

Bromeliad Society

PAY YOUR DUES FOR 2026



March 2026 Volume 59 Number 3



The President's View

By Michael O'Neal,
BSH President

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A Critical Month for Our Society

We have a number of exciting activities and opportunities coming up in the next few months, so be sure to review the **Coming Events** section of this bulletin and mark your calendars.

As many of you know, **membership has dipped again this year**, and this is something we must address together. Our society thrives on participation, fresh ideas, and shared enthusiasm — and right now, we need all three.

Our monthly meetings, plant sales, workshops, and friendships only happen because we have an active membership base. That foundation allows everything else we value to continue.

Please invite your friends, gardening contacts, and plant-loving acquaintances to join us.

Word of mouth is still our most powerful recruiting tool.

President's View (continued)

March Meeting

Bromeliad Breeding and Pollination in Nature

Dr. Alfredo Cascante-Marin, Professor and Researcher at the University of Costa Rica, Department of Biology, has traveled extensively throughout his homeland of Costa Rica to study the propagation patterns of Bromeliads in the wild. The presentation will explore sexual (from seeds) reproduction in bromeliads. He will be sharing the presentation remotely via zoom.

7 pm

1475 West Grey, Houston

Hospitality donors: N-Z

Zoom in at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89412131955?pwd=KcnmZawPlxsZ6M7Cgyaazm4pEbiX4h.1>

Meeting ID: 894 1213 1955

Passcode: 194524

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If you have not yet paid your dues, please send them to **Allyn as soon as possible**. We need an accurate membership count to properly plan for the year ahead. Your prompt attention truly makes a difference.



The Power of New Energy + Experienced Expertise

One of the greatest strengths of our society has always been the combination of:

- **New and younger members** bringing energy and fresh ideas
- **Our experienced growers** sharing decades of hard-earned bromeliad knowledge

We need both. Volunteer leadership is especially important right now, and we encourage newer members to step into roles alongside our seasoned growers.



URGENT: Show Chairperson Needed



This is the most critical issue facing us right now.

Our Annual Show — **the crown jewel of our society** — is currently in jeopardy without a Chairperson.

Without someone stepping into this leadership role **very soon**, we will run out of time to properly organize and execute the show.

That said, let me emphasize something important:

We have the talent and the people to make this happen — we simply need someone willing to coordinate the effort.

Let me be very clear:

- The Chair does *not* do everything.
- The Chair's primary responsibility is **organization and communication**.
- The Chair fills key volunteer positions and ensures those volunteers are supported.
- You will have help. The Board will assist you.

Think about what this show represents:

President's View (continued)

A showcase of the incredible skill of our growers
An opportunity to see rare and spectacular bromeliads
A public demonstration of how well bromeliads thrive in our area
A rewarding, unifying effort for the entire society

Yes, it's a big effort — but it is also deeply rewarding.

We are looking for:

1. **An immediate Show Chair for this year**
2. **A future leader to shadow this year and learn the ropes**

If you are even *considering* this role, please contact me directly this week so we can talk through what it involves. A conversation does not obligate you — but it may make all the difference.



PlantCon Opportunity – Recruitment on a Big Stage

Speaking of new members, I believe **PlantCon** presents a tremendous opportunity for us.

This is a large-scale event at **NRG Arena**, featuring hundreds of booths and significant social media exposure. It attracts a broad audience, including many younger and highly socially engaged plant enthusiasts.

If we are serious about our mission of reaching more people and broadening our demographic — especially attracting younger members — this is precisely the type of opportunity we should explore.

If we move forward, we will need volunteers:

- Before the event (planning and prep)
- During the 2-day event (staffing the booth)
- After the event (follow-up and breakdown)

We will also need to **borrow some showy bromeliads for display** — plants that stop visitors in their tracks.

I hope to:

- Use our new signage
- Add a QR code linking to our website

President's View (continued)

President;s View (continued)

- Strengthen our social media presence (currently an area we need to improve)

PlantCon attracts strong social media engagement and influencers. This could be a powerful way to bring fresh visibility to our society — but it will require participation.

More details to come soon.



Board Meeting Date Change

Due to scheduling conflicts with myself and several other board members, the March Board Meeting has been moved to:

March 12

Please see elsewhere in the bulletin for the Zoom link if you would like to attend.



What You Can Do This Month

Here are four concrete ways you can help right now:

- Renew your membership if you have not yet done so
- Invite at least one guest to an upcoming meeting
- Contact me this week if you are considering the Show Chair role
- Volunteer for PlantCon if we move forward

Small individual actions, taken together, shape the future of our society.

Reminders

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Updating Your Contact Info

If your contact info in the directory has incorrect information, let me know so I can edit the directory. lindawhipkey@ymail.com

Don't forget to send me pictures of your plants. They don't have to be in bloom. For the APRIL edition, get them into me by MARCH 23.

