



Newsletter of the

# *Hawai'i Bromeliad Society*

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

OCTOBER 2016

## OCTOBER MEETING TO FOCUS ON HOLIDAY SALE

So maybe it's not even Halloween, but Holiday season is fast approaching (now that's scary!). The next meeting of the Hawai'i Bromeliad Society will be devoted to preparing for the East-West Center Holiday craft fair, which will take place on Thursday and Friday, December 1 and 2, in front of Burns Hall, 1601 East-West Road, on the grounds of the East-West Center, next to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa campus. Coordinated by retired and current EWC employees Terese Leber and Val Wong, and HBS VP and Program Chair Gail Rabideau Ishihara, our participation in the fair will involve hosting two tables full of bromeliads and related items for sale. So we're asking members to come to the October meeting with plants, pots, decorative materials, and above all, lots of ideas, energy, and creativity.

Gail and a team of her friends have already begun preparations by assembling and gilding (yes, gilding) about sixty pots, ranging from three to five inches in size—perfect for smaller *Tillandsia* and mini-*Neoregelia*, so please take a look around your gardens and see if you have any plants that would be appropriate. Bigger

Continued on page 2.



Samples of Gail's plants.



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## SEPTEMBER MEETING

This Saturday, **October 29**,  
we meet at **Lyon Arboretum**  
at **12:30**.

Our hospitality hosts are  
**Susan and Terese.**

## REPORT OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2016

Lyon Arboretum

ATTENDING: Francis Arakaki, Nancy Arakaki, Marie Grininger, Gail Rabideau Ishihara, John Ishihara, Terese Leber (presiding), Ed Nishiyama, Dolores Roldan, Jaime Roldan, Stan Schab, Randy Wong, Val Wong.

CONVENED: 12:55; ADJOURNED: 2:30.

Terese welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked members for accommodating the move to the downstairs meeting room, with special thanks to Val and Randy for providing the food and drinks.

TREASURER: Dolores reported that the August auction raised \$185, with no expenses recorded for the month, leaving us with a balance of \$9,619.67. Terese thanked Dolores for doubling as acting membership chair, helping to keep our members list updated.

PROGRAMS: The program for October will be led by Gail, Terese, and Val, and will focus on preparing for the East-West Center craft fair. Members should start looking over their gardens for plants and materials to donate. Besides raising money for HBS programs and field trips (and parties!), events like the craft fair present opportunities to inform the public about bromeliads and the HBS, so please think about ideas for educational materials as well.

HOSPITALITY: Our hospitality hosts for October are Susan and Terese.

OLD BUSINESS: YEAR-END PARTY: Terese reminded everyone about the HBS Holiday get-together, which will be at the Willows Restaurant on Saturday, December 10, starting at 12:30. Members will pay \$15 each, with HBS covering the rest of the cost (lunch prices are \$38 for adults and \$35 for seniors).

AUCTION: Mahalo to Ed and Gail for supplying some great plants and mountings for auction; and in particular some striking specimens of the Lisa Vinzant "Fireball" hybrids *Neoregelia* 'Lilinoe' and *Neoregelia* 'Red Measles.'

## PLANS FOR THE OCTOBER MEETING

Continued from page 1.



plants, and different varieties, are also appreciated—and especially plants that might be in bloom in December (take a look at some of the specimens on sale in 2012, below). Besides plants and pots, please come with suggestions, and materials, for potting, and for decorating the pots. Additional ideas and things to sell, like the wreaths Lynette provided in 2013, would also be great. If you can't come to the October meeting, but would like to donate plants or materials, please contact Terese or Gail.



## THE WORLD OF *CEROPEGIA*

Many thanks to John Kawamoto, our guest speaker for September, who not only presented an entertaining and informative slide show introducing the plant genus *Ceropegia*, but also brought in several samples to show and share, along with potting materials and instructions. Thanks also to HPS Vice President and Program Chair John Ishihara for inviting Mr. Kawamoto to speak, and for organizing the presentation.

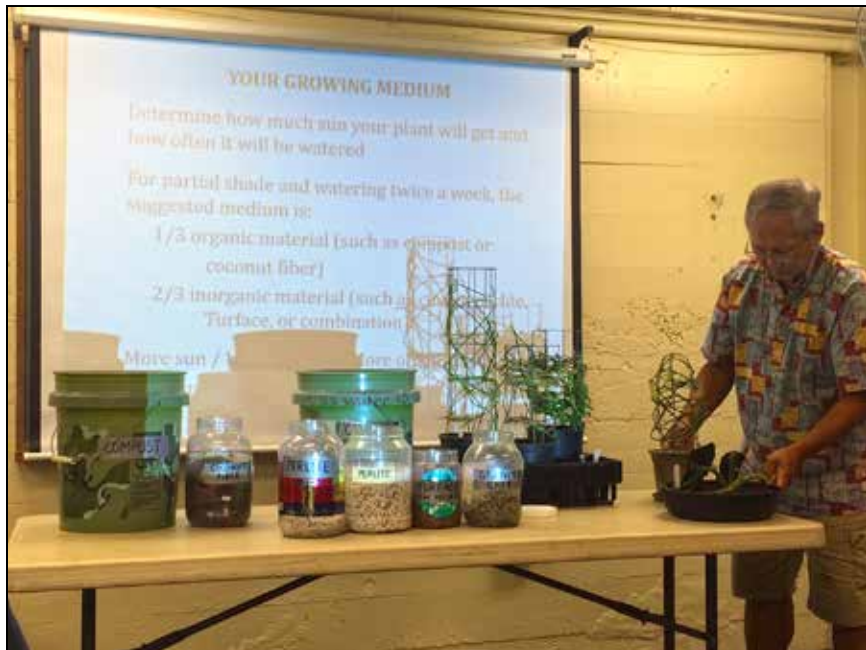
A longtime gardener, particularly of less familiar species, John Kawamoto has been an orchid grower, a collector of carnivorous plants—he has raised and donated carrion flowers to Foster Botanical Garden—and a member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Hawaii. Of late, he has specialized in the genus *Ceropegia*, also sometimes known as the lantern flower.

