

# S E M B S

The Southeast Michigan Bromeliad Society

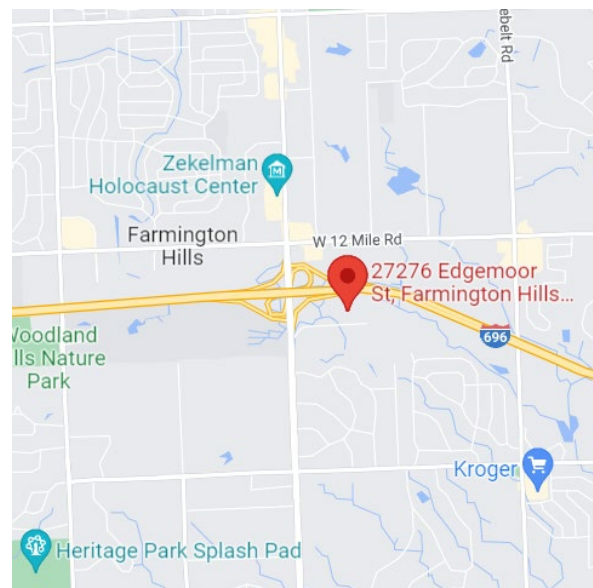
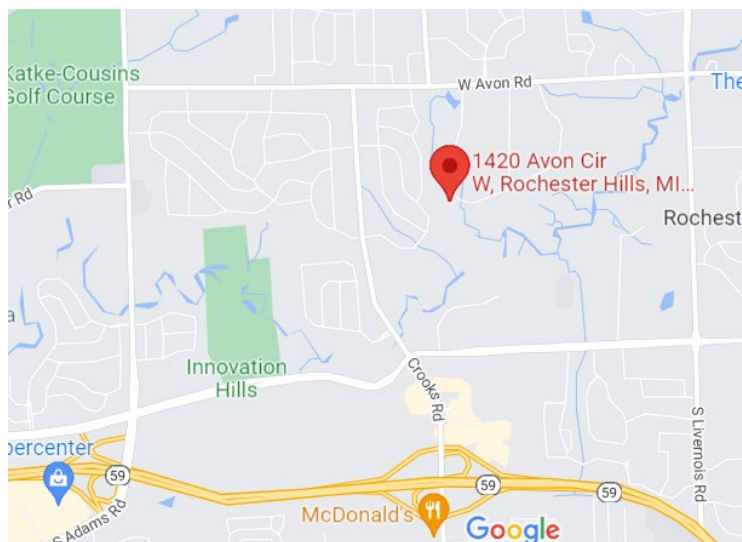
An Affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International

July/August 2022



*Vriesea lubbersii* x 'Voodoo Magic' - a new hybrid by Paul Wingert

*Events Calendar:* Saturday, July 23, 1:00 PM. Annual summer picnic/ potluck hosted by Lynne & Pat Echlin. 1420 Avon Circle W., Rochester Hills, MI 48309. Our hosts have offered to provide burgers, hot dogs, and beverages. Kindly RSVP to Lynne or Pat- 248-651-9521 so they can plan accordingly, and also to let Lynne know what kind of salad or dessert you plan to bring. Plan to enjoy the Echlin's wonderful garden and enjoy a feast for the eyes with Lynne's generous utilization of bromeliads in the outdoor landscape! Meeting topic to include display of new plant acquisitions from the WBC and report on the conference experience. The photos included later in the newsletter offer just a small taste of all that occurred at the conference! We will also have a discussion of the September 10-11 Display and Sale at Matthaei Botanical Gardens.



Saturday, August 20, 2:00 PM. Meeting hosted by Paul and Karen Wingert, 27276 Edgemoor, Farmington Hills, MI 48334. August colors in the shade house are intense and there are plenty of plants in bloom! Bring extra pups of bromeliads that you would like to trade or offer for the raffle table. For members attending either of the July or August we will have a special surprise giveaway!

