



BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF GREATER CHICAGO

THE BSGC NEWS

December, 2017

President	Lori Weigerding	(630) 888-7516
Vice President	Martha Goode	(815) 459-1623
Treasurer	Paula Darning	(847) 295-2559
Secretary	OPEN	
Newsletter Editor	Steve Goode	stevegoode1@ameritech.net

WEB SITE
Webmaster

<http://bromeliad-chicago.org>
Lori Weigerding



From the San Diego Bromeliad Society's
Newsletter
They are hosting the 2018 WBC

Think about going to the Bromeliad Conference in San Diego next year which is May 29 to June 3. To see more information go to: www.bsi.org and click on WBC 2018. We went to our first one in Houston in 1998 and haven't missed one since. A lot of people we know save up for their trip every two years. (So we've been to ten of them. Isn't that enough? No Dear, We're going!)

President's Column

Hi everyone. Sorry to have missed the last couple of meetings. The arthritis in my hips has been giving me a lot of trouble and making life challenging. I'm sorry to say I'll also have to start my collection of plants over. With the move, we have less space and I didn't know where to move them to and unfortunately they froze. I have only 2 left, a crypt and ??????????. They were all ready inside, because they were bigger and I have no shade here either! I only had a handful that I took with, very sad to see them go. I hope everyone else had better luck.

I look forward to things being better in 2018! I certainly miss seeing all of you! Maybe to add something to our newsletter, our members could send in something about how their plants are doing? Martha could include that in the newsletter as an update. Give it a thought, it would keep us in touch with one another.

I hope everyone had a safe and agreeable Thanksgiving! We had a nice one with our family. Looking forward to Christmas, love to drive around looking at the lights. Not sure how much we'll see out here with all the farm land, but in town hopefully.

I want to thank Martha again for all her hard work! Without her we wouldn't be. Thanks to her and Steve for continuing to produce such an excellent newsletter! Also thanks to all our members, hope to see more of you in the coming year!

Well here's to a happy and safe end to 2017 and a bright start to 2018!

Lori Weigerding

Steve and I are back in Arizona along with my tillandsias. A Tillandsia juncea that I got at our show is getting ready to bloom. I found a very good article in the June 2017 Journal of the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand about getting them ready for winter. Please remember that their seasons are opposite to ours.

“Preparing tillandsias for Winter”

Preparing tillandsias for winter

– Article by renowned tillandsia grower, Lynette Nash,
adapted from her talk to the Society’s monthly
meeting in May.

Photos taken at Lynette’s home by Diane and Lucy
Timmins.



Tillandsia ionantha ‘Rosita’

I have been asked to talk about preparing tillandsias for winter. I think I may be better at growing and presenting tillandsias than talking about them, but here goes!

The principles of preparing tillandsias for winter are similar to other genera and have been written up in the Journal many times so I thought that I would expand the subject a little to also talk about other things to do over the winter months. I am hoping to be able to give you some useful information that will not only get your plants through the winter but also keep them growing in good condition to flower next season.

Cultural requirements...

Let’s start by looking at tillandsia cultural requirements briefly because they are just as relevant in winter. In our Journal, September 2001, reprinted from ‘Bromeletter’, Len Colgan of South Australia writes that when asked what are the most important aspects in successfully growing of mounted tillandsias he responds with the following five necessities:

1. Good fresh air movement
2. Good light
3. Good fresh air movement
4. Regular watering
5. Of course you can all guess what 5 is.
Good fresh air movement.



Tillandsia disticha

I would probably add... a regular fertilising programme in the summer months.



Tillandsia 'White Star'

With the worst of the winter rapidly approaching, keep in mind those five necessities, as well as Peter Waters talking at our February meeting and describing many tillandsias growing in bitterly cold areas in Mexico. It is the constant winter rain that will do most damage causing plants to rot. Recent winters have been reasonably warm but periods of intense cold and wet do occur so it is good to be prepared. Will how we grow them have an effect on how well they cope with the winter?

Quite possibly in my view. We all like to grow many of the small species in clumps because that is how they grow in their natural habitat, make a statement and look their best. At this time of the year if you are a 'clumper' remove unsightly dead leaves and the old plants so that the clump receives maximum light and air movement. A wire basket is useful to attach plants to and form a clump. This is what I have used to form this clump of *aeranthos*. It is also beneficial to provide air circulation around the roots. I was dismantling a clump a few weeks ago and was surprised that it was quite wet in the middle although it was several days since watering.

