

S E M B S

The Southeast Michigan Bromeliad Society
an Affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International

January/February 2025



Wallisia cyanea albomarginata grown by Jerry Raack. The February 15 meeting (by Zoom) will focus on indoor growing strategies for growing in our temperate climate. Join us and show us how you grow your bromeliads in winter, or to get inspiration from fellow society members!

President's message- *Brooke Monette*

With the New Year well underway, it's a good time to start thinking about our 2025 events. We have a field trip in mind, and are happy to announce that after a few years' hiatus, we will be returning to the Novi Home and Garden Show this March. Please take a look at your availability, since we'll need some help staffing our booth. Speaking of schedules, here's our tentative itinerary for the year so far:

January	No Meeting
15 February 2pm	Member Growing Habits/Show & Tell, Zoom
22 March 2pm	Seed Starting Workshop, Matthaei Botanical Gardens
28-30 March	Novi Home & Garden Show, Suburban Collection Showplace
12 April 2pm	Introduction to Bromeliads/Dividing and repotting pups, Graye's Greenhouse
17 May 2pm	Spring Group Order, Paul and Karen's House
21 June 2pm	Field Trip, TBD
26 July 2pm	Brooke and Adam's House
16 August 1pm!	Summer Potluck Picnic, Paul and Karen's House
6-7 September 10am-4pm	Plant Show & Sale, Matthaei Botanical Gardens
18 October 2pm	Betty Patterson, Matthaei Botanical Gardens
November 2pm	TBD, Matthaei Botanical Gardens
December	Holiday Party, Details TBD

For our booth at the Home and Garden show, we need a few volunteers to join us in spreading our love of bromeliads, to chat with visitors about what bromeliads are and how to grow them, and how to join our society to learn more. We could use some plants for our display there also. For those who volunteer, parking and admission will be free. We'll have some tickets to share with those members interested in attending the show itself, as well. The show dates are Friday through Sunday, the 28th-30th of March. Please let Brooke or Paul know about your interest in joining us there so we can coordinate your parking pass and our volunteer schedule. Additional information will be included in the March newsletter. We'll pass around a signup sheet at the March meeting and go over details then, too.

**Novi Home and Garden Show
Suburban Collection Showplace
46100 Grand River Avenue
Novi, MI 48374**

**Friday, March 28 | 12 pm – 7 pm
Saturday, March 29 | 10 am – 7 pm
Sunday, March 30 | 10 am – 5 pm**

Our February meeting will be held by Zoom on Saturday, February 15, beginning at 2:00 pm. Follow the link below to join the meeting.

Brooke Monette is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: SEMBS February Meeting

Time: Feb 15, 2025 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/2158510746?pwd=2xbcrIsQsDmqCViHJduhodHFAoWXl.1&omn=85497965696>

Meeting ID: 215 851 0746

Passcode: 748155

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,2158510746#,,,,*748155# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,2158510746#,,,,*748155# US

Dial by your location

- +1 305 224 1968 US
- +1 309 205 3325 US
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
- +1 646 931 3860 US
- +1 386 347 5053 US
- +1 507 473 4847 US
- +1 564 217 2000 US
- +1 669 444 9171 US



A nice sampling from Kevin Patterson's collection. Kevin supplements his lighting with 100-watt LED panels. He likes the light distribution provided by the panels. He also uses 4-foot 5000K LED shop lights for smaller plants and seedlings.



As stated on the front page, this is an opportunity for everyone to show the plants that we love to grow, and the strategies we use to display and enjoy our plants! Everything is on the table for discussion- where you situate your plants at windows, in a greenhouse, under supplemental lighting, what plants need fertilizing, which plants tolerate chilly conditions best, etc. Don't have anything that you would like to show, but looking for inspiration from others? Please join us!

Last July, Jerry and Joanne Raack hosted our meeting. The September-October 2024 newsletter highlighted many of the plants that Jerry grows outdoors during the summer. As a follow-up, Jerry has graciously shared an article to show how he manages to squeeze everything indoors for the winter.