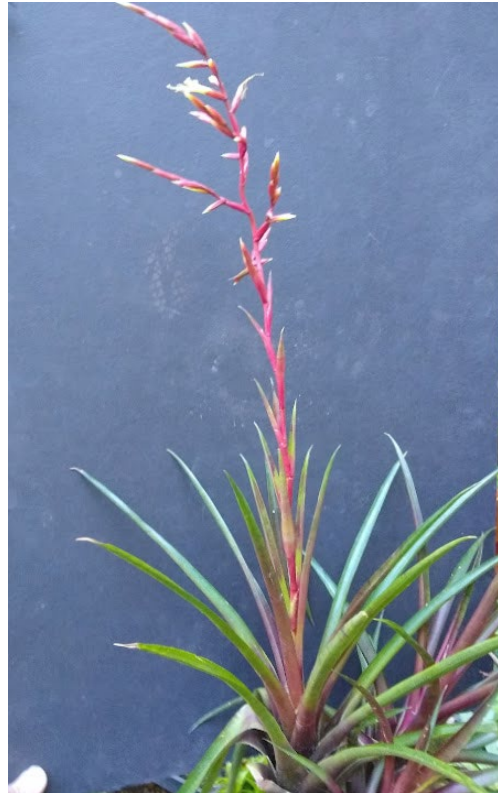
Saturday, September 10 and Sunday, September 11- Annual Fall Show and Sale co-presented with the Michigan Cactus & Succulent Society at University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Hours will be 10 AM – 4:30 PM both days. The event will take place in Greenhouse 3. The greenhouse will be open on Friday for those who wish to set up early. Everyone is encouraged to bring their favorite plants to display, even if you only plan to attend for a few hours on either day! Members are welcome to bring plants for sale. Double tag plants- one label will stay with the plant. The second label should list the price and initials of the seller or other seller ID. 10% of plant sales shall be donated to the SEMBS. Let Paul Wingert know of your requested space requirements at one of the July or August meetings, or contact him by email: [pcwingert@gmail.com](mailto:pcwingert@gmail.com)

*May Meeting Recap:* Welcome to new members Dennis Theakston and Ren Seven, Matt Loeper, and a “welcome back” to Jeremiah Sandler. Despite some mid-day storms, and threats of afternoon downpours, it turned out to be a beautiful afternoon! As usual, Michael Kiehls’ grower’s choice offerings were a bit hit, and we also found new, happy homes for bromeliads from Andrea Gray’s collection.



## Adventures in Hybridizing- *by Paul Wingert*

The cover photo for the current newsletter is the culmination of a project that started in 2014. On a whim, I decided to cross two blooming Vrieseas that each had colorful leaves. The seed parent was the species *Vriesea lubbersii*, a bromeliad from the Atlantic Forest ecosystem in southeast Brazil. I originally acquired the plant from Michael Kiehl a few years earlier. As you can see in the photo, it is a “smallish” *Vriesea* with many reddish colored, narrowly triangular leaves and a tall, wiry inflorescence with red bracts and yellow flowers.



The pollen parent is *Vriesea* ‘Voodoo Magic’, a hybrid by the legendary John Arden. A treasured plant in my collection, I got it directly from John during a visit to his home during the World Bromeliad Conference 2006 in San Diego. It is a gorgeous foliage plant more than 3 feet across with stunning maroon leaves. The inflorescence is long lasting, tall, amply compound, with long lasting red floral bracts.

My thought process at the time was- “well, very likely that there will be some very nice foliage plants.” On that count, I have not been disappointed. The influence of the ‘Voodoo Magic’ pollen parent has been strong. Virtually every seedling

developed the rich, maroon foliage of the pollen parent. Leaf shape and plant size has been a good deal more variable. I was hoping for more of the offspring to be somewhat reduced in size from the seed parent's genetics, but that appeared not to be a dominant trait. The influence of leaf shape and inflorescence characteristics did appear in some of the progeny. In fact, the first to bloom from the grex seemed heavily influenced by the seed parent. Smallest of the grex and blooming in "only" 4 years from seed (it is also worth mentioning that waiting for the seed capsules on Vrieseas requires patience, typically 7-9 months!), it has the upright shape and triangular leaves of *Vr. lubbersii*, though with wider and more intensely maroon leaves. The inflorescence also has more affinity to the seed parent with a tall, wiry inflorescence, but more robust in character and brighter red bracts.



It is always an adventure when using a "hybrid" as a parent when attempting to create new hybrids. The genetics are already a jumbled mess, and as I researched Vriesea 'Voodoo Magic' on the BSI Cultivar Registry, I discovered that it has a complicated ancestry. It does help explain why there has been extreme variation in the flowering traits of some of the progeny. The plant pictured (left) first flowered in November 2021. This one had the most affinity with the pollen parent and has the appearance of a slightly "downsized" version of *Vr. 'Voodoo Magic'*. The only disappointment was that the flowers appear to be sterile, so it's useless for further hybridizing. Nonetheless, it is an attractive plant and producing some nice offsets!



