

orlandiana



Newsletter of the
Bromeliad Society of Central Florida
Volume no. 52, Issue no. 11

Next meeting: November 19, 2025

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

CONTENTS

President's Message	2
October Minutes	2
Species Spotlight: <i>Neoregelia carolinae</i>	4
Plant of the Month	6
Membership Renewal	6
Holiday Party	7
Pictures	8
Membership form	9
Officers	10

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!

Please Note: I will be relinquishing my position as editor of the orlandiana so this is my last edition. Please contact me if you wish to take over this position. John Vecchitto

President's Message

As the cooler temperatures settle in, I am finally able to put in cleanup and planting time that my garden surely needed. The heat of August and the rains that finally came surely was a weed tsunami at my house. Other plants and trees from sales like Leu Gardens, and other nursery visits, have been sitting in kiddie pools begging to be planted. How did I motivate? I put my garden on tour. Originally scheduled for an art show that weekend, that was canceled, I wasn't able to commit until 2 weeks prior to the tour date. Between another art show and other commitments, I was putting in full days in preparation. I enjoyed speaking to everyone that made it to my garden, also pleased to not do anything the day after.



Cooler temperatures could turn into cold at the most inappropriate times. When I first started my bromeliad acquisition upon returning to Florida 4 years ago, I just brought them all into my screened porch with a roof, with plastic over the screen, and 2 incandescent bulbs on all night, keeping them warmer than being outside. Since then, I have been planting many of them in my landscape. Last year I bought a roll of freeze cloth, supplemented with incandescent mini holiday lights on the ground underneath. Thank goodness I hit Walmart the day after Christmas last year and bought the 100 incandescent light strings for \$1.29, since many more bromeliads have been planted throughout my property. Have you planned for possible freezes this Winter? What are your tricks and habits?



As the year ends, so does the terms of all of our volunteer positions. There are a few positions open that will need to be filled so we are up and running for next year. The listing is included in the newsletter cover email.

Dan Sawyer

October 2025 Minutes

BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, INC.

Draft Meeting Minutes: October 15, 2025

Will be approved with potential corrections at the January 21, 2026 meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 7 pm at the Seminole Bromeliad and Tropical Plant Society location in Sanford.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: *Neoregelia carolinae*

Program: Vice President Bonnie Friedrich introduced speaker Chip Jones of Jones Landscaping Nursery whose topic was Interviews from the World Bromeliad Conference of 2024.

President Dan Sawyer announced a meeting break at 8:00 pm.

Business Meeting was called to order at 8:15 pm by Dan Sawyer.

Membership Secretary: Pam Marion announced there were 47 people in attendance including 5 guests.

Minutes: The draft minutes of the September 17, 2025 meeting were published in the October 2025 orlandiana. **A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Mike McMahon and seconded by Paula Edwards. The motion was passed unanimously.**

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

Committee Reports:

Mead Garden Sale – Mike McMahon reported that more sellers and plants are needed for the November Mead Garden sale. All sellers should wear their green BSCF shirts. New ones are available for \$5. Members will be admitted at noon on Friday, non-members at 2:00 pm.

Holiday Party – Paula Edwards discussed the December holiday party and requested that people sign up to identify the food items and number of people they plan to bring. Participants should wear white shirts and jeans. There will be a plant gift exchange.

New Business:

Leu Garden Sale - Mike Saunders made a motion to spend \$600 for two spots at the Leu Gardens sale in March. The motion was seconded by Mike McMahon and passed unanimously.

Nominations – The nominating committee announced the slate of proposed officers for 2026:

President – open

Vice President - Bonnie Friedrich

Treasurer – Joyce Gibault

Recording Secretary – Sandy Caruthers

Membership Secretary - Robin Norton

There were no other motions from the floor for any officers. A motion was then made and seconded to accept the slate of officers. The motion passed. The new Board will need to decide how to handle the open office.

Plant of the Month – Steve Boudoin announced the winners of the Halloween-themed plant of the month. Kathy Hancock took first place and Leslie Kinnaird took second. A three-way tie for third place was resolved by a show of hands and went to Phil Hancock.

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

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

Dan then drew and announced raffle ticket numbers.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Date Approved

Robin Norton

Recording Secretary_____
Bromeliad Society Central Florida

By Mike McMahon

In her 1973 book *Bromeliads*, Victoria Padilla wrote that *Neoregelia carolinae* was "the best known and most widely cultivated member of the genus." Nobody would have disagreed. Indeed, back then in Orlando not only did "everyone" have it, they had multiples of it. Today, few brom-addicted hobbyists keep it, and if they do it is not the wild-type species, but a variegated cultivar. Even these are often relegated to some back corner. Nonetheless, "everyone" is indebted to it.

Of the 8,192 registered *Neoregelia* hybrids (as of this writing), 737 list it as a parent, and I would venture to guess that its hybrids parented more than a quarter of the rest. It is one of the two foundation species (the other being *N. concentrica*) from which hybridizers have generated the bulk of the *Neoregelia* hybrids that dominate Florida collections. If a *Neoregelia* has a colorful center, the chances are good that it is due to the genetics of one or the other. Even the variegated Skotak hybrid Neos have a variegated *N. carolinae* in their ancestry.

