

S.F.V.B.S.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BROMELIAD SOCIETY

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OCTOBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

OFFICERS

Pres: **Mike Wisnev** V.P. & News: **Mary K. Carroll** Secretary: **Kathleen Misko** Treasurer: **Mary Chan**
Membership: **Nancy P.-Hapke** Health & Wellness: **Georgia Roiz** Web Page: **Kim Thorpe**
Directors: **Steve Ball, Bryan Chan, Richard Kaz –fp, Dave Bassani-fp**

next meeting: **Saturday Oct. 5, 2013 @ 10:00 am**
Sepulveda Garden Center 16633 Magnolia Blvd. Encino, California 91316

AGENDA

9:30 – SET UP & SOCIALIZE

10:00 - Door Prize – for members who arrive before 10:00 / Please Sign In

10:05 -Welcome Visitors and New Members.
Make announcements and Introduce Speaker

10:15 - Speaker: Guillermo Rivera

Topic: “Bromeliads from Colombia”

This digital photo presentation will cover a trip earlier this year to the Andean region of Colombia. It will show his group exploring its 3 ranges: Cordillera Oriental, east of Bogota, Cordillera Central, on the other side of Magdalena Valley, and Cordillera Occidental, west of the Cauca Valley, and before the Pacific region. Because of difference in elevation, many habitats serve as a home for Bromeliads to grow. We will enjoy photos of subtropical



and tropical habitats not only rich in Bromeliads such as Guzmania, Tillandsia, Vriesea and Pitcairnia, but also rich in butterflies and birds.

Dr. Rivera was born in Cordoba, Argentina. He has a Ph.D. in Botany from the University of Cordoba, and was a researcher there for a time before forming a tour company. (Continued next column)

He is owner of South America Nature Tours (former Cactus Expeditions), a company dedicated to the organization of tours for the last 12 years, throughout South America (Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador), Mexico and South Africa, with emphasis on plants (bromeliads, cacti, and orchids), and birding. Rivera will be our tour operator and guide on CSSA Tour 2012: Argentina and his talk on Argentina will be a preview of the plants we may see on that trip. There is another trip to Colombia, planned for November 8 - November 21, 2013. For more information please contact Guillermo at rivera@intecar.com.ar or info@cactusexpeditions.com or visit his website: www.southamericanaturetours.com ◇

11:00 - Refreshment Break: Will the following members please provide refreshments this month: **Wesley Batera, Diana Barber, Dave Bassani, Kaz Benadom, Jeanette Bond, Cristy Brenner** and anyone else who has a snack they would like to share. If you can't bring anything this month don't stay away, just contribute next month.

Questions about refreshments? Call Mary K. 818-705-4728, leave a message, she will call back.

Feed The Kitty-help support our refreshments

11:30 - Show and Tell – Please bring one plant.

11:45 – Mini Auction: members contribute

12:00 - Raffle: We need each member to donate

12:30 – Pick Up around your area /

Meeting is over—Drive safely ◇

TAKING A LOOK BACK at...

Our September meeting was another good one, well attended with good food, good people and good vibes. Steve Frieze' program on "Tropical Adventures in Brazil" was both informative and entertaining. We saw some beautiful Brazilian Bromeliads and other plants. Lots of Dyckias, and some other Dyckia looking plants with somewhat different inflorescences. Steve's collection consist primarily of Cactus so it is understandable that he didn't know some of the Bromeliad names; our members were more than willing to help out. One of his photos of a Dyckia in habitat sparked a lively discussion comparing Dyckias to Encholiriums. That discussion motivated Mike to do a little research which you can read about further down in the newsletter. A special thanks to those who donated raffle plants and food and show-n-tell. We had several members contribute who don't normally do so and we really appreciate it. I would like to say thanks by mentioning all by name but this time I'm really afraid I will forget someone. Please know that you all have my sincere thanks. <>

Novice Corner - Who would have thought Palmolive dish liquid would be important to our plant collection, well it is!

