual plants. You can make it much harder for judges to summarily dismiss your entries by taking the time to clean your plants and pots (or replanting into clean pots). You might also need to replant some of your entries to center the rosette or clump in the container.

Checking for and removing insect infestations is mandatory. With bromeliads, this almost always means infestation by scale insects. Several different scale insects will attack bromeliads, but the general method of identifying and removing them is the same for all types. These insects are named for the characteristic protective shell that covers a feeding female. These shells range widely in color and size, but all can be felt as a small bump on the surface of a leaf. Most of the time, they are found on the sheaths of the older (lower) leaves and are far more frequent in plants that have been growing in crowded conditions for considerable lengths of time.

The commonly seen Coconut Scale has a relatively large, light brown shell that is often easily wiped away with a wet cloth. This scale is almost always found on plants that are growing in conditions where free air movement is greatly restricted and is unable to persist when the plants are moved into conditions where air has free access to the plants. In other words, this is an easy problem to solve.

Much more difficult to deal with is the Flyspeck Scale. This insect has a very dark, small scale that feels thick because it is as tall as wide. It is also difficult to scrape off under the best of conditions. In addition, once established, this scale is perfectly able to grow and reproduce in exposed conditions with free air movement. Uncontrolled infestations can kill bromeliads, so we are talking about controlling early infestations. If only a few scale are present, they can be scraped off using your fingernail or the edge of a plastic plant tag. You have to be careful to scrape gently or you will damage the leaf. You can kill the visible scale using a cotton swab dipped in isopropyl alcohol. Of course, you still need to scrape individual scales off the leaf a week or so later, but this is much easier once the insect is dead.

Cleaning plants involves removing any debris accumulated in the leaf axils as well as getting rid of white splotches caused by calcium buildup or dried algae. Most of the debris can be removed by holding the rosette upside down while squirting water into the leaf axils. You may have to wash out the leaf axils 2-3 times to get rid of most debris. In some cases, there may be a leaf or small stem or other foreign object tightly wedged in a leaf axil. These will have to be pulled out using long tweezers or long needle-nose pliers. Any dead or dying leaves at the base of the rosette should also be removed.

During the rainy periods in summer, it is common for algae to grow prolifically in the water held in a bromeliad rosette. If not washed out on a frequent basis, you will have thin layers of the algae stick to the upper surface of the leaves during days when the water level in the plant drops. This layer of algae will dry to a white film. It is usually no problem to remove any dried algae. If rewet, it can be easily removed with a soft cloth but, if it has been on the leaf for more than a few days, it will have blocked enough sunlight to interfere with the production of chlorophyll in the body of the leaf. The areas of lighter green will remain obvious until the chlorophyll has had a chance to recover to normal levels, so you need to remove the algae now to give the chlorophyll a chance to recover before the show.

Calcium, of course, is plentiful in our local groundwater. Calcium buildup is generally seen on the lowermost leaf sheaths of the rosettes. Much of this buildup can usually be removed using a soft cloth and water, but stubborn patches will have to be removed using a weak acid. For instance, the weak acid in carbonated drinks (carbonic acid) has been used by many people to loosen hard patches of calcium sufficiently to aid in removal.

Judges expect to see plants that are centered in the container, and strictly erect. Most of the bromeliads in cultivation tend to gravitate towards the edge of their pot when grown for several months, so it is often necessary to remove the plant from its pot and repot it for the show. You need to pay particular attention to two potential – often related – problems. First, judges do not like to see plants potted so deeply that any part of any leaf sheath is covered by any potting medium. Second, if you need to repot a plant with a small root system, it may be impossible to pack the potting medium around the small underground

base tightly enough to hold the plant firmly in place during judging. Fortunately, judges do not ever see what is beneath the surface of the potting mix. You can cut pieces of bamboo to a length where they press against the inner sides of the pot at the proper level and use a pair to hold the plant base steady under the surface. You could also tie some string around the base of the plant and then tie the string to something that can be buried in the pot to provide extra stability.

Leaf damage is virtually impossible to avoid when growing bromeliads – especially the forms with spiny leaf margins - in the garden. You can minimize the damage by spacing plants far enough apart that their leaves do not touch. However, you do not have to grow a plant completely free of leaf damage to have success on the show table. Large dark spots caused by bacterial or fungal infection, or large holes in leaves are never acceptable in show plants, but a few small spots caused by mechanical damage on a few leaves will not always disqualify a plant from the head table. In any case, given the unusually severe growing conditions experienced in southern Florida during the 3rd quarter of 2017, we will ask the judges to be generous in their appraisal of leaf damage for this show.

If you prepare your plants for entry as described above a few weeks before the show, final cleanup just before the show will be easy and allow you to enjoy the show more fully. So, look around your collections for a plant or two or three that look good.

Issue	Horticultural Rule	Artistic Rule
Length of Ownership	6 months	no length
What is Judged	Plant Alone	Overall – other “stuff” as well
Container	Do not allow container to draw away from plant	Not a concern and may be the focus of the art
Wood or cork	Look weathered or natural	Not an issue
Size	Matters	Not an issue
Symmetry	Matters	Not an issue
Stolons	No gaps	

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 24-25 Annual Show and Sale
10901 Old Cutler Road
Coral Gables, FL 33156
Phone: 305-667-1651

Redland International Orchid Show
May 18-19, 2018
Fruit and Spice Park
24801 SW 187th Ave,
Homestead, FL 33031
<http://www.redlandorchidfest.org/>



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

May is only months away. The World Conference is always-too-good-to-be-true-sunny San Diego. Other than the usual show, you have the following: (a) exciting Optional Bus Excursion up to see two fantastic member gardens; (b) a visit to the San Diego Botanic Gardens where they'll have an Alfresco dinner together; (3) a stop in Balboa Park to see the world-famous Botanical Building; (4) included in your registration fee is a half-day afternoon tour in central San Diego; and (5) more.



Want to register online for \$ 2 9 0 . 0 0 – go to <http://www.bsi.org/new/wb-c-registration/> Or use the registration form at the end of this Advisory. Still need

to know more, go to <http://www.sandiegobromeliadsociety.org/world-conference.html> or <https://www.facebook.com/Bromeliad-Society-Intern>

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Caladium Festival

July 27-29, 2018

Stuart Park

Lake Placid, FL

<http://www.lpfla.com/caladium.htm>

MESSAGES

NEW MEMBERS PLEASE COLLECT 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.

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.

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.



Aechmea 'Hacienda' Photo from Chip Jones



Neoregelia 'High Voltage' Photo by Chip Jones