Another thing that will determine how well tillandsias cope with winter is to reduce fertilising in autumn. The recommended fertiliser for tillandsias is low in nitrogen, high in potassium, with added magnesium, iron and trace elements. Nitrogen should be avoided leading up to winter because of the soft growth it produces.



Tillandsia brachycaulos in clay pot

Now we have dealt with the clumps and stopped fertilising, and it is still raining, what next?



Tillandsia ionantha 'Fuego'

Perhaps we have to resort to moving plants and consider which plants are most susceptible to wet conditions. Moving tillandsias into a plastic house is the ideal although identifying the warm sheltered areas in your garden will be effective in protecting them from the worst of the weather. If it is particularly cold and frosty and for a prolonged spell, extra care should be taken as damage could result. A short time in a car port or garage will not be detrimental. A heater set at a

very low temperature is useful. I use a heated towel rail in my plastic house.

Making an area with rocks, bricks and concrete is a good idea in that it will radiate stored heat back to the plants. My little Tillandsia 'Tuti Fruiti' is grown like this. It is outside all year round now and has much better colour than before when grown in a hot house. Another is ionantha 'Fuego' which I've had on a schist rock since I bought it in 2012. I am not suggesting that you grow your entire collection as lithophytes, however some will do well, so why not give it a go and experiment!

I have not had any experience with frost cloth but I believe that this is a very necessary option for many. It may be worth trying Microclima, a transparent U.V. stabilised, knitted fabric, permeable to water and air that does not need to be removed during the day. Jo Elder wrote about this very light, Italian made product in our May 2011 Journal. She used it inside her shade house with, in her words, wonderful results.

Most tillandsias growing outside will not need to be watered over winter. It depends however on the temperature in a plastic house and if it has been warm for several days as to whether watering will be required. Some will need more than others and to group these together makes it easy to give them a light misting in the morning. The problem with tillandsias being wet all night over an extended period of weeks is carbon dioxide starvation. They take up carbon dioxide at night unlike most other plants and cannot do this if their leaves are wet.

Editors Note: Of course in Illinois, you can't have your tilandsias outside in the winter!

Some more ideas...

I feel it is a good time over winter to evaluate your collection in terms of health, colour and flowering. Most of your tillandsias should be doing well as they are easy plants to grow. However perhaps you have seen a plant that you grow in another collection that is so much better and wonder why yours is not looking the same? Try a different position in the plastic house or outside. It is surprising how effective a change of light or temperature can be, you may not get the right place initially, but keep trying. In the early days of my collection I had my share of losses simply because they were growing in the wrong place. In recent years more of my tillandsias are growing outside but in a protected environment as they are against a north facing wall. They grow well there and the difference I notice most is how colourful the foliage is now.

If your plant has been grown as an epiphyte, try it terrestrially. My *Tillandsia mitlaensis*, has lovely form, beautiful silver foliage and pups well. I got it from Bea Hanson around 2001 and it had always grown mounted on wood and never flowered. I switched it to be grown in a container for maybe the last 2 years, and success! Is that the reason it is flowering now? Sometimes it is difficult to decide which way to grow, but in this case for me it was a no brainer

How about *Tillandsia xerographica*, normally grown epiphytically but a difficult plant to mount and it requires careful watering over winter. Will it do well in a pot? Mine has been suspended over a very small amount of water as an experiment and has surprised me with a lot of roots. It will be transferring to a pot, not because I want to hasten flowering but because I am looking to produce a well grown, healthy plant that is mature on flowering. Growing it terrestrially in bark is how I think it will do best.

I always think about whether a plant needs splitting up and remounting. I have noticed very good growth after dividing tillandsias. There will be more air flow around each plant, watering will be more effective, aesthetically it can be very pleasing and it's such a funjob!

Remember to cut off all old flowers and inspect the base of the scape, lower leaves and the roots for mealy bugs. I have this occurring occasionally, if you don't get on to it they can cause real damage. A weak solution of Confidor sorts them out.