Conference registration includes access to all conference seminars, the bromeliad show, the auction, and early entrance to bromeliad sale. Included meals are listed below.



- Conference Opening Reception with All American Buffet (Wednesday evening)

- Plant Auction with Complimentary Appetizers (Friday evening)

- Keynote Address with plated Banquet Dinner (Saturday evening)

Bus tours and extra dinner tickets are optional and can be purchased for an additional fee. See BSI.org website.

Conference Registration – \$425 per person

All conference registration fees are final and non-refundable.

Witness the artistry of nature and the skill of dedicated growers! Our **judged plant show** will feature a stunning array of bromeliads, meticulously cultivated and presented for your admiration.

Photos from March



Lymania corallina

Dave Whipkey



Cryptanthus 'Living Colors'

Dave Whipkey

Tillandsia ionantha

Linda Whipkey



March Photos



Billbergia sanderiana
Frank Lee



Tillandsia 'Houston' cv 'Cotton Candy'
David Whipkey



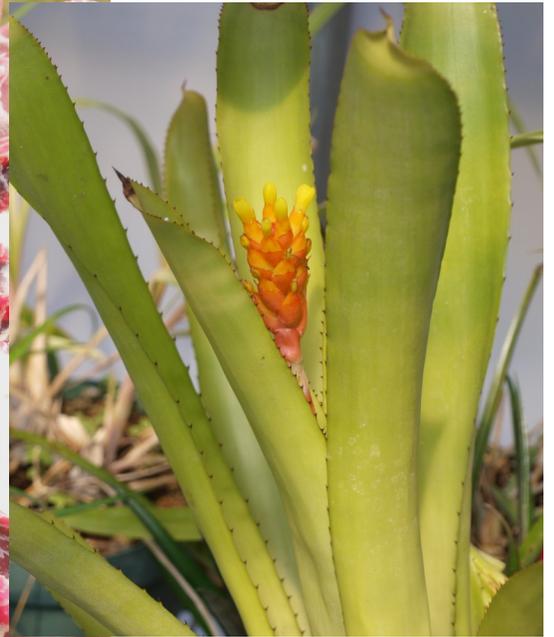
Sincorea burlemarxii
Frank Lee



xBillmea 'Poncho'
David Whipkey

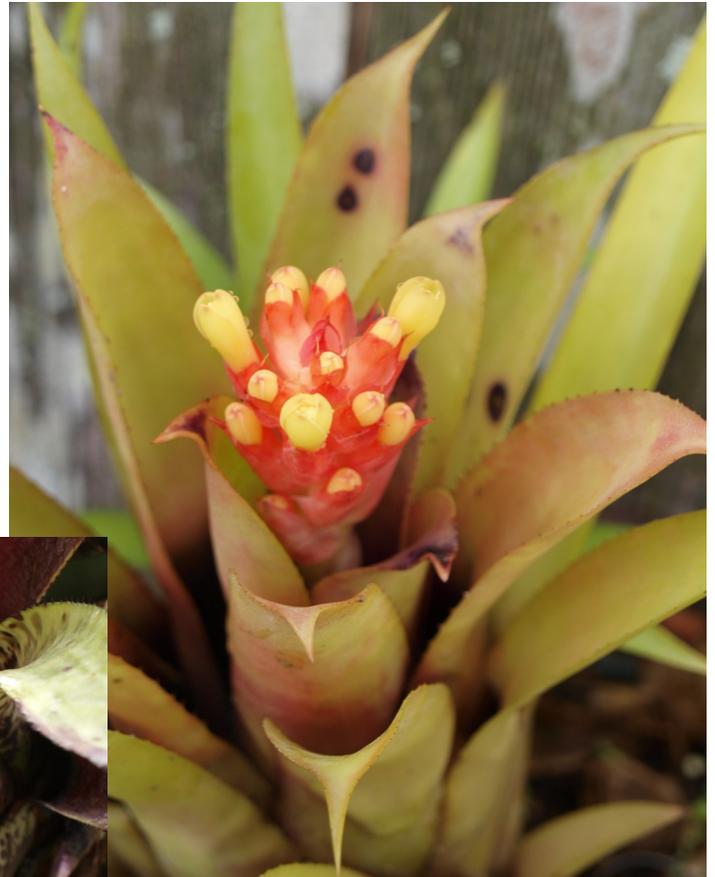


***Cryptanthus* 'Elaine'**
David Whipkey



Billbergia kleinii
David Whipkey

Aechmea recurvata* x *Aechmea calyculata
David Whipkey



***Aechmea* 'Skidmarks'**
David Whipkey



BS/H

Coming Events

March Board Meeting	March 12 (zoom)
March General Meeting	March 17
Spring Sale at West Grey	April 11
Mitch presents at Plaza Garden Club	April 13
BSI World Conference (California)	April 16-19
PlantCon at NRG	April 25-26
ABC's at Mercer	May 2
Annual Show and Sale (Judson- Robinson)	May 16-17
May General Meeting	May 21
Quarterly Luncheon	June 8 ??
June General Meeting	June 18

