



# orlandiana

**Newsletter of the  
Bromeliad Society of Central Florida**  
Volume no. 51, Issue no. 8

**Next meeting: 08/21/2024**

**Where:** Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Avenue, Orlando, FL 32803

**6:30 –7:00** is time for displaying and purchasing plants

**Program officially begins at 7:00 pm**

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Visit the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Website at:  
[www.bromeliadsorlando.com](http://www.bromeliadsorlando.com)

You will find an activities page that lists our speakers for upcoming meetings, downloadable copies of newsletters, plant photos, a map to Leu Gardens, and more! This is a great place for the public to find out about our Society or send us a message. Check it out! +

Michael Kiehl hybrid: Neoregelia 'Flame On'

## President's Message

It is commonly advised that we not worry over the little stuff. Stay focused on the big stuff.

Do you know what is really big? The universe is as big as it gets, right? The observable universe is 93 billion lightyears across. Astrophysicists can calculate the distance by analysis of light waves. But, that is only what can be observed. If you point the most powerful space telescope in any direction, you can see to the end of the visible universe where a teeny faint speck of light appears. If you were on a planet circling that distant star, Earth would be at the end of the visible universe as seen from there. However, we know that our planet is not at the edge of the universe. We can point that telescope in the opposite direction and see to another faint speck as many billions of light-years away. And, the universe is expanding. It is expanding faster than the speed of light. That's big stuff. Bigger than can be comprehended.

The problem with the advice about focusing on the 'big stuff' is that it may be beyond our comprehension. Perfect knowledge does not occur.

I've also been told that success is all in the details. Aren't details 'the little stuff' that's to be ignored?

Do you know what is really little? An atom is really little. So are molecules composed of atoms. Do you know how many molecules of water it takes to fill all the oceans on Earth? A nerdy fellow calculated it based on the best estimates of ocean volume he could find. The number is too big to print. But, to give a sense of it, there are more molecules of H<sub>2</sub>O in a 12 ounce glass of water than there are glasses of water in all the oceans on Earth. Think about that. More molecules of water in a glass than there are glasses of water in the oceans. Molecules are really small.... too small to comprehend. And atoms are even smaller. And atoms are composed of even smaller electrons, protons and neutrons. How small do we need to get to reach those important details?

The truth is we can't always comprehend what is important and what is not. What is important is being practical. "Good enough" is in fact good enough if it works. Perfection may be a goal, but it is never accomplished. We are human and make mistakes. What is important is trying. Then try again. When I was a kid, my mother taped a quote inside a cabinet where I saw it every day. "The best place to succeed is where you are with what you have." I read it thousands of times. Doing your best with what you have is all any of us can do. There are no ruby slippers to take us where we want to go. And, we all know that at times we each fall

short of our own best. Even world record holders do not run, swim or vault at world record pace every time they step out.

So, what's this all about? It is about our mission. It is about volunteering to do "stuff", whether it is "big stuff", "little stuff" or all the "somewhere in-between stuff". It takes each of those glasses of water for there to be oceans. It takes all those electrons, protons and neutrons to make up the universe. And, it takes everyone for BSCF to succeed in its mission. Each of us can do some "stuff" to promote bromeliads, spread knowledge about our shared addiction. There is always stuff that can be done.

It is also about being satisfied with doing 'good enough'. Nobody needs to comprehend the universe or how electrons form atoms to do any of the stuff BSCF does. Whatever the task, the important thing is to try. Don't worry that you might mess something up. It can be fixed. It's OK if you don't comprehend everything. It is OK to do your imperfect best with what you have.

When an opportunity arrives, step up. Focus on the practical and you will do just fine. There are folks who will help you. It is everyone coming together that gets stuff done. When everyone does a little something, big stuff gets done. Our universe expands.

It just takes giving it a try.  
Mike McMahon

## July Minutes

### **BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, INC.**

#### **Draft Meeting Minutes**

**July 17, 2024**

**Will be approved with potential corrections at the August 21, 2024, meeting**

Meeting was called to order at 7:04p.m. by President Mike McMahon at Leu Gardens Orlando, Florida.

