



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

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Lori Weigerding

The final meeting of the year will be our luncheon on Sunday, Oct. 2 at 1 pm at Hackneys which is located at 1514 E. Lake Ave, Glenview, IL, 60025. If you need directions or need to get in touch, my cell number is 480-526-3691. We are still looking for a Secretary to complete the roster of officers. If anyone is interested, let us know.

President's Column

Well we had a wonderful and brilliant presentation from Jennifer & Bonnie at the Chalet Nursery. It was a very fascinating and informative lecture! There's so much to learn about plants! The Chalet has a nice room setup to give presentations and classes in.

We had a short meeting after the presentation, where we discussed the upcoming luncheon at Hackney's in Glenview. We've been there several times now, the food is good and the atmosphere is pleasant. We're hoping that you all can come and enjoy the fellowship of your fellow club members. We also discussed who we might be able to have our show with and Priscilla is presenting the idea to her group. We'll have to wait and see what they decided.

I hope to see you at Hackney's!

Lori Weigerding



Jennifer and Bonnie gave a great presentation on Bromeliads at the Chalet Nursery. Bonnie's background is in graphic design so she has a very good eye for mounting Tillandsias. She has found the cool glue gun works well for her since the glue dries faster than using liquid nails.

Jennifer said that the Nursery found out about three years ago that the vase of bromeliads needs to be emptied out since they were having a problem with plants getting rotted. She mentioned that overpotting or overwatering can be fatal. The plants need the oxygen.

Jennifer showed us a picture that showed a microscope that she can use to see the trichomes on tillandsias. Trichomes absorb moisture and nutrients through the leaves. She said that when she lived in Houston and walked through a wooded area she could smell the tillandsia usneoides when it was in bloom. She mentioned that *Tillandsia ioanantha* turns red when starting to bloom and then the purple flower comes out. Jennifer said there are many things that are great for mounting tillandsias, bark, driftwood and stems of orchids. To take care of tillandsias either spray it several times a week when the humidity is low or dunk in water once per week. She suggested using liquid fertilizer at 1/4 strength once per month from March to October.



Bonnie demonstrated how to attach a tillandsia to the stem of an orchid. She suggested using wire around them and then put moss using the glue gun. Orchids and tillandsias grow together in many locations in their native habitat. She showed us some of her creations. One had driftwood with several tillandsias mounted on it and then she put reindeer moss to help keep moisture around the tillandsias.

She showed us several glass containers that she used. We asked about air movement which is very important to the plants and Jennifer said that you should open up a closed container every once in awhile so that there is air movement for the plants.



Jennifer showed us some different terrariums and said that they work great for planting cryptanthus. She said to put a layer of charcoal in first, then a layer of gravel and then a well draining potting mix before planting the cryptanthus.

She said most of the bromeliads need bright light. If you don't have enough light in your house or apartment, Jennifer suggested using grow lights which need to be on for sixteen hours.

Chalet Nursery donated some aechmeas and guzmanias to our club. I will bring the ones not chosen to our luncheon for those not able to attend the meeting. Marjorie won the centerpiece which had the plants, neoregelia 'Lorena Lector', novar and Tillandsia 'Sweet Isabel'.

If you were at the August meeting at the Botanic Garden and took the tram ride that broke down, don't forget you only have until Oct. 30th to use the ticket they gave you.

I read several articles on bromeliads and other plants and how they improve the air quality indoors. From Wikipedia I learned that NASA in association with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) in 1989 published a list of air filtering plants. They were looking for ways to clean air in space stations. All plants absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. These plants also eliminated significant amounts of benzene,



Herb Hill's Nursery

formaldehyde and trichloroethylene. The study found that at least one plant per 100 square feet was able to clean the air efficiently. Micro-organisms in the potting mix has been shown in other research to remove benzene from the air. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASA_Clean_Air_Study



Herb Hill's Nursery

In Melanie Dearing's article "Bromeliads in Plantscape Designs", she mentions that there are many benefits to growing bromeliads. She says that many people make the mistake of overwatering which leads to rotting roots. She says that they require less maintenance than many other indoor plants and are actually fairly drought tolerant. She states that research shows that bromeliads release oxygen and remove air pollutants during the night. The Plants for Clean Air Council

suggests that when combined with foliage plants that bromeliads can help provide around the clock indoor air purification. There are several bromeliad genus which can survive in low light conditions including Vrieseas, Guzmanias and Nidulariums. She suggests combining different types and colors of bromeliads

into one pot to produce striking arrangements. You must make sure that the container has good drainage. [Http://www.bromeliads.info/4-reasons-why-you-should-use-bromeliads-in-your-plantscaping-designs/](http://www.bromeliads.info/4-reasons-why-you-should-use-bromeliads-in-your-plantscaping-designs/)