Most of us have experienced a potted plant that became too dry; so dry that the soil was hard as a rock. At a recent LaBallona Bromeliad meeting Tom Rozell shared a landscape maintenance tip with the group. Palmolive will soften the soil. I tried it and it worked. I put a few drops of Palmolive in a glass of water and poured it into the pot. I had to much water so I just poured the remainder into the plant's saucer. The plant is still alive and the soil is soft. <>

Announcements

- ***The 2014 June show*** may be moved back or forward a week. We will keep you updated.
 - **Correction to a statement I made last month about miniature Neos.** There was a question about how fast they will multiply. I said I usually get 2 pups a year, but what I meant to say is two pups after each bloom. The plants don't flower every year.
 - Senior Gardener, **Vel Lauterio, is leaving the Sepulveda Garden Center.** Unfortunately for us she has been reassigned to work at another facility. Vel's last day at the SGC will be Saturday Oct. 5. Some of you will probably remember Paola Jaramillo from when she was worked there before. We will welcome Paola back; she has been working with Vel for the past week so there should be a seamless transition of service. Carlos is still here.
 - **Growing from seed** – Last year Larry Farley brought some Aechmea recurvata rubra seedlings to show at one of our meetings. He said he has begun repotting my (only about 300). He is hoping to have one develop into a variegated form similar to Aechma Aztec Gold (but on a Red Form). This is not his first venture; he planted 1000 Aechmea recurvatas back in the '80s and had three that developed into variegated form. I'm sure Larry will keep us posted. Good Luck
 - ***Holiday Brunch*** - Please put this date on your calendar. **Saturday Dec 7, 2013** at the Sepulveda Garden Center 10:00am start with Holiday Lunch and gifts at noon. Detailed information will be posted closer to the date.
 - **Lost Black Jacket ?? – Did you lose one at the last meeting? I will bring it to the Oct. meeting.**
 - ***4 October Birthdays*** – **Happy Birthday to Dave Bassani on Oct 16, Nancy Hapke Oct. 27, Richard Roosman Oct 31 and Larry Farley also in October.**
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- **Wed. Oct. 23rd** - Steve List is the agricultural instructor at Sylmar High School. He is also President of the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers (CANGC). The CANGC *San Fernando Valley Chapter* will again host an auction for the benefit of scholarships in agriculture and to benefit the, unfunded, agricultural programs in the L.A. Unified School District. This is a very good cause, and because all materials for the auction are donated, the prices are great. Refreshments are available as is the chance to speak to many members of the gardening and plant world in the SF Valley. In other words, great cause, great camaraderie, great stuff to buy. There is a regular and a silent auction. The particulars are: **Wed. Oct. 23th. @ 6:00 pm.** The location is **9560 Reseda Blvd.; corner of Reseda and Superior** in the meeting hall of the **Methodist Church**. The auction admission fee is \$5.00 per person; such a deal.

The CANGC *SFV Chapter* is *in need of donations, volunteers and attendees.* Give Steve List a call or e-mail if you would like to support Horticulture Education. 818-399-4273 S.list@verizon.net



This is your newsletter!

Do you have something to announce or something humorous or educational to share?? <>

SFVBS Regular meeting Schedule

Sat. - Nov 2, 2013	Speaker – Kim Thorpe – “Bromeliads of Oaxaca Mexico” part I
Sat. - Dec 7, 2013	Meeting and Holiday Brunch 10:00 – 2:00

-Thursday October 3, 7:00 pm – LA Cactus & Succulent meeting at the Sepulveda Garden Center.

- **Wed. Oct. 23th. @ 6:00 pm.** CANGC-*sfv chapter* - annual auction at 9560 Reseda Blvd., Reseda CA; corner of Reseda and Superior in the Methodist Church, meeting hall. Parking on the side and in the rear. The auction admission fee is \$5.00 per person.

Support our local **Bromeliad Nursery**
Live Art Plants -18809 Plummer St. - Northridge, CA 91324

Last month I said Mike deserves a Special Thank You for his research and great Taxonomic Tidbits. Mike has done it again; a well written article about Hechtias and Dyckias. Please see the article By Mike Wisnev (mwisnev@sbcglobal.net) beginning on page 4.