**Program:** Vice President Tim Dreggors was absent therefore, President Mike McMahon introduced speaker Bonnie Fredrich. Bonnie's topic, "Creatively mounted Bromeliads."

**Announcements:** Mike McMahon announced that plants were still for sale at the silent auction; check-out Plant of the Month table that features mounted bromeliads plus a special table with bromeliads in ornamental pots.

Meeting break was from 7:50 p.m. until 8:10 p.m.

**Business Meeting;** was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Mike McMahon. Mike announced that raffle tickets could still be purchased.

**Membership Secretary:** Pam Marion introduced the new member Sonya Neugaard, along with numerous guests. If anyone wants to order a name tag, they are \$8.00 each.

**Minutes:** The draft minutes of the June 19, 2024, meeting were published in the July 2024 *Orlandiana* with no corrections. ***A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Dr. John Vecchitto and seconded by Karen Steinberg. The motion passed unanimously.***

**Treasurer's report:** Joyce Gibault reported that the organization was financially stable. Income and expenses were presented.

**President's Report:** Mike McMahon thanked all those members who brought in plants in ornamental pots and mounted Bromeliads for the display tables. Free seeds of *Fosterella penduliflora* and *Pitcairnia xanthocalyx* were also on the side table.

GROWvember Festival at Mead Gardens will start Friday, November 8, 2024, starting at noon for members. It is open to the public from 2:00-6:00 p.m. on Friday and 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 9, 2024.

Mike announced that three members are needed for the nominating committee. No one volunteered at that time.

Greg Kolojeski, webmaster, will be expanding the website to include BSCF cultural handouts on various genera added in a printable/downloadable format.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** None.

**Show & Tell:** Numerous interesting specimens were shown and explained by various members.

**Door Prize/Raffle giveaways:** President Mike McMahon announced that participants that brought in a Plant of the Month and special display table items could go up first to pick a free plant, then, ticket numbers were drawn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Telka diFate

Recording Secretary

Bromeliad Society Central Florida

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Date Approved



## Guest Speaker

David Sand is the proprietor of Michael's Bromeliads By Dave, the successor to Michael's Bromeliads, which was established by Michael Kiehl in 1986 and moved in 2000 to the site of Don Beadle's famed "Los Milagros" nursery. Dave worked the nursery with Kiehl for several years. When Kiehl retired in 2023, he passed the operation on to Dave, who moved the nursery to his long-time co-worker and friend, David Sand. David moved the operation to six acres of wooded property in Venice, Florida and has erected 3 shade houses with over 20,000 square feet under shade cloth. Unlike mass production commercial nurseries focused on a limited number of varieties, Dave is continuing the Michael's Bromeliads tradition of serving hobbyist collectors. There are over 3000 varieties of bromeliads being raised, including hybrids created by Kiehl, Beadle, Lisa Vinzant and many others. More varieties are being added all the time.



Dave will be presenting "Mistakes: A Review Of Wrong Turns On The Road To Becoming Experienced". Everyone learns from their own mistakes. Dave will be sharing mistakes he has seen people make and mistakes of his own. Come hear how others messed up and save yourself a "learning experience". He will be bringing a full load of bromeliads for sale.

## Plant of the Month

Michael Kiehl was the founder of Michael's Bromeliads, a well-known dealer of hybrids created by Lisa Vinzant of Hawaii, and himself a hybridizer of bromeliads (which includes Don Beadle hybrids that Kiehl selected for registration). Longtime Michael's Bromeliads employee, David Sand, took over as owner of the company that is now Michael's Bromeliads by Dave, Inc. with a new location, and David Sand is still selling plants created by these well-known hybridizers. We are thrilled to have David Sand as our August plant speaker! As a result, "Hybrids by Michael Kiehl (to include Don Beadle) and Lisa Vinzant" will be this month's featured Plant of the Month.



Billbergia 'Mucho Mas'

Below is a partial list of plants from these well-known hybridizers. For a complete list, you may visit the Bromeliad Society International website. There are more than 500 registered hybrids eligible to be displayed!