At Herb Hill's Nursery

In the next article I read, it focused on five benefits of houseplants. They suggest putting orchids, succulents and epiphytic bromeliads in your bedroom since they release oxygen at night and release carbon dioxide in the day. They also release moisture vapor which increases the humidity of the air around them. At the Agricultural University of Norway research found that using plants inside decreased the incidence of dry skin, colds, sore throats and dry coughs. They mentioned the NASA research discovered that the plants purify the air by pulling the contaminants into the soil where root zone microorganisms convert the volatile organic compounds into food for the plant. Kansas State University research found that adding plants to hospital rooms speeded the recovery rates of surgical

patients. The patients requested less pain medication, had lower heart rate and blood pressure, experienced less fatigue and anxiety and were released from the hospital sooner. At the Royal College of Agriculture in Cirencester, England a study found that students demonstrated 70 % greater attentiveness when they were taught in a room with plants. They also found that attendance for lectures was higher in classrooms with plants.

The recommended number of plants depended on the goal. They suggest to improve health and fatigue you should have one 8" pot or larger for every 129 square feet. In an office or classroom they suggest that plants be positioned so each person can see a plant. For purifying the air in a 1,800 square foot house, you should have fifteen to eighteen plants in 6" to 8" diameter pots. Make sure you match the right plant to the right light conditions. [Www.bayeradvanced.com/articles/5-benefits-of-houseplants](http://www.bayeradvanced.com/articles/5-benefits-of-houseplants)

In the Bromeliad article, “Go Tropical the Easy Way with Bromeliads” it also discusses the use of bromeliads to release oxygen and remove toxins. They also say that bromeliads release oxygen and remove air pollutants during the night. The article says that their long-lasting blooms as well as many with brilliant foliage readily adapt to the unfavorable growing conditions in many homes and offices. They suggest tying in accent pieces with the color of the foliage or pot. They have a lovely picture of a living wall of bromeliads which is hard for us to do here in Illinois unless you have a greenhouse. If you use their suggestion of combining bromeliads with other plants you should make sure they like the same light and watering conditions. <http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/12000809/list/go-tropical-the-easy-way-with-bromeliads>



Doubletree Hotel Window Box

The last article I read was about a study conducted at the State University of New York. The results were presented at the National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society this year in Philadelphia.

The lead researcher, Vadoud Niri had been to nail salons and didn't care for the smell. They placed five different plants; the jade plant, spider plant, bromeliad, dracaena and caribbean tree cactus

in an air tight chamber with specific concentrations of several types of VOC's. By measuring the air quality over time, they were able to see which did the best job of purifying the air. The bromeliad managed to clean 80% of the pollutants in 6 of the 8 VOC's tested. The dracaena absorbed 94% of the chemical acetone. Spider plants worked very quickly. He would like to continue his research by seeing how well they would do in a salon setting where the plants would not be in sealed containers.

Now that the weather has turned cooler, you are probably bringing your plants back inside. I am repotting mine since I hadn't done that this summer. One problem I have is losing the name tags. I found the tip from Terrie Bert which was in their August Sarasota Newsletter very helpful.

Losing plant tags? You can never have too many tags in your plants. To

minimize loss, turn the tag upside down and run it down the side of the pot with the written side against the pot. If it breaks, the tip will break and not the part with the name on it, and with the writing flush against the side of the pot, the writing (which should be in pencil) will not fade as rapidly. For mounted plants, double tag with the two tags attached in different ways in different places.



Herb Hill, Tom Wolfe and Carol Wolfe

Steve and I were in Tampa over the weekend. We were fortunate that Tom Wolfe arranged for us to visit Herb Hill's Nursery. June grows orchids to sell while Herb focuses on guzmanias and vrieseas. He does a lot of hybridizing. Now he is busy collecting seeds to plant. He also does some work with tissue culture. He works with the Dutch and sends his plants to them. One of the

beautiful plants he came up with is Vriesea 'Goldilocks'. For some reason the public did not care for it. So from seed to plant it takes 2 to 3 years and then you aren't assured that it will be a success. In growing seedlings they cover the hoops to keep it warmer when the temperature drops in the winter. They can get down in the teens there in Florida once every few years.



Vriesea 'Goldilocks'

