

# October 2023

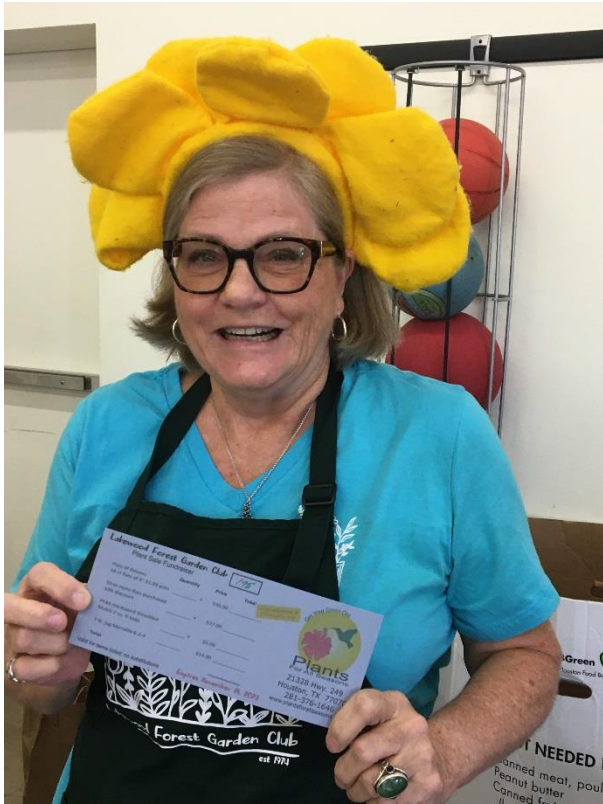
Unseasonable high summer temperatures started the month of October in 2023, but a cool breeze brought with it a promise of Fall to come. **Candace**, our membership chair person, was ready to welcome members and welcomed members and guest to the meeting.

The hospitality group was busy starting the coffee pot, setting up and decorating the table of goodies for the incoming crowd.



Soon members arrived. **Bette Gerhold** brought a friend and introduced her to **Harriett**.





**Rica Brock** caught everyone's attention with her flower head dress, as she encouraged us to participate in the annual fund raiser.



**Pat Gauger** asked to contribute to the annual Wreaths Across America event to honor our Veterans.



**Pam Randall** brought the Halloween spirit to the meeting in her devilish outfit. I must say, she wears it well 😊.





**Margo's** honey from REACH is very popular with us all.



**Lynn** brought flowers from her yard.



We welcomed **Kathy Rogers** back from a long absence due to illness. Glad she is looking well again.

**Hospitality**



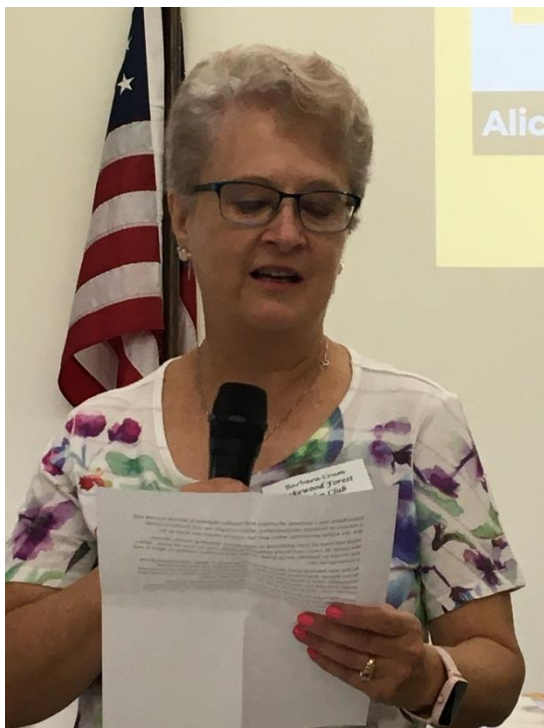
A delicious spread of pumpkin bread, nuts, cheese, apples and caramel sauce was arranged by the hospitality team, **Cheri Bell, Sue Collins, Debbie Jones, Fran Hamel, Sandra McKeon and Pam Randall.**





President **Harriett**, assisted by **Sheila**, the recording Secretary, started the meeting. As always, a prayer was offered by Mary Davis, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

## Program



**Barbara Crum** introduced our first speaker, Capt. Richard Lieder from the Cypress Fire Station, to us. He had requested to come to our meeting to inform us about important Tax issues on the ballot for the November election.