Also Perhaps a Farmer's Market

BSI Membership Perks

Being a member of the BSI is more than any one thing. Think of it as being part of an extended international family, bringing together people from all walks of life who share a common interest in this fabulous plant family. BSI membership allows you to expand your bromeliad knowledge in many directions, contact and visit collectors in distant lands, witness amazing displays of stunning hybrids and unusual species at world conferences and regional shows, and gives you the opportunity to contribute to the conservation of a fascinating and important group of plants.

In nature, bromeliads are sometimes referred to as keystone species, that is, they provide an important source of food and shelter for many of the creatures of the tropical and subtropical forest canopies. In our yards and public places, they provide a source of beauty and tropical imagery, and in our minds, they remind us of nature's beauty and intricacy.

Perks:

1. Receive this Journal of the Bromeliad Society, four times per year. The Journal is the flagship publication of the BSI and is intended for the amateur and professional grower as well as the bromeliad scientist and conservationist. The Journal is well illustrated in color and black and white and contains information and advice for all levels.
2. Obtain Online Members-Only Benefits (www.bsi.org), which include having access to:
 - FREE BSI Journal back issues. View and search Journal volumes 1-27, years 1951-1977 (more coming). This is a phenomenal way to enjoy the early years of the BSI and peruse hundreds of informative articles on bromeliads and bromeliad personalities.
 - FREE 50-year index (1951-2000). This index, painstakingly compiled by former editor Chet Blackburn, lists plants, authors, and topics, and can save many hours of research time. Non-members pay \$30 plus shipping.
 - FREE BSI Directories. A current membership directory allows for seeking the contact information of bromeliad hobbyists, affiliate groups, scientists, and conservationists worldwide. Travelers will appreciate the additional listing of members by geographical region. You can also find contact information for BSI officers, directors, committee chairs, and accredited judges. This document is available in Adobe PDF format.
 - FREE: An Alphabetical List of Bromeliad Binomials. You would have to pay \$12 at the BSI store for this up-to-date listing of all known species of bromeliads by renowned expert Harry Luther of the Bromeliad Identification Center. This listing is essential for newsletter editors who wish to spell names correctly and for anyone wishing to know the current thinking on bromeliad nomenclature.
 - FREE: Seed Fund Listing. The seed fund contains a listing of bromeliad seed available for sale or exchange. Enrich your collection and help support the BSI by purchasing or exchanging seed.
 - Media Programs for Affiliate societies. Visit the members only section if your local society needs a quick program.

Getting Ready for the BS/H Show

What should I be doing in March to prepare for the Show in May?

If you have questions, speak to the 2026 Show Chair, a local BSI judge, or a person who has previously entered plants into a show.

Horticulture (make sure that you have had the plant for at least 6 months)

- > identify possible show entries
 - almost mature plant or clump of plants
 - good color and markings
 - appropriate shape
 - minimal damage
 - no disease or pests
- > do a preliminary grooming
 - remove declining plants from clumps
 - remove dead or dying leaves
 - remove debris and water spots
- > repot if needed
 - use a clean or new pot
 - use new potting mix
 - set plant at appropriate depth
- > give them a little TLC
 - move to a prime location
 - rotate the plants on a regular basis
 - treat disease and insects as soon as noted
 - regular watering and fertilizing
 - watch for sunburn

Artistic

- > Ask the Show Chair for a list of the criteria and judging rules pertaining to the artistic section. As soon as it is available, obtain a copy of the 2026 Show Schedule.
- > Decorative containers
 - select a container
 - select a plant that complements (or contrasts with) the container
 - size
 - shape
 - color
 - texture
 - use the 'Horticulture' criteria shown above to assist you in choosing
 - do not move plant into the decorative container until shortly before the show
- > Artistic Arrangements (no limitation on ownership length)
 - learn the 2026 show theme is as soon as possible
 - examine your plants and artistic materials
 - sketch out several possible arrangements
 - refine your ideas
 - do practice assemblies
 - what could be improved
 - take pictures for future reference
 - look for materials that you could incorporate to improve your design
 - don't be afraid to discard a design that is not working

GOOD GRIEF WHY ARE ALL OF MY PLANTS DYING?

The concept for cultural tips this year will be to aid our membership and readers to improve the growing environment of their garden and greenhouse to more closely mimic the way the plants grow in nature. This may result in better choices of plants that can be easily maintained in Houston's microclimates. This month's article will address how to choose plants for newcomers and experienced growers in hopes the choices will be better suited to our growing conditions.