How to Grow Bromeliads in Very Crowded Situations in Ohio— by Jerry Raack

Here is some information about how I actually pack plants together to grow more in less space and how it works.

Hi everyone, I'm just starting to get out of the "ice ages" here in Ohio, with the first day above normal since December occurring yesterday. So, yesterday it was sunny, and I took photos in my greenhouse to show how I pack so many plants into such a small space, and my experience in staging them for the best growth. With sun and Ceramic Metal Halide lights the colors were not really accurate, but I did the best I could. Normally the colors would be brighter and clearer. Please have a look at all the photos before reading on, as my comments will make more sense to you after you see all the photos.

LINK: *(left click to highlight link, release, then press Ctrl and left click again to access the Google Drive folder)*

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14_yiLnNHglqo7sHV_SpOoxqO_UkJI-L?usp=sharing

I currently grow about 460 species, cultivars and hybrids over 32 genera and 5 inter-generic hybrids. The predominance of my collection is in Tillandsia (159), Guzmania (138), Aechmea (29), Vriesea (27), Racinaea (18), Neoregelia (12) and 10 or fewer types in each of the other genera. Within the Tillandsia, at least half are mesic (like moisture) types, followed by Pseudovriesea and finally the drier growers.

Trying to assure optimal growing conditions for all of these in such a tight space (roughly 233 square feet of greenhouse) is really impossible, but I do my best by placement within the space I have. I put the drier growing bromeliads up high in the greenhouse where it is more difficult to water; hence, they get less water, but do get a lot of humidity and light. I put the other mesic sun-loving plants next down from the top, then the smaller most numerous and those that require the most water on the horizontal benches, and finally I put the biggest plants on the floor as they are quite heavy and large (up to 4 feet across) and cannot be supported by hangers. Most of these are mesic varieties such as Barfussia platyrhachis, Tillandsia goudae, Mezobromelia gregbrownii, Mezobromelia capituligera, and Tillandsia fendleri. I utilize 6 poles made of thick-wall conduit in a vertical orientation spaced 32 to 45 inches apart along the highest back wall of my lean-to greenhouse to gain vertical growing space. I use "pigtail" hangers on the poles to place potted plants up higher and around the pole (see photos). This lets me use the cubic feet in my greenhouse more efficiently and allows much better air circulation among the plants. Each pole supports anywhere from 24 to 36 plants depending on their height and breadth.

My greenhouse is an L-shape with the longest part 20 feet long, and the shorter bottom part of the L-shape 14 feet long, with both wings being 9 1/2 feet wide. The back wall is just over 7' high, and the front wall is 44 inches high, but the height of the bench along that wall is 35" tall, with the space under the bench unusable for growing due to no light penetrating below it. The vertical outside walls are double-walled glass windows that open horizontally and are used for summer ventilation. The roof is double-wall polycarbonate plastic supported by 2 x 6 cedar rafters. There is a 16" thermostatically controlled exhaust vent at the upper end of the greenhouse near the roof to dispel hot air in the summertime.

I have 3 CMH lights of 750 watts each which produces a lot of penetrating light, and heat. The lights run from late fall to early spring when the greenhouse normally requires heat, so the electricity used for the lights doubles to help heat the greenhouse anyway. My primary heater in the greenhouse is an old electric furnace from a mobile

home with a blower on it to distribute the heat through a bit of duct work. My backup heater, in case of an electrical outage or fault in the electric furnace, is an LP Gas heater that requires no electricity to work. It has a pilot light and is attached to two 40-lb propane tanks with an automatic switchover device. This lets me refill one tank while the other is being used without shutting down the heater. I have a 20-inch box fan running 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. My weather here is pretty much what you get in the Detroit area, just about 12 hours later. So, you know I have very gray and cloudy days in the winter since moisture is picked up over Lakes Michigan, St. Clair and Erie and moves southwest toward and past Columbus. So, with a lean-to greenhouse where the house blocks some of the natural light anyway, the CMH lights are an absolute requirement to grow plants well in the wintertime, and to provide more light with so many plants shading one another. Oh, and in a few photos, you will see a small diameter black hose attached along the roof rafters - that's my mist system used only when the greenhouse gets too hot, or when I am on vacation and want to water my plants automatically. It is controlled via Wi-Fi.