N. carolinae is found growing terrestrially and as an epiphyte in shady forest in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It appears from sea level to 3,600 feet. In the wild its leaves are long and narrow, flexible and glossy with small spines. It forms an attractive green starburst about 24 inches across, but the leaves can extend even longer in shadier conditions. Its outstanding trait is the colorful center when it blooms. It can retain color for 8 months or longer. The color of the center is typically in shades of red variously described as cerise, vermilion or some such, but in some specimens the center becomes more purple-red and in some more orange-red. All of the foliage can become bronzed if the light is just right. This color variability has resulted in there being numerous non-hybrid cultivars (over 60 listed on various internet lists), most of which are not registered and many of which are long lost. The center color is so brilliant when it blooms that back-in-the-day hobbyists did not mind it being just plain green for the months it took to have it bloom. However, even in the 1970s the wild-type species was giving way in collections to three cultivars: 'Meyendorffii', 'Marechalii' and 'Tricolor'.

The outstanding feature of both 'Meyendorffii' and 'Marechalii' is that they have wider leaves and form a more compact rosette, rather than the spidery look of the wild species. Additionally, both can get splotches of red or orange on the foliage before coming into bloom. Virtually all of the variations of *N. carolinae* found today come from these two old cultivars. The origins of 'Meyendorffii' and 'Marechalii' are much debated. Skipping all the contradictory histories (which would take many pages to regurgitate), it can be said that both names arose in Europe in the 19th century and were used at different nurseries. In the 1970s it was common for hobbyists to get into lengthy discussions over whether a particular plant was 'Meyendorffii' or 'Marechalii', but it is now thought that the only reliable visual distinction that cannot be influenced by how a specific plant was grown is the color of the tips of the floral sepals, which are submerged in the center where nobody sees them. (Hardly a difference worth debating!)

There is a Central Florida connection of interest. 'Marechalii' was introduced to the American market by Julian Nally, who lived in Gotha. Nally raised about 30,000 seedlings of 'Marechalii' in the 1950's, but it was more susceptible to fungus and reluctant to bloom (without being forced by gassing) compared to 'Meyendorffii'. It was found that 'Marechalii' did best in the low humidity of California nurseries.

~~*N. carolinae* 'Tricolor' presents a different tale. There were two of it. The first appeared in Belgium in 1929~~ among seedlings of 'Meyendorffii' raised by Arthur Gyselinck. The second was discovered by Omer Morobe among seedlings of 'Marechalii' at the Belgian nursery of M. A. DeClerq. It was initially called *Nidularium marechalii* tricolor. (Back then a lot of Neoregelias were being called *Nidularium*.) Some subtle differences existed between the two variegated clones, but they were not sufficiently distinguishable for consumers to care. By the late 1930s when World War II began, both were simply being called 'Tricolor' in the trade. Although these variegated carolinae came from seeds produced by 'Meyendorffii' and 'Marechalii', they did not have the short wide leaves of those cultivars. Both had longer, narrow leaves like the wild species. Mulford Foster began growing it at his Orlando nursery in 1944. In 1953 he authored an article describing it for the BSI Journal, stating: "This striking three-colored variety of *Neoregelia carolinae* has been known for several years both in Europe and America but has invariably been listed by horticulturists and sold as *Nidularium tricolor*." In 2016, Derek Butcher, who headed up the BSI cultivar registry, observed that 'Tricolor' had never been registered, so he undertook to do so himself. Although the plant was widely known as "carolinae tricolor", Butcher decided it should not have a Latinized name, so he registered it as "Caroline Tricolor", a name nobody uses. Adding further confusion, there are photos of 3 different plants published in the Registry, only one of which is the plant historically grown as *N. carolinae* 'Tricolor'. The others are entirely different variegated cultivars of *N. carolinae*. Butcher's attempt to record an important cultivar has created confusion and inaccuracy, but it may not matter from a practical perspective. Almost nobody has *N. carolinae* 'Tricolor' today anyway.

What is mostly grown today is a third variegated *N. carolinae* cultivar which was discovered in 1968 by Adriens Simoens of Merelbeke, Belgium and marketed by Paul DeCoster. Like the DeClerq clone, it was found among *N. carolinae* 'Marechalii' seedlings. Unlike the DeClerq clone, it had the broad leaves and compact growth habit of 'Meyendorffii'/'Marechalii'. This third variegated *N. carolinae* was named 'Perfecta Tricolor' and was granted a Belgian plant patent in 1975 and a U. S. plant patent in 1976 (expired). It dominated in the marketplace by the mid-1990s, replacing other variegated carolinae in most hobbyists' collections.