*Kindly bring your plant or plants to display at the Plant of the Month table. It's going to be an impressive representation of bromeliads!*

Cathy Schubert

### Michael Kiehl Hybrids

Billbergia 'Appaloosa'  
 Billbergia 'Beadleman'  
 Billbergia 'Le Vie en Rose'  
 Billbergia 'Mucho Mas'  
 Neoregelia 'Flame On'  
 Neoregelia 'Flame On' Marginated  
 Neoregelia 'Gum Drop'  
 Neoregelia 'High Society'  
 Neoregelia 'Moon Over Ft. Dix'  
 Neoregelia 'Sparky'  
 Neoregelia 'Tartan Warrior'  
 Orthophytum 'Stardust'

### Lisa Vinzant Hybrids

Aechmea 'Beatle Juice'  
 Aechmea 'Haiku'  
 Billbergia 'Darth Vader'  
 Billbergia 'Alaka'l'  
 Billbergia 'Obi-Wan'  
 Billbergia 'Raspberry Parfait'  
 Billbergia 'Smokestack'  
 Billbergia 'You Tube'  
 Neoregelia 'Black Satin'  
 Neoregelia 'Blueberry Muffin'  
 Neoregelia 'Blushing Tiger'  
 Neoregelia 'Voodini'  
 xNeomea 'Thing One'  
 xNeomea 'Thing Two'  
 xNeomea 'Zydeco'

## Upcoming Events

**GROWvember Festival** at Mead Gardens will start Friday, November 8, 2024, starting at noon for members. It is open to the public from 2:00-6:00 p.m. on Friday and 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 9, 2024.



## Marilyn's Garden

**Albomarginated, variegated** and **banded** are types of leaf variegation found in bromeliads.

Albomarginated refers to plants with a white or light-colored margin around the edge of the leaf, while the center of the leaf is green. This margin is caused by the presence of specialized cells that do not contain chlorophyll and therefore don't contribute to photosynthesis.

(I personally think of albo as referring to albino or without color.)



*Aechmea fasciata*  
*albomarginata*



*Aechmea*  
*nudicaulis*  
'Flavomarginata'

Variegated bromeliads, on the other hand, have areas of the leaf that are completely white or a different color from the surrounding green, resulting in a more irregular pattern of variegation. This pattern is caused by the presence of a genetic mutation that affects the production of chlorophyll in the plant's leaves. The variegation can be irregular or streaky, and can occur on the entire leaf or only on certain parts of it.

The variegation in bromeliads can serve several functions. It can protect the plant from excessive sunlight by reducing the amount of chlorophyll in the leaves, which helps to prevent the plant from overheating. Variegation can also be a way for the plant to attract pollinators by making it more visible and attractive to insects.





*Musa* 'Bert'  
variegated  
variety



*Aechmea* 'Bert'  
variegated  
variety

Banded, I couldn't find a definition for banded but it is a common term used for horizontal stripes on a bromeliad.



*Hohenbergia*  
'Fudge Ripple'



*Vriesea*  
*heiroglyphica* x  
*fosteriana*



## Elections

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTED

Every year a Nominating Committee is appointed to come up with a slate of officers it recommends to the membership. The new Nominating Committee is composed of John Boardman (Chair), Cathy Schubert and Steve Beaudoin. They will be looking for members to serve in 2025 as President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary and Membership Secretary. All office terms are one year commencing January 1, 2025. A candidate must give permission before their name appears on the slate. Any dues-paid member is eligible to serve in any of the offices, but it is required under the Bylaws that the President and Vice President be members of the Bromeliad Society International at the time they take office (January 1). The election will be held at the October meeting.

Let the Committee know your suggestions of candidates, and if the Committee contacts you about serving, please step up. It takes everyone doing what they can to make BSCF successful.

## Potting Media

### POTTING MEDIA: WHAT'S IN YOUR POT?

By Mike McMahon

There were a number of folks at the July BSCF meeting who found it confusing, even shocking, when our speaker said she used broken chunks of styrofoam as a potting medium. A fellow who posts in our Facebook Group often shows his beautiful broms in empty pots or with gravel as a medium. That draws quizzical comments. For folks who have years of gardening experience raising plants in pots with a rich potting soil, using inorganics can be too shocking to easily accept. So, let's take a closer look.