Taxonomic Tidbits –*Hechtia*, *Dyckia* and their Flowers I

By Mike Wisnev (mwisnev@sbcglobal.net)

Our club is blessed with some great *Dyckia* and *Hechtia* growers in the club. Among others, Steve Ball, Bryan Chan and Richard Kaz are well known in the *Dyckia* world and have fantastic collections. Any *Dyckia* article would be remiss by not mentioning the late Bill Baker who probably mentored all three, and hybridized some of the most beloved *Dyckias* around. Other club members grow quite a few of them, and some grow from seed. We have also been lucky to hear Andy Siekkinen speak twice in the last two years – Andy no doubt knows more about *Hechtia* than any other Bromeliad hobbyist. And Nels Christianson and Steve Frieze have shown us lovely photos of *Dyckia* in habitat.

Below is a *Hechtia* “*gayii* (*H montana* Burgandy)” at Huntington Botanical Gardens (HBG) .
For those of you in the hobby before me, it was collected by Ed and Betty Gay.



So, what to write about? Certainly not *Dyckia* hybrids given the group noted above. Instead, I'll show some pictures of them at HBG, and write a bit about *Hechtia* and *Dyckia* flowers, even though no one grows them for their flowers. I'll focus on *Hechtia* in this article.

You have all seen *Hechtias* and *Dyckias*, so I won't try to describe them. They look fairly similar, and to be honest, sometimes I have trouble telling some apart. My own view is that *Dyckias* usually have a symmetrical look, while *Hechtia* often look a bit wilder – like the one below.

This is *H podantha* (collected by Myron Kimmach and H. Sanchez-Mejorada) at HBG. Some of these clumps are huge – I won't hazard a guess when they were planted.



This is clearly a broad (and perhaps inaccurate!) generalization – the *H gayii* above is symmetric, as are many others. And some *Dyckias* look pretty wild. In addition, many *Hechtia* can get rather large compared to *Dyckias*.

A lot of *Hechtia* get redder than most *Dyckia*. See the picture above of *H gayii*.

Of course, a lot of *Hechtia* are white, or green, like a lot of *Dyckias*. *H galeottii* at HBG is shown below.

In recent years the *Hechtia* world has changed dramatically. First, many new species have been recently published. Kathleen Burt-Utley and John Utley, an American couple, have done quite a bit of it. I saw three articles of theirs – the 1987 article said there were 50 species, the 2011 article said 55, and the 2012 said over 60. From what we heard at Andy's recent talk, more will be described soon. Some are truly new. In other cases, previously described species that were poorly understood are broken up into different species as more is learned about them in their different habitats. It will be interesting to see if some of these are lumped back together in years to come.



Much more shocking is that recent DNA studies have shown that *Hechtia* and *Dyckia* are not closely related! Traditionally both have been considered members of the Pitcairnioideae subfamily. This subfamily included the similar looking *Puyas*, *Deuterochohnias*, and *Ochagavias* (and as we saw last month, *Encholoriums*). But recent DNA studies have shown that *Hechtia* should be treated as its own subfamily. In fact, the entire Pitcairnioideae subfamily has been revised. In any case, *Hechtia* and *Dyckias* are not closely related as once thought. Perhaps this is not so surprising since *Hechtia* grow primarily in Mexico and Central America, while *Dyckias* grow in S America. *Hechtia* also grow in Texas!

One *Hechtia* looks like a *Tillandsia*, and is aptly named *H tillandsioides*. Here is one at HBG – it looks more *Tillandsia* like when smaller in a pot than it does here.



While *Hechtia* and *Dyckias* can look a lot alike, their flowers are quite different. For starters, their size and color. Most *Dyckia* flowers are 1-2 cm long, while *Hechtia* flowers are smaller. *Dyckia* flowers are generally orange or yellow, and some are red. If I remember correctly, Nels told us that the yellow flowered ones tend to be in Argentina, while most in Brazil are orange. *Hechtia* flowers are usually white or cream colored, though at least one species is lilac and another is rose colored. To my knowledge, *Dyckias* never have white flowers, and *Hechtias* never have orange or yellow ones.

