

Bromeliad Society

Read your bulletin!



SEPTEMBER 2025 Volume 58 Number 9



The President's View

By Michael O'Neal,
BSH President

moneal37@gmail.com



Moving Forward with Fresh Energy

As mentioned at our August meeting, the Farmer's Market booth didn't draw much traffic this time, but I want to thank all of our volunteers who came out to support it. Each time we set up, we're learning what works—and taking another step toward making the booth more appealing. Hopefully, we can have a great response at the TACSS event at Mercer in October.



Cool Plants = Cool Brand

Last month I shared the idea of **Cool Plants** as a theme, and it's starting to grow roots. We've been experimenting with signage that's brighter, bolder, and more colorful, showing off bromeliads in a way that feels modern and fresh. Really, this is more than just a booth design—it's about rebranding our society to match the energy and creativity of the plants we love.



September = Member Sale!

If you've ever joined in one of our raffles, you know how fun they are—and what a great way they are to grow your collection for just a few dollars. But September takes things up a notch: we'll be holding a **Member Sale!** This is a special chance to

September Program

Kathy Stahl has kindly agreed to share details and photos of her trip to Central America at our September 16 BS/H Meeting.

In addition to Kathy's interest and love of bromeliads, she is also a bird enthusiast, so there will be many bird photos from group tours in Belize, Trinidad, Costa Rica, Panama with a few bromeliad pictures taken between bird sightings. In this presentation the birds are identified, but YOU, the experts in our group, can have fun identifying the plants.

See you all then.

Member's Plant Sale Sept. 16

Bring your plants with two tags—one with your price and plant name and the other with the price and your sales number.

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buy something unique directly from a fellow grower in Houston. Not only do you get a cool plant, but you also get the chance to ask the seller how they've grown it so well. Think of it as buying both the plant *and the insider knowledge*.



Don't Forget Zoom

We know not everyone can make it to the evening meetings, so remember that Zoom is always an option. Invite your friends and future members — even if they can't come in person, they can still join the community online. I recently spoke with a bromeliad lover who has *hundreds of plants but hasn't joined because she couldn't attend at night. Let's spread the word that Zoom is here!*



November Meeting = Change of Venue

Heads-up: it looks like our November meeting may shift to the daytime on a weekend and a different location and it should be fun. Stay tuned for details—we'll make sure everyone gets the information early.



Fun + Games = Focus

A quick shout-out to Linda for her "Match the Genus" activity at our July meeting. That simple, fun game helped bring everyone back together after a few challenges getting set up and reminded us that learning can be playful too. More of this, please!



Website Updates

Have you checked out the society website lately? It's finally getting some love again—missing info is coming back online, and the **Common Genera** pages are live again. We're also working on adding photos from our shows. Take a look when you have a chance; it's a great way to relive the highlights and get inspired by what our members have grown.



In short: The rest of the year is all about **fresh looks, fresh plants, and fresh energy**. We've got a September **luncheon** and an October **garden tour** coming up, followed by **Dennis Cathcart** with another of his famous presentations (and Tropicflora plants in tow!). And of course, we'll wrap up the year with the **December holiday party and auction**. There's a lot going on and plenty of fun to be had—so whether you're joining in person or online, we hope you'll be part of it.



T. ionantha 'Druid'



Druid Wreath

Latin for Bromophiles (those who love broms)

Aechmea recurvata (curved backwards)

Aechmea triangularis (with three angles)

Aechmea caudata (with a tail)

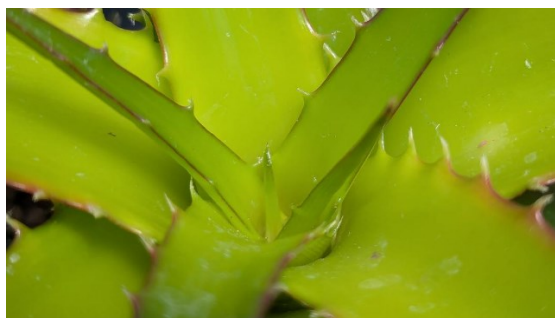
Aechmea candida (shining white)

Aechmea augustifolius (narrow leaves)

Acanthostachys strobilacea
(cone-shaped)



***Cryptanthus* 'Ann Collings'**
Linda Whipkey



***Orthophytum* 'Nova'**
David Whipkey



***Cryptanthus* 'Circuit Breaker'**
2025 Bromeliad Show
Mike O'Neal

Volunteer opportunity
See page 4



No raffle at the September
meeting because of the
member's sale



***Hohenbergia* collection**
David Whipkey

Reminders



We are going to be at Mercer Arboretum on October 18 together with the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society for their state conference.

