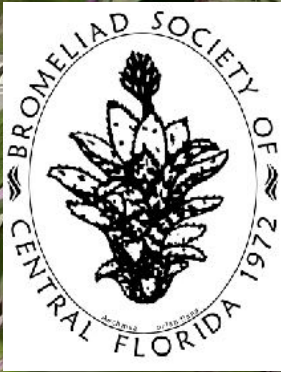




orlandiana



Newsletter of the
Bromeliad Society of Central Florida
Volume no. 52, Issue no. 10

Next meeting: October 15, 2025

Where: Sanford Garden Club, 200 Fairmont Dr Sanford, FL 32773

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

Program officially begins at 7:00 pm

BONUS ISSUE!

Actually just making up
for the lack of a
September orlandiana.

CONTENTS

President's Message	2
August Minutes	2
September Minutes	4
Guest Speaker	5
List of Upcoming Events	6
Plant of the Month	7
Species Spotlight: <i>Aechmea blanchetiana</i>	7
Marilyn's Garden	10
Nominating Committee Report: 2026 BSCF Board Election.	12
Chester Skotak's Visit	13
Pictures	13
Membership form	14
Officers	15

Visit the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida Website at:

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!

President's Message

As we see a hint in the Summer heat leaving and some cooler temperatures, now is a great time to clean up the garden, plant those new acquisitions, attend the garden tours for ideas, and attend the last sale of the year at Mead Gardens.

There was a strong attendance to the Bromeliad Extravaganza, hosted by SCBTPS. The plant sale had many great plants for sale by 18 vendors. Greg Kolojeski asked me if I could accommodate Leonardo Versieux after the Extravaganza. I was captivated by bromeliad information that was new to me, learned about the area of northeast Brazil Leonardo where lived, including flora and fauna information, especially the locations of certain genera of Bromeliads. We exchanged our travel histories in Brazil and around the world. He was interested in our Central Florida native plants, especially since the major timber crop in a cultivar of our native Slash Pine, *Pinus Elliottii*. We made excursions to Lori Wilson Park, almost the northern range of the tropical maritime forest, the Enchanted Forest, 3 plant communities from Mesic to Pine Scrub. He was happy to see the *Magnolia Grandiflora* forest section. Then on the way to the airport we made a short stop at the St. John's River along SR520. He commented that it was similar to the Pantanal region of Brazil.



Garden tours are tentatively happening Saturdays October 18th & 25th. The tours will be from 9:00 am through 1:00 pm, this is a "go at your own pace, revolving door" type of tour – just show up at any of the locations any time from 9–1, tour the garden, then move on to the next location. This is a great and enjoyable way to see different gardens, get information and ideas on how the members are growing their plants, the successes and issues, and ideas on which ones you would like to add to your garden. On October 4th, I attended 2 garden tours hosted by the Palm Society. It was interesting to see the type of gardens that happen with a different emphasis on what is grown. Not only did both gardens have bromeliads; but there was a former BSCF president, and a few other BSCF members in attendance too. I now have some extra hard to find cold tolerant palms to add to my garden.

Dan Sawyer

August 2025 Minutes

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, INC.

Draft Meeting Minutes: August 20, 2025

Will be approved with potential corrections at the October 15, 2025 meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 7: 00 pm.

Program: Vice President Bonnie Friedrich introduced August speaker Marty Baxley, owner of Jungle Gems Nursery, whose topic was on Bromeliad naming issues: Fact or Fiction.

Announcements:

President Dan Sawyer announced a meeting break at 7:45 pm..

Business Meeting was called to order at 8:06 pm by Dan Sawyer.

Membership Secretary: Pam Marion announced there were 56 in attendance. She introduced four guests and two renewing members.

Minutes: The draft minutes of the July 16, 2025 meeting were published in the August 2025 Orlandiana. **A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by John Vecchitto and seconded by Joyce Gibault. The motion was passed unanimously.**

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

New Business:

John Vecchitto announced that he needs additional proofreaders for the newsletters.

Greg Kolojeski reminded us of the upcoming Bromeliad Extravaganza noting the benefits available to registrants, including discounted hotel rates, the banquet, rare plant auction and early access to the plant sale. Details are posted online. Greg asked Dan Sawyer to provide information about volunteers that are needed. Pam Marion has registration forms.