Below is *H rosea* at HBG, named for its leaves??
The green leaved *H schottii* is in the background – another wild one!



Nope, it is named for its red flowers.



While flower color can generally be used to distinguish these two genera, the color doesn't distinguish them from other Bromeliads. But, as described below, *Dyckia* and *Hechtia* flowers are different from all other genera in the old Pitcairnioideae subfamily.

Let's start with *Hechtia*, since they are really unique. Almost all Bromeliad flowers are considered perfect – that means they have both male stamens and female pistils. Some sources call these flowers hermaphroditic or bisexual; there is some confusion here that seems to stem from whether these terms apply to the flowers or the plants.

Hechtia do not have perfect flowers. They are imperfect or unisexual. Some plants of each species have female flowers, and the others have male flowers. As such, *Hechtia* are considered dioecious – the species consists of female and male plants.

Hechtia are fairly unique in this respect. No other genus of Pitcairnioideae is dioecious! In fact, I had read that only one other genus of Bromeliad has dioecious species – *Catopsis*. But I keep on finding a few examples in other genera.

As an aside, does that mean the rest of Bromeliads are monoecious? This is apparently a matter of semantics. Some authors would say yes since they use the term to include all plants whose individuals have both male and female parts. Others use monoecious in a stricter sense – they consider a plant monoecious only if the plant has both unisexual female flowers and unisexual male flowers (there are no such Bromeliads); under this view, plants with perfect flowers are neither dioecious or monoecious.

Here are some pictures of *Hechtia elliptica* collected by Myron Kimmach and Gary Lyons at HBG.
The brown spines make a nice contrast with the white glaucous leaves.



While you can see the six stamens with green anthers in the open flower, there is no pistil.
Thus, this is a male plant.

Here is a flower of female *H glomerata*. Here you can see the three long styles and stigma (attached to the yellowish ovary at the bottom) sticking out of the flower. Note also the violet tips of the white petals.



One other thing – *Hechtia* flowers are actually considered “functionally unisexual.” What does this mean? The flowers have both male and female parts but one of them is significantly suppressed. Female *Hechtia* flowers actually have a stamen-like structure, but it doesn’t have anthers or produce pollen. It is called a staminode. I included the enlarged picture of the flower above since it shows the staminodes – you can see one at the bottom of the flower circled in orange and two more above it. Similarly, male flowers have a pistil like structure that is called a pistillode. I haven’t seen information on just how much staminodes and pistillodes vary from species to species, or if any *Hechtia* flowers don’t have them.

Male and female *Hechtia* can differ in many ways besides the flower parts. For example, the inflorescence of a male plant is often more branched than that of a female plant. The peduncle of the female might have side branches that don’t branch themselves, while the male side branches have their own branches. (I have seen at least three ways to describe the branching patterns – one is whether the inflorescence is bipinnate or tripinnate, another is whether there is a single or double compound and yet another is whether it once or twice divided!) Other articles indicate that there can be difference in the petals, bracts and sepals of male and female flowers of the same species.



Enough about flowers. Compared to *Dyckias*, *Hechtia* haven’t been hybridized almost at all. Perhaps because you need a male and female plant. One of the few hybrids I have seen is called **H ‘Aztec Sun,’** which is a Bill Baker hybrid. Mine is a cutting from Richard Kaz I got at last year’s show and sale. I admire it almost every day, though I don’t think it looks as good as the day I got it (shown here).



There are certainly some lovely *Hechtia* species around. *H glauca* is one of my favorites.

Here it is at HBG.

This one wasn't labeled – it might be *H glomerata* per a Bromeliad forum.



On the right below is a male *H argentea* at HBG.
The left one is not labeled, but appears to also be *H argentea*.



And, if these above aren't pretty enough,

(look below)

..... here is one last photo, from the BSI Journal



Hechtia texensis

photo by D. Mueller, JBS 1982 p157