We had a wonderful program in February, by Pamela Koide Hyatt, of Bird Rock Tropicals, regarding Werner Rauh. Pam brought many wonderful plants which she offered in her sale. When we brought ours home the first question we struggled with was how should we take care of our new bromeliads? Since most of the plants offered were Tillandsias we decided to choose this genus for further study this month. Tillandsias grow in either temperate, mesic and xeric climates. Much of the definitions below are taken from the work of Pam Koide Hyatt in her Tilli-Cards which are now available in Apple form via app. Contact Bird Rock Tropicals for more information at 760-436-8088.

Types of Plants

Temperate plants "tolerate moderate temperatures and climate and exhibit some drought tolerance. They are easy to grow, hardy and adaptable". There are two Tillandsias that are native to Houston, *Tillandsia usneoides* (Spanish moss) and *Tillandsia recurvata* (ball moss), this implies that all other Tillandsias might require some growing conditions not found naturally in Houston and must be provided by the grower.

Mesic plants "grow where there is an abundance of moisture, in low elevation humid forests or high elevation cloud forests. Their leaves are thin, green and are less tolerant of extended dry periods". Some of these plants will tolerate the Houston climate although it is not ideal for them. There are no native Tillandsias that tolerate these conditions. Houston is a low elevation, varied humidity rather than constant high humidity and has very high temperatures that swing to freezing temperatures. Houston does not have any high elevation with cloud forests.

Xerophytic plants "have adapted to survive extended periods with or without water. Their leaves are thicker, have more trichomes and can tolerate sunlight and higher temperatures" typical of a desert. Houston has no native plants that can tolerate Xeric conditions without changing the growing environment provided by the grower. Where the plant is grown in its native region, tells you the type and amount of work that is needed to successfully grow your new plants. Any opportunity you might have to visit Bromeliads growing in nature and observe their growing conditions will allow you to change your growing conditions to meet their needs. This comment also applies to not only Tillandsias but also all of the Bromeliad genera. Ask yourself what are the conditions where they live compared to where you live. In April, we will address physical methods to vary the growing conditions that will alter your Houston garden.

Cultural Tips (continued)

Cultural Tips (continued)

We need your input to make a list of recommended, easier to grow plants for our area. Send your list of as many genera as you can to our email address below. We will publish the list later in the year in hopes that this will help new growers in Houston.

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We also need a list of plants that you currently have trouble growing or have any cultural questions. We might be able to help with a few possible solutions. Challenge us and we will try to help you find a solution.

Email to planobrom@aol.com



Tillandsia ionantha 'Druid'



Tillandsia ixiodes x *Tillandsia bergerii*



Tillandsia paleacea

BULLETIN BOARD



March Birthdays

Annette Dominguez	3/18
Alma Gordon	3/1
Eileen Ilanfeldt	3/13
David Klein	3/17
Sue Softy	3/3

Your Birth Month Perennial

January	Snowdrops (Galanthus)
February	Lenten Rose (Helleborus)
March	Crocus
April	Camassia
May	Columbine (Aquilegia)
June	Rose
July	Blanket Flower (Gaillardia)
August	Coneflower (Echinacea)
September	Aster (Symphyotrichum)
October	Goldenrod (Solidago)
November	Oakleaf Hydrangea
December	Dogwood (Cornus)

Membership dues in the Bromeliad Society Houston are \$20 for individual \$30 for family.

The membership goes from January to January.

To join, send your check to:

Allyn Pearlman
6422 Bankside Drive
Houston, TX 77096

With your check, include your address, cell phone/home/work phone numbers; your birthday month and day and your email address. The email allows you to receive the monthly bulletin and important communications. Also, designate a phone number to call in case of an emergency cancellation of the meeting.



Jimbo's Nursery
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We have a large selection of Aechmea, Billbergia, Cryptanthus, Dyckia, Neoregelia, and Tillandsia. Please compare our prices and our quality.

15019 8th Street West, Santa Fe, TX 77517 ■ 409-925-6933

www.jimbosnursery.com



Houston Orchid Society

www.houstonorchidsociety.org

Regular meeting first Thursday of month at 7:30 PM
First Christian Church | 1601 Sunset Blvd



Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

www.tgcfersoc.org

Regular meeting third Sunday of month at 2:00 PM
Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Drive., Houston, TX 77004



Houston Cactus and Succulent Society

www.hcsstex.org

Regular meeting fourth Wednesday of month at 7:00 PM

Metropolitan Multi-Service Center

1475 West Gray, Houston, TX 77019

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SECRETARY
Don Green

VICE PRESIDENT
Gordon Stowe

TREASURER
Allyn Pearlman

PAST PRESIDENT
Scherie Townes

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Don Green Cherie Lee

March Board Meeting

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85257139694?pwd=qNAz7YrR93EObhWTABXaCVrUdW5TXR.1>

Date: March 12

Time: 7:30 pm