Mike McMahon discussed the Mead Garden sale to be held November 7-8. Members who wish to sell plants are to email him. See Pam Marion to obtain a seller number.

Dan Sawyer asked that anyone who wishes to serve on the Board or a committee next year to contact him or another Board member.

Show & Tell: Members providing plants for the Show & Tell table presented and discussed their specimens.

Plant of the Month: The August plant of the month was bigeneric crosses. Members brought in several beautiful and rare plants which were displayed and discussed.

Door Prize/Raffle giveaways: Dan Sawyer announced the order of seating rows to select door prizes.

Dan then drew and announced raffle ticket numbers.

Meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Norton
Recording Secretary
Bromeliad Society Central Florida

Date Approved

September 2025 Minutes

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, INC.

Draft Meeting Minutes: September 17, 2025

Will be approved with potential corrections at the October 15, 2025 meeting.

September 17, 2025

Will be approved with potential corrections at the October 15, 2025 meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 7 00 pm.

Program: Vice President Bonnie Friedrich introduced speaker Dave Johnston of Bromeliads Galore whose topic was Bilbergias are Awesome.

Announcements:

In President Dan Sawyer's absence, Vice President Bonnie Friedrich presided over the meeting. Bonnie announced that the regular October meeting will be held at the Sanford Garden Club location. Chip Jones will be our speaker. The holiday party will be held in November. There will be no meeting in December. A meeting break was announced at 7:45 pm.

Business Meeting was called to order at 8:00 pm by Bonnie Friedrich.

Membership Secretary: In Pam Marion's absence Robin Norton introduced new members Colleen Graneto and John Lambert. Our guests were Aime Kimpel and Gabrielle Polizzi. In total there were 44 attendees at the meeting.

Minutes: The draft minutes of the August 20, 2025 meeting were included in the September meeting announcement. **A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Paula Edwards and seconded by Sue Fischer. The motion was passed unanimously.**

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

New Business:

There was a discussion on future table format preferences.

Bonnie announced that the contract with Leu Gardens has been renewed for next year.

Mike McMahan provided information on the Mead Garden Sale to be held November 7-8. The sale is open to members at noon and to the general public at 2:00 pm.

Paula Edwards, chairman of the holiday party, described the theme (Jeans and Jewels) and other planned activities.

Greg Kolojeski reminded everyone of the schedules for the speakers, rare plant auction and sale at the upcoming Extravaganza.

Bonnie announced that Steve Beaudoin, Sue Fischer and Katharine Vaccarro will serve as the nominating committee for next year's Board members. Voting will take place at the October meeting next month.

Show & Tell: Members providing plants for Show and Tell identified and discussed their specimens.

Plant of the Month: Steve Beaudoin announced that the Plant of the Month theme for the October meeting will be Halloween. He said he is looking forward to someone taking over this position, also noting that it's interesting and enjoyable and takes about ten minutes a month to organize.

Door Prize/Raffle giveaways: Bonnie Friedrich announced the order of seating rows to select door prizes. Phil Hancock then drew and announced raffle ticket numbers.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Norton
Recording Secretary
Bromeliad Society Central Florida

Date Approved

Guest Speaker

There will be a very special program presented by Chip Jones entitled, "Bromeliad Breeders: Interviews From The World Bromeliad Conference 2024". This will be the most informative, insightful program of the year, with revealing interviews conducted by a plant lover extraordinaire. Chip Jones began his plant journey as an intern at the New England Wildflower Society, followed by serious study and traveling the world in search of new plant species. Today he operates his own business, Jones Landscaping Nursery, in Moore Haven, Florida. It is not the typical landscape nursery. He specializes in the rare and unusual, with special focus on cycads, palms and bromeliads. Among the bromeliads, the focus is on variegated *Neoregelia* hybrids, and the genera *Dyckia*, *Hechtia*, *Aechmea* and *Alcantarea*. Those who attended the 2025 Extravaganza will recall the immense specimen of *Alcantarea* 'Aurora' at his booth. It was the largest and most dramatic bromeliad of the event. But, even with the nursery to manage, Chip still takes off to other countries in search of new plants. When he returns home he heads straight to his grow houses. "Are they happy? Did they miss me? Do they need me?"