Blooming at the same time as the wannabe baby 'Voodoo Magic' was this



imposing, much larger sibling with a 3 foot + spread of nearly black foliage and a towering 4 foot compound inflorescence with a red rhachis and spreading branches with shiny yellow floral bracts. The yellow bracts were unexpected. This is where closer examination of the Cultivar Registry got interesting. The ancestral lineage of Vriesea 'Voodoo Magic' includes the parents and grandparents Vr. 'Van Ackeri', Vr. 'Brentwood', and Vr. 'Poelmanii'. If you view [Vriesea 'Brentwood'](#) on the BSI Cultivar Registry (it's a mess!), you begin to appreciate the thousands of hours of work to document the newer bromeliad hybrids! Having verified that the yellow floral bracts could have come from just about anywhere, it wasn't a total surprise when two more bloomed this spring with branched yellow inflorescences. Besides the plants

pictured on the Newsletter cover, another came into bloom almost concurrently. Though slightly smaller in width and height, and with fewer branches, the inflorescence had the delightful habit of the branch tips incurving towards the terminal bud. It did have the advantage of fitting into my suitcase (with 1/8 of an inch to spare!) so I entered it into the judged show. Apologies for the lighting in the photo. Sadly, it's the only picture I took of it. There were very few flowering Vrieseas in the Show, so this one got a lot of attention! Despite a bit of leaf damage, it came away with a blue ribbon! By the end of the week, it had grown too much to return home in my suitcase. I donated it to the Rare Plant Auction, where it sold for a satisfyingly hefty price! Nice to know it has a good new home in Florida!







# WBC 2022 Sarasota, Florida. June 7-11

Wednesday Garden tour. Orchids, bromeliads, live oak, palms, asparagus sprengeri, and ferns in abundance. If you look closely, you'll see some people for scale! This is just a small portion of a spectacular, large garden!

Just imagine being able to grow these giant Aechmeas year-round as epiphytes on our local oak trees!







Nursery tour to Michael's Bromeliads. Name your genus, and it's likely that Michael has plants by the thousands! Featured in bloom here (*left*) is *Vriesea elata x zamorensis*.

Need something on the spiny side? Perhaps this *Hohenbergia* 'Ouchi' will do! With a dozen shade houses to explore, there wasn't nearly enough time to take it all in.



Any requests for a *Dyckia* or two? These were growing in the unrelenting, hot Florida sun. Absolutely super!







Thursday morning nursery tour to Tropiflora. Regretted not packing an umbrella for a soaking 10-minute shower, but it didn't take long for the sun to return to make everything toasty and dry again.

I found several bromeliads that I hadn't seen before. Some followed me home! It ended up being a rewarding, albeit rather expensive morning!

Just a few of the Tillandsias. There were a couple more shade houses with multiple layers of plants!

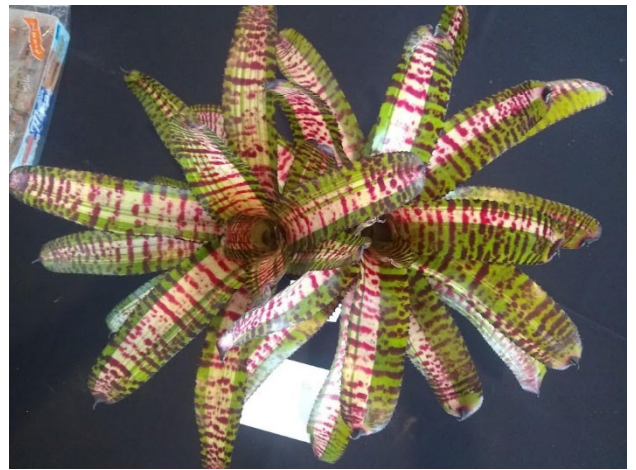




The Tropiflora display at the Conference



Thursday afternoon the judged plant show was open for conference registrants. There were so many spectacular plants!





One of the largest Tillandsia ehlersiana I have ever seen!



I made it to the Head Table with my hybrid Orthophytum 'Heavy Metal'

Best of Show! A gorgeous Vriesea hybrid by David Fell