Next on our program was a Bromeliad enthusiast and expert, **Alicia Baker**. In a slide show she introduced us to the many beautiful and diverse varieties of Bromeliads who can grow on trees in the wild. She brought a few samples of her own plants as well. Mrs. Baker explained that 29 or more Bromeliads are known with over 865 species. Today she will talk to us about specific growing conditions of only a few.



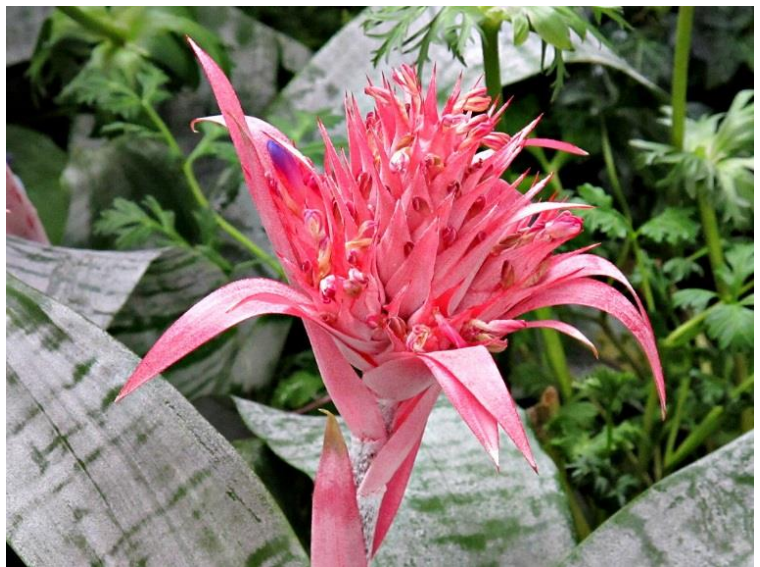
### **The Bromeliad Varieties:**

- Aechmea – (“spear”) found throughout South America and the Caribbean
- Billbergia – native to Brazil but also found in Mexico and Argentine
- Neoregelia – from the rain forests of South America
- Dyckia – grows in higher altitudes on rocks/sand, is drought and cold tolerant
- Ananas – (*Ananas comosus*) wild species are native to Paraguay and southern Brazil

### **Aechmea**

Aechmea, is a popular, evergreen with distinctive variegated or banded leaves of silvery grey with spiny edges. A stunning, long lasting, bright pink flower grows in the center of the plant. In spite of their exotic appearance, Aechmea bromeliad is easy to grow. These plants are epiphytic (grows on another plant but is not a parasite) in their natural environment, the South American Rainforest.

Their care can be enhanced by mimicking this environment or by growing in airy containers. Leaves need to be rinsed occasionally and misted when conditions are dry.



## Billbergia



This bromeliad comes in many shapes, sizes and colors. Their leaves either stand straight up to create a tubular shape or spread outward to make a central cup with their rosette. The foliage comes in many different colors and variegations and most have spikes at the edges.

Billbergia flowers are particularly showy, though not as long lived as many other types of bromeliad. They are usually found on a flower stalk that emerges from the central trunk. The flower stalk either stands up or droops in a

pendant form. The flowers come in many different colors from reds and pinks to purples and blues.

Primarily an epiphytic species, Billbergia will grow comfortably in small pots with well-draining, slightly acidic soil. Alternatively, the plants can be mounted on a substrate such as driftwood.

Plants range in size from 8 to 36 inches tall depending on the species. Billbergia will produce many pups or offshoots. These pups can be repotted or allowed to clump in the same pot.

Billbergia tolerates colder and hotter temperatures better than their cousins and likes circulating air. This makes it a more ideal landscape plant.



## Neoregelia

These bromeliads range from the very large, almost statuesque, to the squat and colorful landscape plants seen throughout the tropics. Indoors, the most common Neoregelia species don't have the towering flower stalks of other bromeliads—their flowers stay closer to the central cup, and the newer leaves flush in different colors. Like all bromeliads, Regelias spreads by producing offsets or 'pups' around the base of mature plants.





After the mature Neoreglia has flowered, the mother plant will gradually die back as the pups take over. These can be potted into their own pots. Neoreglia are not difficult to grow, but they are more dependent on strong light to develop deep, vivid colors in their leaves. They can withstand some direct sunlight, such as eastern morning exposure. They need ample humidity during the summer and don't like to be overfed.

## Dyckia

Dyckia prefer sunny and rocky terrain in higher elevation. Some Dyckias live directly attached to rocks, but most are growing in the ground. Unlike other bromeliads, Dyckia have the ability to survive cold temperatures.

They are often confused with succulents because of their stiff leathery leaves and



drought tolerance. Unable to store water internally, they survive periods of stress, such as dry weather conditions, by going dormant. Almost all Dyckias have sharp spines or hooks around the margins of each leaf.