Do not miss this program. After seeing the presentation, Greg K. said: "It's one of the best I've ever seen".

Upcoming Events

GROWvember AT MEAD GARDEN, NOV. 7-8, 2025

Don't forget to mark your calendar!



The 2024 BSCF booth at GROWvember. All those tents as far as the eye can see... ALL BROMS!

WHERE: Mead Botanical Garden, 1300 S. Denning Drive, Winter Park, FL 32789

WHEN: Friday, November 7 (officially, 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM) and Saturday, November 8 (8:00 AM to 4:00 PM).

WE WILL BE READY FOR YOU BY NOON, even though it does not officially open until 2PM on Friday. Why 2 hours early? So BSCF members have a chance to be first. Brom-a-holics travel from as far as Jacksonville, Tampa and Vero Beach for this sale. A bunch will show up by 1PM to be 'first'. Only BSCF members are informed that we will be ready by Noon. There will be tons of broms. If you cannot come until Saturday, don't worry. There will still be plenty to hunt among. Don't miss it. This is BSCF's most fun sale of the year. And, the GROWvember festival will have over 30 other vendors selling every sort of plant. Plus, food trucks, a beer garden, live music and much more. November is the real start of the Florida garden year, so mark your calendar.

Any member wanting to sell who has not already signed up, email Mike McMahon (mike.mcmahon2024@outlook.com) so he can plan a spot for you. He will send you the rules for the sale.

Plant of the Month



This month's theme is to showcase bromeliads in a Halloween themed presentation. Last year's presentations were outstanding and very creative. So, put on your thinking cap and come up with something special for this very fun night! It should be a fun display. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, although the award denominations were not determined at the time of the newsletter.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: *Aechmea blanchetiana*

By Mike McMahon

Whenever anyone asks what bromeliads they can plant in full sun, the response includes *Aechmea blanchetiana*. Indeed, it does not just tolerate direct sun, it thrives in it. Some of the best looking *A. blanchetiana* are to be found planted along interstate highways in south Florida where they are in full sun from dawn to dusk. There are few bromeliads as tough as *A. blanchetiana*. There is good reason for that.

A. blanchetiana evolved in harsh conditions. It originates in the coastal restinga of Brazil, ranging from Espírito Santo to Bahia. This habitat is characterized by broiling sun; sandy, nutrient deficient soils; and salt air. The sparse cover is mostly thorny scrub, cacti and salt-tolerant grasses. What trees manage to survive are stunted and gnarled. Here is where *blanchetiana* grows in clumps on the ground surrounded by generations of dead, brown leaves.

The leaves of *A. blanchetiana* are long, narrow, hard, shiny, spiny and arranged in an open rosette. Large specimens can easily hold a liter of water. The leaves can reach 36 inches or more in length. The beauty of *blanchetiana* is all about foliage color, which depends on both the particular form/cultivar and light conditions. The foliage of the typical wild plant ranges from light green in partial shade to yellowish-green with an orange blush in full sun. There are numerous forms and cultivars with bright yellow, orange or red leaves when grown in full sun. The famous landscape designer Roberto Burle Marx popularized the use of *A. blanchetiana* in the landscape, making it a star of tropical gardens. He used it in large 'islands' under full sun surrounded by grass or other low vegetation, creating a spectacular color contrast for large properties. The inflorescence is branched and tall, reaching 1.5- 2 meters in height with orange-red bracts and yellow flowers. Hummingbirds are regular visitors once they discover it. The fruits that follow are small elliptical berries, with tiny seeds.

This bromeliad does best as a terrestrial and prefers sandy well-drained soil. It tolerates most Central Florida freezes as long as frost does not form on the foliage. (Cover them to be safe.) It multiplies easily by pups, which form at the base and at times on short stolons that extend a few inches away from the mother plant. It is common for there to be multiple pups, meaning that a single plant in a few years can become an impressive clump. Single plants tend to have the leaves spread outward, while in clumps the foliage grows more upward. When grown in shade the leaves stretch longer and tend to bend over, making the plant look wind-damaged. It is a comparatively easy bromeliad for the beginner, but only if they have a large space in the sun to devote to it. Without at least a half day of direct sun, it is probably best to try something else in the garden. And, do not waste money on a fancy cultivar if you only have shade. They will not have the bright color that makes them special.