Finally, a good indoor job for the winter months is to make a record of your collection, easy enough on a computer spreadsheet. As your collection grows and they begin to number in the hundreds as they inevitably will, it is very interesting

to look back, refresh your memory on how long you have owned a particular plant, where and who you bought it from or if you were lucky enough that it was a gift. If there is a query regarding the name, and this sometimes occurs, it can be most helpful to know the source of your plant. Your records may also prevent you from buying the same plant twice! It is a good time to do some research, make a wish list of plants to look out for in the future, and challenge yourself to grow the most spectacular tillandsia.

In conclusion, I would say, take extra care of your fresh air friends over the winter and all will be well. Happy days everyone!

Pictures from the Bromeliad Journal of the Bromeliad Society of New Zealand, Inc.

In the October, 2006 Florida East Coast Bromeliad Society Newsletter, they had this paragraph.

LEAVE THOSE NEOS. ALONE!

If you haven't already done so, don't separate any more Neoregelia pups until Spring. I have never heard an absolute explanation of why pups separated after early October don't do well, but I'm sure that it has to do with the reduced number of hours of daylight, decreased outside temperatures or a combination of both. In any event, the time has passed to pot up Neo. Pups in our area. Wait until March or so before entertaining any thoughts of separating them. For those procrastinators in the group; congratulations! You have successfully dodged this bit of work for another 6 months.



Neo pictures from www.fcbs.org



Neoregelia 'Christmas Colours' photo by R Smythe

The November, 2017 New York Bromeliad Newsletter “Bromeliana” reprinted an article from November, 1976. You have heard some of this information before but I’m sure some of it is new. It is very appropriate for the time of year when we are getting together with friends, and family. Remember to be hospitable.

Ananas ‘Symbolicus’
by Sig Sussman

My interest in art always seems to be complemented by my fascination with Bromeliads. Recently, I was in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and attended a gallery talk on 18th Century English Rooms and the Decorative Arts being given by Mrs. Carolyn P. Cassilly in a beautiful dining room designed by Robert Adam (about 1760).

A large table was set as if for an elaborate and important dinner. The centerpiece was a pyramid of various fruits at whose apex was a pineapple. Mrs. Cassilly indicated that this type of centerpiece was used as a symbol of hospitality and wealth.



Pineapple on door as welcome symbol

My curiosity was aroused and I asked Mrs. Cassilly where I could get further information about the pineapple in 18th Century England. She was kind enough to check her notes at home and told me of two magazine articles written by Jean Gorely, who was editor of the publication “Old Wedgewood”, the annual periodical of the Wedgewood Club. In 1940 she wrote an article on “Pineapples as a Decorative Motif” and in July, 1945 she wrote on ‘Pineapples’ in the magazine “Antiques”.

What follows is a brief history of the introduction of *Ananas comosus* into England. In 1555 a monk named Andre Thenet sent a specimen to Europe from the West Indies. The first pineapples to reach England were sent to Oliver Cromwell in 1657. Later, in 1668, King Charles II served pineapples at a royal banquet for the French Minister, Colbert. Due to the long trip from the West Indies to England the pineapples apparently had spoiled and the guests did not like their taste.

In 1755 Dr. Samuel Johnson gave the following explanation for the name: From before the middle ages and through the 15th century the pine cone was regularly used in designs and in heraldry, and it was popularly called the pine apple. Because of its resemblance to the pine cone, the fruit of the Ananas also came to be known as a "Pineapple".

In the middle of the 17th century a Mr. LeCour at Leyden, Holland showed how to grow Ananas under glass by installing a stove in the greenhouse to provide the heat required by this tropical plant. To this day warm greenhouses are called "stove houses".



Variegated *Ananas* 'Comosus' with multiple basal and apical offsets

In 1720 an *Ananas comosus* was grown, flowered and fruited in a pineapple stove house in Richmond, Surrey. This feat created such excitement that the Dutch painter Theodore Netscher, painted a picture of it. It hangs in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England.

A pineapple was fruited in Scotland in 1732 in a "pine apple stove house" at an estate at Chrichton near Edinburgh. Interest in growing the *Ananas* became so intense that hothouses were designed specifically for growing pineapples. They were called "pinehouses" or "pineries", and erecting them

became one of the pastimes of the wealthy .

Adam Taylor, in his "Treatise On The Ananas" in 1769, called the pineapple "The King of Fruits" and stated that the production of pineapples "has become the test of good gardening".