Dyckias can be found in shades of red, green, yellow and silver. They range in size from a few inches to several feet in diameter. Many of the plants have tall flower spikes that often produce small flowers in oranges, reds and yellows.

Dyckias have extensive root systems and require containers that are at least as large as the plant itself. Dyckias will usually grow into the size of the pot where it is planted.



When planted in the ground, Dyckias can make a thick ground cover. When grown in a pot, Dyckias will eventually need to be separated and replanted. Take care to separate the plants with as many of the roots intact as possible.

### **Ananas comosus**



This plant requires rich, sandy, well-draining soil. It does not grow far-reaching roots, and a small pot of about 6 inches is more than enough. Ananas requires temperatures between 64°F to 75°F never drop below 57°F.

Provide adequate light but not direct sun. Absolutely avoid setting it near heat sources such as radiators,

because moisture is what this tropical plant needs most. To

keep humidity high, rest the pot on a bed of clay marbles or gravel with water filling in the gaps. The evaporating water will ensure that the pineapple can pull moisture out from the air.

In fall and winter, reduce watering and wait for the soil to be dry. Reduce light fertilizing to every month.



As Alicia explains, it is not difficult to grow Bromeliads if you know the specific requirements of the particular plant.

- The soil she recommends in general is a mixture of Miracle grow, potting soil, perlite and bark.
- Most varieties do not require much water and a loose soil will allow excess water to drain away.
- The plant requires regular cleaning of the leaves and removal of dead foliage to prevent rot.
- Snails are a common pest and must be removed.
- Bromeliads are susceptible to develop scale which should be treated with biological agents.

- For fertilization, Alicia recommends a liquid orchid fertilizer. Decrease watering during the winter month.
- In general, direct sunlight and excessive heat should be avoided, as well as extreme cold temperatures.
- When growing outside, a protective cover of frost cloth and a plastic cover may be sufficient for the plant to survive freezing temperatures.
- Potted plants can be uprooted and stored during the winter in a warm place.
- Many bromeliad varieties will not rebloom but form Pups. These can be removed and potted. Alicia grows her pups in strawberry pots or in the crevasses of knurly wood.

For more information on growing and caring for these plants, Alicia referred us to the Houston Bromeliad Society.

<https://bromeliadsocietyhouston.org/>



References:

<https://www.bromeliads.info/billbergia/>

<https://www.bromeliads.info/aechmea-starter-bromeliad/>

<https://www.bromeliads.info/all-about-dyckias/>

<https://www.nature-and-garden.com/gardening/ananas-comosus.html>

<https://www.thespruce.com/grow-neoregelia-bromeliads-1902662>

## Meditation

*Heavenly Father, we gather before You today, seeking Your abundant blessings upon our beloved garden club. We thank You for the opportunity to come together, to share our love for gardening, and to nurture the beauty of nature. Bless our club with unity, inspiration, and a flourishing spirit. Help us to embrace our diverse perspectives, talents, and experiences, for it is in our differences that we find strength and inspiration.*

*Inspire us to nurture not only our gardens but also the friendships and connections within our club. May our time together be filled with inspiration, growth, and a deep appreciation for the wonders of creation. May each meeting be filled with joy, friendship, and fruitful discussions.*

*May our gardens be filled with lush foliage, vibrant blooms, and bountiful harvests. Grant us favorable weather conditions, abundant sunshine, and refreshing rain to nourish our plants. Bless the soil beneath our feet, making it fertile and rich in nutrients.*

*Grant us wisdom as we exchange ideas, explore new techniques, and cultivate the earth's gifts. Bless our endeavors, both in our personal gardens and in our shared projects, so that they may blossom with abundance and grace  
We ask all of this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.*

*Amen*



## Ways and Means



**Rica** has been busy arranging for our plant sale fundraiser. She engaged her sister, **Adrienne** in a funny skit to act out a successful sales pitch on how to convince friends and neighbors to buy our vouchers.

As an additional incentive, she will award prizes for participation and high sales achievements.

**Sheila Anderson** reminded us of the Federation meetings next Friday and invited anyone to join her on the trip. Tickets for the Christmas gala are still available for anyone interested.

Committee chairs provided updates on the preparations for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and activities at the Lakewood Forest neighborhood.

Two ladies, Jennifer and Leslie, from the LF HOA updated us on the situation with the management company and reminded us of a townhall meeting next week.

A planning committee for next year's Spring Fling will be needed if the trip will take place.

**Any Volunteers??**

With this request, the meeting was adjourned.