The genus was identified by the Swedish botanist Karl Linnaeus in 1753, who named the plants for their resemblance to a wax (keros) fountain (pege). There are over two hundred species of *Ceropegia*, which is native to a wide geographical range, from South Africa, across the African continent to the Canary Islands and the Arabian peninsula, to South Asia, as the plants can flourish in a variety of natural environments—from dry to lush, subtropical to tropical, desert to jungle. The different *Ceropegia* species reveal multiple adaptations to their specific environments, especially noticeable in their systems for storing water. *Ceropegia* generally grow on thin vines, and can flourish in sun to partial shade.

The *Ceropegia* species featured in the slide show included the *africana*, *ampliata*, *conrathii*, *dimorpha*, *fortuita*, *haygarthii*, *papillata*, *rendalii*, *rhynchantha*, *sandersonii*, *stapelliformis*, and *woodii*, from different regions of Africa, the *rupicola* and *superba*, from the dry climates of Arabia, the *dichotoma* and *fusca*, from the Canary Islands, and the *fantastica*, *jain*, *spiralis*, and *vincifolia*, from wet regions of India.

From his own collection, John brought in samples and offered cuttings of *ampliata* and *superba*, and a *sandersonii* hybrid 'Hamlet.' He also brought in all the ingredients need to mix climate-customized potting soil (see page 4).

And as proof of his kinship with bromeliad hybridizers, John passed out tags on which to record type of plant, potting medium, and date!



## GROWING MEDIA FOR *CEROPEGIA*

One of the fun, hands-on parts of our September meeting was the chance to put together a customized potting mix for a *Ceropegia* cutting, designed for our own individual neighborhoods.

Our speaker, John Kawamoto, brought in samples of the different materials he uses to assemble his potting mixes—both organic material, including compost and coir, and inorganic matter, such as perlite, cinders, and surface (fired clay pellets).

*Ceropegia* prefer a gritty growing medium, to ensure good drainage, so depending on location, John will combine from one-third to two-thirds organic material with a combination of inorganic matter. In general, he'll use one of three combinations: one-third compost, two-thirds cinder; one-third compost, one-third cinder, one-third surface; or one-half surface, one-half perlite, with no organic matter—a combination designed for areas of high rain, such as Mānoa. In short, the amount of sun and water determine the percentage of organic and inorganic material in the growing medium. More sun and less water means the mix should have more organic media; less sun and more water means less organic matter in the growing medium.

Most of his own plants, John grows in partial shade and sun—the plants are shaded at the base and grow into the light—and he waters twice a week. His growing medium is usually one-third organic matter such as compost or coir, and two-thirds inorganic material.

To top off the meeting, John presented cuttings of his *Ceropegia*; helped us assemble our own mixes, customized to fit where we live; and showed us the best way to plant the cuttings: make sure the middle nodes of the vine are covered, rather than one of the ends.



## THE DIRT ON DIRT IN HAWAI'I

Bromeliad growers, *ceropegia* growers, succulent growers, orchid growers . . . one of their main shared topics of conversation is potting soil, and what mixture works best for particular plants in specific environments. But they almost all agree in looking down on the common dirt on the ground—the common soils we find in our neighborhoods.

But dirt is actually a very dynamic mixture of minerals, inorganic compounds, organic compounds, and living organisms. Dirt comes in many different kinds, colors, and flavors, and though soil only covers a thin layer on the surface of the planet, it is crucial for human survival: for food crops, for oxygen production, for water filtration, and much more.

Due to Hawai'i's diverse climates and landscapes, the islands comprise a great diversity in soil. The most common group of soils is called andisols, which refers to soil recently formed from volcanic ash and cinder. In wet areas with high rainfall, andisols are leached of nutrients, but they maintain a high degree of water retention, are rich in organic matter, and have good physical properties. The red color in much soil in Hawai'i is from the iron oxides left after nutrients are washed out of andisols.

Soils in drier area have more nutrients, and contain minerals that are younger or less broken down, and therefore more gray or brown in color. Dirt can also be young or old, as the young volcanic ash, cinder, and rock on islands such as Hawai'i are broken down into the clay soils of O'ahu.

To learn about the soil in your neighborhood, check out the Hawaii Soil Atlas, an interactive map developed by researchers at the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agricultural: <http://gis.ctahr.hawaii.edu/SoilAtlas>. The map can provide specific descriptions of neighborhood soil composition, fertility, and pH.