By this time the pineapple had become the rage of London aristocracy. Whenever an important dinner or banquet was given the "grand table" would have an elaborate centerpiece. This was usually a pyramid of mixed fruits and sweetmeats topped at the apex with a pineapple. It was either on a revolving platform of willow wood (our Lazy Susan) or on a silver epergne.

The guests would eat other fruits and goodies but would leave the pineapple untouched so it could be used to adorn another table. It was so expensive that no one would dare ask the butler to cut this fruit or he might never be invited anywhere again. The pineapple was so rare and esteemed that if the host did not have one in fruit in his "pinery", he would rent one from someone who did. It became such a symbol of importance and wealth that a method of "candying" pineapples was developed to preserve them. It took the cooks so many changes of syrup that 10 weeks were required to complete the preserving process. It was evidently worth the trouble to have a pineapple last over a year.

As a very impressive gift, Voltaire in 1772 gave a pineapple to the Duchess of Northumberland when she came to visit him. It was reported that in 1789 a banquet was given in Windsor Castle and that many pineapples were served on the tables. That was royal hospitality.

The popularity and prestige of the pineapple reached such heights that it influenced Josiah Wedgwood to produce a pineapple pattern for his ceramics, and a large quantity was produced between 1759 and 1764. By the end of the century it was firmly established as a decorative feature symbolizing wealth and hospitality. Pineapples were carved on furniture, mirrors, glassware, fabrics, silver urns, teapots, flatwear and sugar bowls. The practice spread to the West Indies, the pineapple's original habitat, and to the United States where this symbol was carved on bedposts and chairs and over doorways.

In his play, "The Rivals", written in 1775, Sheridan had Mrs. Malaprop say: ". . . He was the pineapple of politeness." By then everyone knew that a pineapple was the pinnacle of the fruit world and the malapropism was readily understood.

By the middle of the 19th century, the symbolism of the pineapple was extended beyond mere hospitality. Hooper writes in "The Lady's Book" in 1841, that the gift of a pineapple between lovers signified "you are perfect".

I am sure that none of this interesting information will help you to grow the ananas successfully, but if anyone wants to rent a pineapple, just call me. Members of the New York Bromeliad Society will receive a 25% discount.

(Editor's note: Dunmore House shown in the photo below was built into the wall of a large garden in 1761 by John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore. It is still known as Scotland's folly and the most bizarre building in Scotland. A hothouse was built on the ground floor of the building for growing pineapples and other



Dunmore House - Scotland's 'Folly'

plants. The south facing ground floor now covered in stucco was originally covered with glass window panes. The carved, stone pineapple on top is 40 feet high.

Over the centuries the Dunmore estate and this building fell into ruins and was abandoned. One lot, called the "Pineapple Lot", included the folly and the large walled garden, along with some woodlands and a small lake. This lot was purchased by the Countess of Perth, and in 1974

was given to the National Trust for Scotland. The "Pineapple Lot" was then leased to the Landmark Trust, who restored the building.

The edible pineapple we love to eat was classified as the species *Ananas comosus*, but it has now lost its genus status and become a cultivar called *Ananas 'Comosus'*. The reason for the change is that for 200 or more years this plant has been clonally selected and crossed and recrossed, and it is impossible to get an accurate description of the physical characters of the original plant.

The pineapple is a multiple fruit; each flower in the inflorescence produces a fruit, but these mature into a single mass in which each flower has produced a true fruit. After flowering the mass is called an infructescence. Examples are the fig, pineapple, mulberry, osage-orange, and breadfruit. Pineapple fruits frequently turn bright red during the flowering/fruiting process.



Picture from the Sarasota Bromeliad Society
Newsletter, December 2017

We hope that you have had a Wonderful Christmas. Please have a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Don't forget to renew your membership now, if you haven't already.

Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago Membership Application

(New Member) (Renewal)

Chose one below

Individual \$5.00 Annually Dual \$8.00 Annually

Name _____ Phone Number (_____) _____

_____ - _____ Cell Number (_____) _____ - _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____

Birthday (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

Make your check or money order out to the Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago

Simply fill this form out and mail with payment to:

Paula Dering

Bromeliad Society of Greater Chicago

44 Atteridge Road

Lake Forest, IL

60045-1713