As you can, or have seen in the photos, the plants are really packed together with leaves overlapping one another. Great for maintaining humidity levels high, but poor for causing shading of lower-level plants from their much-needed light. About 1/2 the plants are moved outdoors from about May 15 through Oct 10th, but it can vary by a week on either end due to weather forecasts upcoming. Once plants are put in the greenhouse in October, they remain in the same place about 90% of the time. I occasionally move a few plants when they come into bloom to enjoy them in the house, or in a more prominent place in the greenhouse, but most simply remain where they were put the entire winter. In the summer about 1/2 the plants are moved outside in various places to provide them more or less sunshine based on their requirements. Since I live in a mature dense forest, most get quite a bit of shade during the day. Humidity levels are usually high (about 60% or so).

That's the environment I grow my bromeliads in - year after year. As with almost everyone in the area this past year, the summer was hotter than normal, and MUCH drier, with near record drought. Most bromeliads did not like this weather; especially the cooler growing species that I specialize in raising. During the fall, winter and spring, the temperatures are much more to the liking of the cool-growing types, and they usually at least double in size. Many of my plants bloom during the winter months since I raise a lot of *Guzmania* and *Vriesea*, both of which normally bloom during this period in their native habitats. A large number of my plants are native to Ecuador, where I have explored 9 different years during several different times of the year, but most recently mostly in January when our weather is cold here and many plants are in bloom in Ecuador.

So, you will see in the photos that life in the greenhouse is crowded, and plants "elbow" each other to collect light from the outside and from the CMH lights. Light is the most precious commodity that I have and that I constantly fight to keep up.

In the photos, you will see some wonderful plants that are currently in full bloom, or that are just developing their inflorescences. Among the photos you will see the following:

An undescribed *Pitcairnia* species from Peru, *Guzmania bipartita* (in basement under LED Lights), *Cipuropopsis zamorensis* (P1299140), *Aechmea corymbosa* x *chantinii*, *Tillandsia ionantha* 'Druid' with its yellow leaves and white flowers, *Tillandsia* 'Majestic' (Mark Dimmitt hybrid), *Wallisia* x *duvalii* - a larger plant than *Wallisia cyanea* but similar in color, *Tillandsia raackii* (2 plants in bloom now), *Guzmania lingulate* Variegated - red is an extremely difficult color to take a clear detailed photo of as the red melds together and hides the distinctness of the petals - a very beautiful form, *Guzmania conglomerata* from Ecuador - its white flowers are not yet open, the large *Guzmania sanguinea* that I collected with my wife on our honeymoon in 1988 near Sta Isabel in Ecuador, 3 plants of *Vriesea* 'Vogue' in one pot, also 2 pots of 3 plants each of *Vriesea* Goldie Lox (Herb Hill Jr hybrid) whose colors in person are much brighter red and clear yellow than the photo shows, the extremely beautiful pastel colors of *Tillandsia limonensis* with its branched pendant inflorescence and green flowers, the variegated *Aechmea* 'Reginaldo' with 3 plants of *Vriesea* 'Goldie Lox' in the background, a great clone of *Wallisia cyanea* from Peter Bak, a very nice clone of *Wallisia cyanea* Albomarginated that does not bloom very often, and is much slower growing than the normal *Wallisia cyanea*, an immature inflorescence of *Guzmania cundinamarcae* from Peru, an immature inflorescence of the large *Guzmania wittmackii* Variegated which will have a variegated red and white inflorescence with white flowers when it opens, in the background of that photo is *Tillandsia guatemalensis* also shown in the next photo, the immature inflorescence of *Tillandsia porphyrocraspeda* (which will be a very bright red cylindrical inflorescence with blue flowers hanging on the left with a good view of one of my 3 CMH lights, *Tillandsia foliosa* with multiple plants of *Cipuropopsis dubia* in bloom in a single pot to its left, a very immature inflorescence of *Guzmania* 'Soledo' with the *Vriesea* 'Vogue' behind it, The bright red flowers

