

Bromeliad Society of Broward County

DECEMBER 2020 SCURF

www.bromeliadsocietybc.com/



Shared by Brigitte Sheeks

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY
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Affiliations: BSBC supports the BSI, Cryptanthus Society and FCBS (2017-2020)



The Vaccine Before Christmas

By Kevin A. Wilson

'Twas some days before Christmas—how many I'm not sure
(The days ran together; everything was a blur).

All the houses were locked down from COVID-19,
With everyone wishing for the promised vaccine.
The children were nestled and sleeping just fine.
They were all tuckered out from their classes online.

And mamma in her kerchief and I in my cap
Had just sanitized our hands and hung up our masks.
The year had been hard. We were due a vacation.
But the thing wanted most? Emergency use authorization.

Then out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I assumed it was another 2020 disaster.
I ran to the window and put on my mask,
But what would I see? I was too scared to ask.

The neighbors were quiet and socially distant,
Awaiting the time they'd be COVID resistant.
But despite travel bans, there then did appear
A miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.

But this wasn't Santa. His gut wasn't paunchy.
It was the trusted presence of Anthony Fauci.

More rapid than eagles, at warp speed they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now Pfizer! Now Sanofi! Now Johnson & Johnson!
"On Moderna! On BioNTech! On Adaptive and Amgen!

To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall
Now vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate all!

As a virus expelled by a cough or a sneeze
When it meets plexiglass rises up on the breeze;
So up to the house-top the pharma all flew,
With the sleigh full of hope, and Dr. Fauci, too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney Fauci came with a bound.

He was dressed in a suit, as was always his way,
And his neatly cut hair was a smart silver-grey.
A chart in one hand, a syringe in the other,
And a medical bag—a gift from his mother.

The wisdom in his eyes and the knowledge in his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
With his reassuring smile covered up with a mask,
His no-nonsense style led him straight to the task.

He sprung to my side as I rolled up my sleeve,
And he stuck in the vaccine as quick as you please.
He flew to the bedroom, gave mamma a shot,
Then vaxxed both our kids without waking them up.

Inoculations complete, he returned to the chimney,
And gave me a pamphlet about what he put in me.
Then raising his finger but not touching his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

"C'mon, team!" he said. "We've a great opportunity.
If we vaccinate more we can reach herd immunity!"

Then he yelled back to me, as the sleigh quickly rose,
"I'll be back in a fortnight for the follow-up dose."



Diversity In Vrieseas

One of the favorite groups of bromeliads for many enthusiasts is the genus *Vriesea*. Whether the attraction is their spineless leaves, striking cross bands, or perhaps just the abundance of unusual color combinations, no bromeliad collection is complete without several of them!

Vriesea have long been a favorite among bromeliad hybridizers who artistically blend color and pattern characteristics into a new cultivar that will entice even the most finicky grower into buying just one more for their collection! To make them even harder to resist, *Vriesea* have some of the most amazing and colorful bloom spikes found in bromeliads.



Vr. 'a touch of class'
Photo: M&M Cameron



Vr. 'crimson tiger'
Photo: Royanne Shiigi



Vr. 'bloody red barron'
Photo: M&M Cameron



Vr. 'wild safari'
Photo: M&M Cameron



Vr. 'cool moss'
Photo: David Fell



Vr. 'white lord'
Photo: M&M Cameron

The plants shown above represent some of the more common foliage patterns for *Vriesea* where cross bands extend out in a radial pattern from the center of the plant to the very tip of its leaves. The spacing between the bands varies in different species as does the width of the leaves and even the intensity of the overall color.

As you can see in these photos, there are even subtle characteristics such as leaf tip coloring that add even more contrast and interest. Rosette and leaf shapes, including roundness or pointed leaf tips, are all variables depending on the species.

Like most bromeliads, how you grow them will also affect the plant's appearance. *Vriesea* prefer lower light levels and slightly drier soil making them perfect for indoor applications, but many varieties will thrive outside and even blush with increased sun exposure.



Vr. 'egyptian sunset'
Photo: George Stamatis



Vr. 'xayides blush'
Photo: George Stamatis

These at left, show blushing characteristics that are more common to Neoregelias. Some of the cultivars will have hints of these colors long before they reach maturity which varies from most Neo's.

Some Vriesea cultivars have linear lines that extend from the cup all the way to the end of the leaf as seen in these at right.

The striking tip color adds even more contrast and interest to the plant.



Vr. 'vortex'
Photo: M&M Cameron



Vr. 'white chocolate'
Photo: M&M Cameron



Vr. 'zeus'
Photo: M&M Cameron



Vr. 'wild jean'
Photo: David Fell

Cultivars that combine radial bands with linear lines, albomarginated or contrasting edges, and even blushing centers are part of the latest trend in Vriesea hybrids.

These plants at left show a combination of these various characteristics that make them hard to resist even if you're not a bromeliad collector. Hybrids like these take not only creative vision, but years of trial and error to create a stable plant.

If all of these images don't get you rethinking your love of Neos, Aechmeas, and Guzmania's, that's okay. There's room enough in your heart and in your collection for all of them. However, if you have Vrieseas in your collection and they haven't bloomed yet, then you're in for a real treat!