Breeders have intensively worked with 'Meyendorffii', 'Perfecta Tricolor' and other forms of *N. carolinae* to produce dozens upon dozens of cultivars that are genetically 100% *N. carolinae*, like Nat DeLeon's albomarginated 'Inferno' (registered as 'DeLeon's Inferno'). Mostly, however, these *N. carolinae* cultivars have been crossed with other species to create remarkable hybrids. Notable among these is the work of long time BSCF member Grant Groves. He used *N. carolinae* 'Meyendorffii' and its hybrids in his hybridization program. His many carolinae-derived hybrids have the rosette shape and wide glossy leaves of 'Meyendorffii', some even wider and larger, and many also have brilliant color when not in bloom. Grant also broadened the spectrum of available colors to include shades of pink, orange, lavender and purple, as well as more shades of red than a Porter Paint color chart. BSCF has another notable connection to the creation of carolinae hybrids. For many years BSCF member Eloise Beach has done the work to establish and stabilize the Skotak hybrids that are so admired today. The variegated ones have *N. carolinae* ancestry. Without the work of Eloise in stabilizing the variegation, we would not enjoy all those variegated Skotak Neos. Imagine them without the variegation and you might well not want them taking up space.

Considering the work of just Grant and Eloise/Skotak, it's no wonder few people keep the wild-type *N. carolinae* anymore. Nonetheless, if a BSCF member wants to have a bit of bromeliad history in their collection, *N. carolinae* is a species that gives it. It is a foundation species for so many of the Neos popular today, and it has a lot of Central Florida connections. It is a dependable brom that survives abuse. For the best results, however, don't abuse it. Get it out of the back corner and raise it in 35%-40% sun (65%-60% shade) in a well-drained potting mix with good air flow or in bright shade in the garden. It loves Florida heat and humidity. Protect it from freezes and it rewards with colorful beauty that lasts for months and comes back year after year.

Author's Note: If there is a species you would like spotlighted, email your suggestion to: mike.mcmahon2024@outlook.com. Articles for the January and February issues of orlandiana are in process. Subject species for later months are wanted.

Plant of the Month

Nov: Fall / Thanksgiving Theme!

This month's theme is to showcase bromeliads, which reflect fall and Thanksgiving colors. Think orange, brown, yellow, maroon, and any other colors that remind you of the season. This really opens bromeliads from all genres for the plant of the month. Show your support and make this a really fun meeting!

We are looking for a new plant of the month coordinator for January 2026.



Membership Renewal

A Note from Robin Norton

Hello all, I look forward to being your Membership Secretary in 2026.

Here is a reminder that annual membership renewals are due in January and are valid until December 31.

BSCF's annual dues are \$15, plus \$5 for each additional family member who wishes to join.

Members who renew by February 1 will continue to receive our Newsletter which contains important notices, announcements, articles of interest, pictures and more.

Timely renewal is very much appreciated.

Those who have joined on or after September 1, 2025 are considered paid through December 31, 2026.

A Membership form is always included as the last page of each newsletter.

You can renew either by mail or in person at the January 21st meeting.

To renew, print the Membership Form, fill in your name and provide updated contact information if applicable. Otherwise, simply state "No Change".

Please pay dues with a check made out to Bromeliad Society of Central Florida.

You can mail to:

Bromeliad Society of Central Florida, Inc.
PO Box 536961
Orlando, FL 32853-6961

Or

Bring to the January 21st meeting and give to Robin Norton. I'll be at the Welcome Table. Looking forward to seeing everybody next year!

Holiday Party

Get ready for an evening of food, games, holiday decorations, fun and fellowship with "Bromeliad Enthusiasts!" Many ask what should we wear??? Wear your jeans, white shirts, and holiday accents (Santa hats, jingle bells etc.). Everyone who comes in the themed attire will receive a raffle ticket to win a prize. Don't forget to get to bring your favorite dish you signed up for the potluck. BSCF provides the meat and drinks.

Put your creative thinking caps on for the NOVEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY PLANT OF THE MONTH DISPLAY! Decorate your bromeliad display with the theme of Denim, White & Tropical Delight!!!! It may be a winter theme. It may be a holiday theme. It may be a denim and white theme. It may be a tropical holiday winter theme. If you are really creative, it could be all of the above!!! Oh, my! Decisions Decisions. Let the wheels of creativity churn! There is an added bonus . . . Yes, yes, yes! This will be a judged competition similar to the October Fall Plant of the Month. Oh, yes! First, second and third place prizes will be awarded. This time, there will be a panel of judges who will decide on the top three displays based upon the nicest bromeliad(s), most creative, most festive, and most of what we can't think of for top rating. Okay, get going. You're not too busy. Just do it. Drop all else. This is your priority above all, but please don't forget and bring your holiday food dish while preparing your November Plant of the Month display!

If you are available to volunteer for the party, Contact Sue at 407.625.8402. Looking forward to the great eats and sharing together for our last BSCF member meeting of the year. Don't hesitate to give me a call with your questions or concerns. All the best, Paula.

Paula Edwards, Holiday Party Chair
773.531.0592



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: **John Vecchitto**

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

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

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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.