There is no one perfect potting mix. It all depends on the growing conditions and goals of the hobbyist. A second thing to keep in mind is that not all broms want the same conditions. True terrestrials (like *Cryptanthus*, *Orthophytum* and *Dyckia*) are not going to be happy being treated like a *Tillandsia*. A regular potting soil is what a *Cryptanthus* wants. A third thing to remember is that just about any potting mix will please nearly all bromeliads for a time. The big question is: "For how long?"

Those who toured McCrory's Nursery will recall being told that the nursery uses peat imported from Lithuania because Canadian peat decomposes too quickly. Plants had to be re-potted in fresh media to avoid rot. That was a lot of added expense. It is less costly for them to import the Lithuanian peat. It holds up long enough for their broms to be grown in their controlled conditions, forced into bloom and marketed without re-potting, all in a period of less than two years, preferably much less. But, the Lithuanian peat does not hold up forever. It breaks down, slowly if allowed to become almost dry between waterings, more quickly if kept constantly wet. It is a great medium in the controlled environment of a greenhouse and for broms used for interiorscaping in air conditioned malls, lobbies and airports, and for temporary display in the home. It does not hold up very long, however, when the pots are placed outdoors and exposed to frequent summer rains and irrigation. It becomes waterlogged and rot can follow. A potting medium ideal in one set of conditions to accomplish one goal can be undesirable in other conditions and for other goals.

Most of the bromeliads folks grow are ones with center cups capable of holding water. In Nature these broms are either solely epiphytic or grow on the ground only where there is no tree canopy blocking the light, which is generally a rocky landscape where any soil is just a thin layer that cannot support dense trees and shrubs. They evolved to escape the dark floor of the tropical forest. They want to live high up in the trees where some sunlight can reach them. They can manage just fine in hardscape environments where the substrate is too meagre for other plants to block out the light. In these environments, their roots are primarily for support, not for taking in nutrients. The cups become filled with tree leaves, twigs and other rotting vegetative debris that releases nutrients absorbed through the leaves. For long periods of the year the roots are dry and exposed to air. During the rainy season the roots may stay moist constantly, but remain exposed to the air. They are never in a soggy substrate.

For typical garden plants, a pot attempts to imitate Nature by having a container filled with a rich soil. It is what the plant would like to have in Nature. The pot is like a slice of Nature in a manageable form. For bromeliads, imitating Nature requires an adjustment to our thinking. In Nature they are growing on the bark of trees and rocky substrates. They are where there is air movement. They are not found in soggy conditions. The environment of a pot is entirely unnatural for a brom. But, using pots makes it so much easier for us. Pots can be moved, arranged, groomed and given individualized care at our convenience. We are happy, but are the broms? They will be when the media we put in the pot fits the nature of our broms.

If your mix remains free-draining and airy in your conditions, you've got it right. But, if the mix you are using is not holding up long enough to accomplish your goals, change what you use. Consider adding chunky materials like in an orchid mix. A traditional orchid mix works great with nearly all bromeliads and lasts a long time, but it is expensive. There are

comparatively cheap ingredients that can be substituted. Ones readily available include pine bark mini nuggets, horticultural charcoal, tree fern fiber, coconut husk chunks, lava rock and styrofoam packing material (or chunks of broken up styrofoam used in packaging). To start off, take the mix you currently use and add about 50% of one or more of these chunky materials. If the resulting mix still breaks down too quickly in your conditions, increase the chunky material to 75% or even 100%.

Personally, I use only the red lava rock (about \$7 per bag at Lowe's and Home Depot) for most of my potted broms (mostly Vrieseas). For some (e.g., Guzmania species) the mix is about 50-50 lava rock and pine bark mini-nuggets. If a pot would be too heavy with only lava rock, I'll add a lighter weight ingredient, such as styrofoam, bark or coconut husk chunks. When a fine grade mix is needed for very small plants and seedlings, most articles recommend peat moss. I generally avoid any sort of peat because it becomes sludgy too quickly in my conditions. Instead, I use the fine grade pine bark mulch and ground coconut coir.