Some popular named cultivars:

A. blanchetiana 'Goldmine' - A beautifully variegated cultivar with bright cream-yellow central variegation. It popped up as a seedling when Chester Skotak was crossing different forms of the species 20 years ago, but only became available more recently. It grows over three feet tall with three-inch-wide, stiff leaves. The foliage stays a light green. It tends not to blush bronze or reddish as readily as other forms, but the variegation is bold and it does not fade with age.



A. blanchetiana 'Goldmine'



A. blanchetiana 'Vermelho'

A. blanchetiana 'Vermelho' - Leaves are narrower than the normal form, but still grow to 3 feet. It takes on glowing orange hues when grown in bright light.

A. blanchetiana 'Wally Berg' - Stiffer leaves and a bright pinkish-orange coloration in bright light typify this form, which was collected in the wild by Floridian Wally Berg.



A. blanchetiana 'Wally Berg'

A. blanchetiana 'Orangeade' - A color form that takes on glowing orange hues when grown in bright light. It is a large grower whose bloom spike is 4 or more feet in height, with a heavily branched panicle of orange berries.

A. blanchetiana 'Pink Panties' - This variegated cultivar turns pinky-orange in strong light. It grows a bit smaller, with a maximum height and leaf spread of about 30 inches.

blanchetiana 'Lemon' - A very large cultivar with lemon yellow foliage that keeps its color even in partial shade. The erect, branched inflorescence can rise to 2 meters. It was originally distributed by Tropiflora in the early 1990s from Brazilian stock without



A. blanchetiana 'Pink Panties'



A. blanchetiana 'Orangeade'

a cultivar name. It breeds fairly true from self-set seed, but not 100%. This has resulted in there being several different clones in cultivation, all getting 'Lemon' labels. Some are more upright in growth; some more open and spreading; and some not so yellow. Buyer beware.



A. blanchetiana 'Lemon'

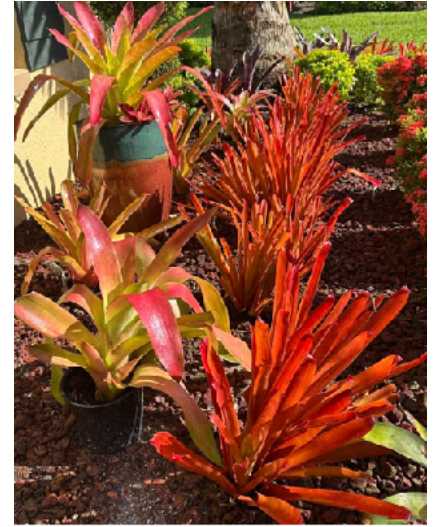


A. blanchetiana 'Raspberry'



A. blanchetiana 'Variegated'

A. blanchetiana 'Red Candles' - This cultivar began as a sport of 'Raspberry' that appeared in tissue culture. It is smaller than the typical *blanchetiana*, usually staying around 30 inches and seldom exceeding 36 inches in height. The leaves are narrow with edges curling inward and held very erect. In full sun the foliage becomes a brilliant red. It forms tight clumps that remain orderly in appearance compared to the sprawling large types. There are conflicting reports about its bloom habit, but it is definitely a reluctant bloomer... if it ever blooms.



A. blanchetiana 'Red Candles'

A. blanchetiana 'Raspberry' - This cultivar can become a vibrant red in the right conditions with direct sun and no supplemental fertilizing, but otherwise can be shades of yellow-green blushed with orange and red. It tends to stay shorter than the typical form, with a somewhat more narrow leaf and shorter inflorescence. Nonetheless, in clumps it can reach over a meter in height.