Vriesea blooms are not only colorful, but many are among the largest in the bromeliad family of plants. Vriesea spikes can be as high as five times taller than the plant itself which can put a tremendous strain on the roots holding on to the potting medium or the host it's attached to.

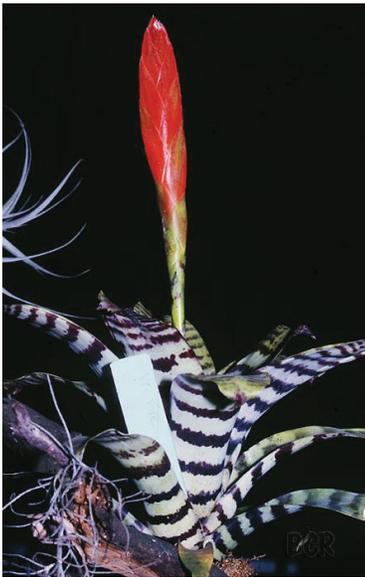


Vr. 'white line'

Photo: Bromtravels NL

Not only do Vriesea spike blooms add vibrant color to the plant, but their wide variety of shapes and complexity make them some of the most anticipated in the Bromeliaceae family.

From long and slender blooms like the 'white line' (left) and 'fire' (below) to some that would lead you to believe that they were crossed with a Chantinii like those on Vr. 'goldilocks' (below).



Vr. 'fire'

Photo: Courtesy BCR



Vr. 'goldilocks'

Photo: Courtesy BCR



Vr. 'ginoti'

Photo: Derek Butcher

Like other bromeliads, Vriesea only produce these magnificent flower spikes once in their life. Unlike Billbergias though, Vriesea spike blooms can last for weeks and weeks making the wait that much more rewarding.

Vriesea pups can be a bit harder to extract from the parent as they typically form higher up from the base of the plant. It's best to let the pups get a bit larger before removing from the parent and may require removing the parent's lower leaves when the time comes.

Like many bromeliads, Vrieseas are native to Central and South America and generally prefer a moderate climate and do well in lower light. Some varieties are cold-tolerant to temperatures just above freezing, but can't withstand a hard freeze.

Vriesea range in size from some of the smallest bromeliads there are to others that grow as large as many Alcantareas. Whatever your size preference, there's bound to be at least one you'll find you can't live without. Visit the [BCR](#) to start your search!

From The Editor



Thank goodness this year is almost behind us. I don't know if there has ever been a year that the entire world would agree was one to forget, but I'd have to imagine that 2020 would be at the top of the list!

Our group has been unable to meet since February of this year and even though there is hope as vaccines are now available, we won't be returning to formal meetings any time soon. If you'd have told me at our last meeting that we'd not be together as a group for over a year, I wouldn't have believed it. I also would have bought more plants and given a few more hugs knowing that I'd not see my dear friends for the rest of the year!

Some may have lost a friend, neighbor, or tragically a family member. Others have seen their jobs and income all but disappear like paper products and sanitizers off store shelves this year! I imagine future generations of students will study 2020 through social media posts, pandemic and political memes and wonder how we survived it all.

The fact remains, humans are as resilient as bromeliads. We can learn to be tolerant of changing conditions. We can get by without many things we thought were vital to our existence. We've learned to live with masks, travel restrictions, and social distancing. Most have not seen friends and family members for months on end yet have woken to see each new day and with it, came hope. We now realize what is essential and what we can live without, but only because there's hope.



Bromeliad of the Year 2020

One good thing that came out of this year is that I've been able to spend more time in my gardens and I hope you have as well. I had more time back in March when I was home for several weeks, but since then I've tried to spend several hours on the weekends among my plants to get the stress relief that only gardening offers.

I've also made the most of the time we've had to prepare all the foster plants I have for the day they get their forever home in Markham Park. What started out as a few adult plants coming home for "2-3 weeks" in early 2020, has turned into three hundred square feet of plants! Each month I've been able to extract more pups from the aging parents and give them their own lease on life. Some of those pups have already matured and are producing pups of their own.

I now have pots and pups in nearly every nook and cranny in my yard and when a neighbor was over a month ago, the word "hoarder" was used liberally. I even reduced my personal collection by over hundred plants this year, but you'd never know it walking through my yard! Once the foster plants are gone I'm sure it will look naked for months to come!



So here's the latest glimpse of some of the foster kids. While I've enjoyed having them, I'm excited to see them move on to create a new space where others can enjoy them. There are some real show stoppers in this group with some of the nicest blooms I've seen!

Most of these came from Maureen Frazell and Richard Sedlak's private collections and I'm honored to have taken care of them and their off spring over the past year.



The extra time this year has also allowed my lovely ladies to repurpose several items that were either neglected or rejected by neighbors who tossed them to the curb in their trash. Bria and Tammy love to do crafts and have certainly had extra time this year. Keeping items out of landfills that still have value rather than buying something new is in their DNA and they are always on the lookout for their next project!

Here are just a few examples of their latest creations. From hand painted pots to colorful gnomes watching over the flock, the splash of color their crafts provide make my gardens sparkle and shine that much more!

*Until next year,
-Brad*

December Birthdays



Brad Beardsley

Bria Beardsley

Anton Hahna

Upcoming Events, Things to See