of *Pitcairnia condorensis* (again, the bright red does not photograph clearly) - this plant is self-fertile setting seed and coming up in adjacent pots in subsequent years, an immature inflorescence of *Tillandsia leiboldiana* 'Mora', the branched red spikes of *Cipuropsis dubia* (multiple plants), a close up of the inflorescence and flowers of *Guzmania sanguinea*, a close up of the inflorescence of *Vriesea Vogue*, the small plant of a special clone of *Tillandsia complanata* with its multiple lateral red inflorescences with pink flowers and leaves that are more silvery in appearance due to the minutely adpressed scales on the undersides of the leaves, the pink inflorescence with yellow flowers of *Guzmania kareniae* from northwest Ecuador, and lastly the immature dark red inflorescence of *Guzmania vinacea* with its wine-red leaves underneath. PHEW! And there were a few things I did not get photos of that were in bloom. Those, and better photos of those with currently immature inflorescences will come in the future.

ENJOY! Have questions? Write me an email. I don't usually pay attention to texts.

Regards,

Jerry Raack

jerryraack@gmail.com

Pataskala, Ohio

Jan 30, 2025

Looking ahead- If you have any seed donations for the March seed starting workshop, contact Paul Wingert (pcwingert@gmail.com) so we can publicize what will be available. The Society may also consider purchasing a few packets of seed from the BSI Seed Bank. The list below is currently posted on the BSI *Members Only* web page. If there are any species that are particularly interesting to you, contact Paul before March 1, 2025 to allow adequate time for shipping. Also, for both the March and April meetings, if anyone has community pots of seedlings from last year's seed sowing workshop, consider bringing them along to divide and repot individually!

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|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. <i>Aechmea emmerichiae</i> | 16. <i>Guzmania monostachia</i> | 30. <i>Tillandsia chapalillaensis</i> |
| 2. <i>Aechmea egleriana</i> v. major* | 17. <i>Guzmania osyana</i> ** | 31. <i>Tillandsia disticha</i> |
| 3. <i>Aechmea kertesziae</i> | 18. <i>Neoregelia pascoaliana</i> | 32. <i>Tillandsia juncea</i> |
| 4. <i>Aechmea lingulata</i> | 19. <i>Pitcairnia capixabae</i> | 33. <i>Tillandsia fasciculata</i> |
| 5. <i>Aechmea mexicana</i> | 20. <i>Pitcairnia ferrellingramiae</i> | 34. <i>Tillandsia flexuosa</i> |
| 6. <i>Aechmea mexicana</i> green form | 21. <i>Pitcairnia flammea</i> v. roseutii | 35. <i>Tillandsia mazatlanensis</i> |
| 7. <i>Aechmea nudicaulis</i> | 22. <i>Pitcairnia heterophylla</i> | 36. <i>Tillandsia pedicellata</i> |
| 8. <i>Aechmea penduliflora</i> | 23. <i>Pitcairnia heterophylla</i> (red)* | 37. <i>Tillandsia retorta</i> |
| 9. <i>Aechmea recurvata</i> red | 24. <i>Pitcairnia scepstrigera</i> ** | 38. <i>Tillandsia scaposa</i> |
| 10. <i>Alcantarea simplicisticha</i> | 25. <i>Puya berteroniana</i> | 39. <i>Tillandsia schiedeana</i> |
| 11. <i>Barfussia laxissima</i> | 26. <i>Puya mirabilis</i> | 40. <i>Tillandsia straminea</i> AB 863134 |
| 12. <i>Billbergia kautskyana</i> | 27. <i>Racinaea fraseri</i> ** | 41. <i>Tillandsia tenuifolia</i> |
| 13. <i>Dyckia brevifolia</i> | 28. <i>Tillandsia atroviridipetala</i> v. longepedunculata | 42. <i>Tillandsia tricholepis</i> |
| 14. <i>Encholirium</i> sp. | 29. <i>Tillandsia capillaris</i> | 43. <i>Vriesea corriea-araujoi</i> |
| 15. <i>Guzmania desautelsii</i> ** | | 44. <i>Werauhia gladioliflora</i> |