A. blanchetiana 'Variegated' - There are multiple different variegated clones which have not been given their own cultivar names, and differ from each other, but all labeled simply as 'variegated' or 'marginated'. They generally have the same form and size typical of the species, but with cream or white stripes. Some have very narrow stripes. Some become more pinkish or apricot orange in full sun and the variegation loses distinctiveness. Often the variegation is not stable and the plant may produce mostly un-variegated pups. When acquiring one, be sure what you see is what you want. Do not think having 'variegated' on the label means it will become like one you saw elsewhere.

NOTE: When seeking a particular cultivar, buy the plant, not the label. There are many un-named forms that hobbyists have labeled with the names of registered cultivars. They do not intend to deceive. They are eager to name their plants and think that since their plant is orangish it must be 'Orangeade', etc. They do not understand that many forms have never been named. If your 'Lemon' is not yellow, it is not 'Lemon'.

Marilyn's Garden



Cryptanthus, toss? Or not!

By Marilyn Howser

The life cycle of bromeliads consists of several distinct stages: seedling,

adult, flowering, and propagation through pups, I'll add, finally deterioration, typically lasting several years.



It has been many years since I was first introduced to Bromeliads. I quickly noticed a very pretty little plant with a funny name, it was a Cryptanthus. Soon I had several of them and in a few years I had lots of them. Then one day I noticed the leaves were turning brown and they were not so pretty any more. Even though they were pupping. I started taking about 20 of them to the bromeliad meetings each month to put on the door prize table and the raffle table just to get rid of them.

A couple of years ago several people mentioned to me they were getting rid of their Cryptanthus due to them getting brown leaves and not looking so good. We were all thinking the same thing.



I have watched Mike Mc trim the brown leaves off of his Tillandsias with cuticle scissors. Mike doesn't toss his beloved Tillandsias because they have brown leaves.

When you go to Steve B's yard you'll see a lot of broms covering his yard, but you won't see one brown leaf. Why? Well I bet cha he hasn't tossed the broms with brown leaves! No I think he has removed the brown leaves and kept the plant.

Each morning I make a trip around my yard and pull up every tiny weed I can find and pull off all of the brown leaves I see.



Before



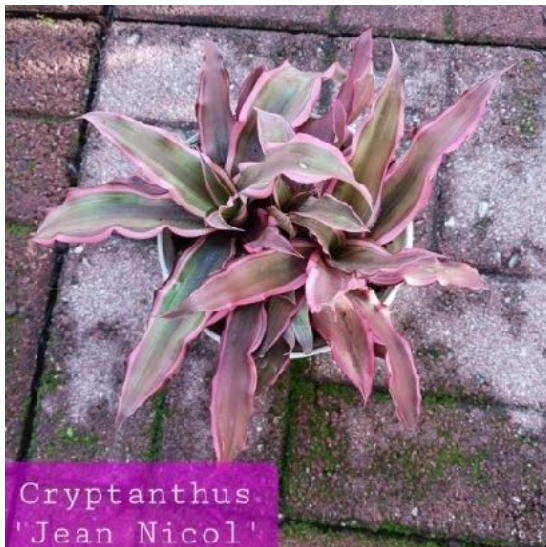
After

The following is from bsi.org

(Name is derived from (M)Mildred Merkel, (E)Edward Ensign who sowed the seed, (N)Julian Nally who gave the seed to Ensign, and (D)in memory of Ralph Davis)

But wait!

I hadn't paid much attention to Cryptanthus for a fairly long while, recently I have noticed the Cryptanthus I had saved were all covered with pups and once again I thought how pretty they look.



I have noticed I like the firmer leaf varieties best.