When bromeliads are grown in pots, their roots will take in nutrient. They take advantage of opportunities they do not often find in Nature. Decomposing organics release nutrients the roots can extract. Styrofoam and rock do not decompose and bark decomposes very slowly. Broms raised in inorganic media will grow more slowly and more compact. If this is a drawback in reaching your goals, it is readily overcome by lightly spraying the broms with a dilute liquid fertilizer on a regular basis. Every 4-6 weeks works well for most people, but more frequent spraying may give you the results you desire. As in Nature, the nutrient is absorbed through the leaves (but without the mess of rotting leaves in the cups).

The idea of growing plants in a pot of lava rock or styrofoam may seem crazy, but it works... for epiphytic broms. Using inorganic ingredients extends the life of the mix. The goal is to create conditions within the pot that imitate the environment in which bromeliads evolved. Bromeliads did not evolve to live in pots, but we can make pots suitable for them. It's all about what's in your pot.



## Pictures







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## **Bromeliad Society of Central Florida**

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

\_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip +4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

**\$15 for one member, plus \$5 for each additional family member at the same address.**

**Name Tags are optional. The price for a name tag is \$8 per member.**

**If so desired please insert number ordered \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Make checks payable to BSCF

**Either bring payment to the next meeting, OR If mailing please send to:**

**Bromeliad Society of Central Florida, PO Box 568872 Orlando, FL 32856-8872.**

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Meetings are held at Leu Gardens, 1920 N Forest Ave, Orlando, FL 32803.

On the 3rd Wednesday of every month, from 6:30-9:00 pm. Buy plants from the speaker between 6:30-7pm. The meeting starts promptly at 7:00. You'll enjoy informative programs, Show & Tell, plant sales, door prizes and raffles. Members also receive a monthly newsletter. Please come join us!

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**[www.bromeliadsorlando.com](http://www.bromeliadsorlando.com)**





President: **Mike McMahon**  
Vice-President: **Tim Dreggors**  
Treasurer: **Joyce Gibault**  
Recording Secretary: **Dr. Telka diFate**  
Membership Secretary: **Pam Marion**  
Immediate Past President: **Mike Saunders**  
Florida Council Reps: **Mike Saunders & Mike McMahon**

## POSITIONS

Meeting Layout Coordinator: President.  
Meeting Hospitality Coordinator: **Kathy Hancock** (Beverages); **Peggy Bohl** (Snacks)  
Welcome Table/Raffle Coordinator: **Robin Norton** Helpers: **Katherine Vaccaro, Kathy & Phil Hancock.**  
Recycling Coordinator: **Dan Sawyer**  
Meeting Breakdown Coordinator: **Pam Marion** Helpers: **Tina Self, Karen Steinberg, Robin Norton, Katherine Vaccaro & others who pitch in.**  
Secret Bid Auction Coordinator: **Phil Wright**  
Plant Of The Month Coordinator: **Cathy Schubert**  
Speaker Helper: **Bonnie Friedrich**  
Librarian : **Dan Sawyer**  
Newsletter Editor: **John Vecchitto**  
Newsletter Proofreader: **Marty Folk, Katherine Vaccaro, Robin Norton, Destini Coiner**  
Audit Committee: **Bob Johnson, Dan Lott and Tim Dreggors (Chair).**

## PLANT SALES -

Plant Sale Chair for Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale: **Mike Saunders.**  
Plant Sale Chair for Mother's Day Show: **Mike McMahon**  
Plant Sale Chair for Mead Garden Fall Plant Sale: **Mike McMahon**  
Field Trip Organizer: **Karen Steinberg**  
Holiday Party Coordinator: **Paula Edwards**  
Webmaster: **Greg Kolojeski**

Permission to reprint is granted with acknowledgment. Please send all correspondence to the address below:

**Bromeliad Society of Central Florida, Inc.**

**PO Box 536961**



**BSCF is a nonprofit Florida corporation recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization.**

Donations to this society are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

BSCF is an affiliate of the Bromeliad Society International, Inc., and a member of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc. and the Cryptanthus Society.