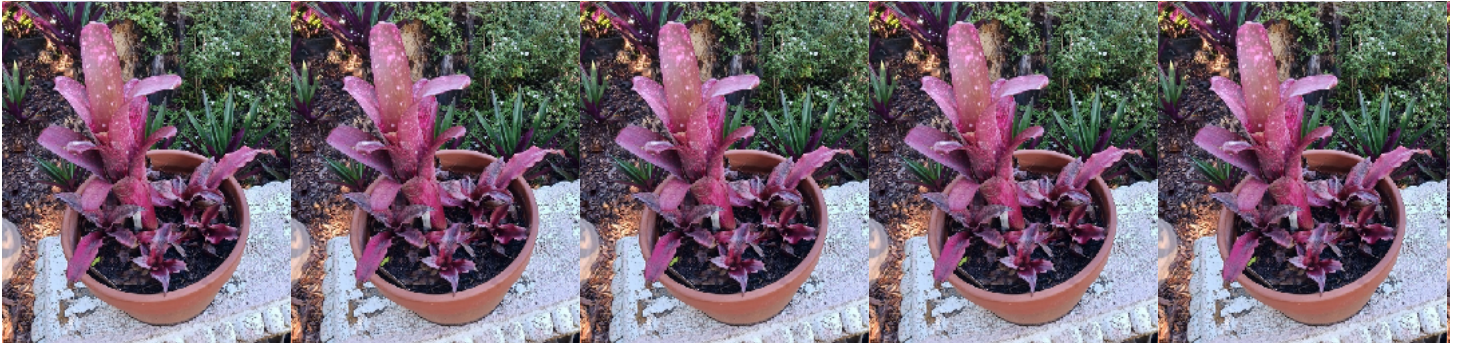
See how pretty the pups are. Yes the mother plant has brown leaves, but I didn't just toss this plant? No, it is just going through the life cycle that all Bromeliads go through.

Lately I have been planting Cryptanthus in with other broms. Cryptanthus are a great size to tuck in where ever there is an empty space.

Crypts like shade and they like a frequent splash of water

This is Billbergia 'Raspberry Freeze' and Cryptanthus 'Eternal Love'. Such a beautiful combination!

We all have certain species and varieties of broms that we really like but why are we so hard on Cryptanthus? I think we need to give Cryptanthus another chance. Remember they go through the same cycle as all other bromeliads.



Nominating Committee Report: 2026 BSCF Board Election

Per our ByLaws, a Nominating Committee was appointed to propose a slate of officers for 2026. Members included Steve Beaudoin, Sue Fischer and Katherine Vaccaro.

Our team worked hard to recruit the best possible candidates for all offices. As of *Orlandiana's* deadline, we had not identified a member willing to serve as President.

Please note that members may nominate candidates for all offices at the October meeting. We encourage you to attend and participate, even though more travel is required. The ongoing strength of our Society depends on active members who will volunteer for the many tasks required to keep us vibrant.

Here is our current Slate, to be discussed and voted on at the October meeting.

President - open for nominations from the floor

Vice President - Bonnie Friedrich

Treasurer - Joyce Gibault

Recording Secretary - Sandy Caruthers

Membership Secretary - Robin Norton

Chester Skotak's Visit

By John Boardman

This article was overlooked for publication in a previous newsletter. Apologies, but better late than never.

If you missed our July meeting we had a special surprise guest, Chester Skotak and his wife, Lorena, from Palmares, Costa Rica. Chester spent a few days visiting nurseries in the Apopka area. We were lucky to have him and Lorena at our meeting. Chester is a world renowned Bromeliad hybridizer. Many of Chester's commercial hybrids are found in the big box stores, mostly Vrieseas and Guzmanias. His plants are known and sold worldwide. John Boardman brought in 6 of Chester's Neoregelia hybrids for the Show and Tell table. Chester briefly spoke to the club about these beautiful plants. It was exciting to have Chester speak at the meeting and answer questions from the members.

Pictures



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 \$10 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.

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

Officers

President: **Dan Sawyer**

Vice-President: **Bonnie Friedrich**

Treasurer: **Joyce Gibault**

Recording Secretary: **Robin Norton**

Membership Secretary: **Pam Marion**

Immediate Past President: **Mike McMahon**

Florida Council Reps: **Mike Saunders & Dan Sawyer**

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:

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: **Steve Beaudoin**

Speaker Helper: **Bonnie Friedrich**

Librarian :

Newsletter Editor: **Dr. John Vecchitto**

Newsletter Proofreader: **Marty Folk, Katherine Vaccaro, Destini Coiner**

Audit Committee: **Dr. Telka diFate, Bonnie Friedrich, Steve Beaudoin, Dr. John Vecchitto**

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

Orlando, FL 32853-6961

facebook.com/BromeliadSocietyOfCentralFlorida



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.