We will have a booth set up with information about our society and some plants on display. I am asking for volunteers now to sign up for shift work. It promises to be a well-attended event. Come out and support your Society.

Shifts go from:

9 am - - 10:30

10:30 - - noon

Noon - - 1:30

1:30 - 3:00 pm

Bring a **Dyckia** or two to show the diversity of our plants. Be prepared to take applications of those interested in our society. Also, be prepared for discussing the benefits of the society: plant raffles, free seedlings, Christmas party with auction, garden tours, luncheons, ABC's and a chance to meet new and interesting people.

Send me your name:

lindawhipkey@gmail.com or call

281-433-4825 by Oct. 11

After your shift, take some time to stroll the lovely gardens at Mercer Botanical or see what the Cactus Society is up to.

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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

For those of you who want to join the monthly meeting on zoom, this is the link and passcodes:

Monthly Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85266221495?pwd=KM2UwUzh4LXcmRasBLizYlQWkYuauc.1>

Meeting ID 852 6622 1495

Passcode is 625577

Hospitality is by A-M for September.

Deadline for bulletin articles and pictures for October is Sept. 26. Send me those pictures of your broms (they don't have to be blooming). Send a jpeg to me. I need your pictures for the bulletin.

lindawhipkey@gmail.com

Cultural Tips

For our
tropicals

Well, it is finally here. Meteorological fall began on September 1, 2025. The temperatures should start trending lower. I wish I could say the same for tropical storms. Hurricane season peaks around September 10.

2025			
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

When there is a storm in the Gulf of Mexico, you have more important tasks than worrying about your plants. Now is the time to think about battening down your garden hatches. Take a few minutes and look around your property. Do you see any objects that a strong wind might turn into a window-breaking missile? If so, you might want to move them to a different location now. A few such objects that pop into my mind are hanging baskets and containers that have been placed on a banister or wall. Plants on the ground probably will be OK unless they are in an area that floods.



Keep up with your usual gardening tasks this month. I don't think my plants like the hot summer temperatures any more than I do. I have noticed that they tend to perk up and have a growth spurt as the temperature drops in the fall. You might want to give your plants a little extra fast acting fertilizer this month. I would not recommend using the slow release type this late in the year. I don't want them rapidly growing when the cold fronts blow in.

Speaking of cold fronts brought to mind an old real estate saying: "When looking for a house, the three most important things to consider are location, location, and location." I would like to take a gardening perspective on that idea. Think about 3 different gardeners: Able who lives in Santa Fe, Baker who lives in Uptown Houston, and Charlie who lives near Hockley. What effect does their location have on their plants?

The first thing that comes to my mind is temperatures during the winter.



As a general rule, the further south you go, the warmer the temperatures will be. Charlie is north of Baker, and Baker is north of Able. So Charlie's garden should be colder than the others, and Able's garden should be the warmest. But let's go a bit further and factor in the urban heat island effect. Year round temperatures in urban locations tend to be higher than those in nearby rural settings, especially at night. All that asphalt and concrete soaks up heat during the day and releases it during the night. Santa Fe and Hockley are not exactly major metropolitan areas, but Houston is. The urban heat island effect will come into play for Uptown Houston. Baker's garden will probably be almost as warm as Able's in the winter, but it will probably hotter in the summer.

Next, let's consider tropical storms. Warm water is the fuel for tropical storms. Once they come ashore they lose that energy source. Able is about 20 miles inland, Baker is about 50 miles inland, while Charlie is lives about 85 miles inland. In general, the closer you are to the storm's point of landfall, the stronger the storm will be. None of the gardens will probably have to worry about storm surge, but it is not looking good for Able. His garden will probably get stronger winds and more rain.

(Cultural Tips continued)

(continued)

Now let's look at how a large body of water influences our three gardeners. Specifically, how much does the Gulf of Mexico influence temperatures in the Houston area?



It turns out quite a bit. Large bodies of water tend to moderate the temperatures of the land areas around them. Temperatures on the land near the water are warmed by the water during the winter and cooled by it during the summer. Mostly it's good news for Able, not so much so for Charlie. During the winter Charlie in Hockley might get a hard freeze, while Baker in Uptown Houston gets some frost or a light freeze, and Able in Santa Fe might see temperatures in the high 30s.

My advice is to take gardening advice with a grain of salt. The Houston area is large. Harris County alone has an area of about 1800 square miles. What works for someone who lives near the Medical Center, might not work for someone who lives near Magnolia. Remember it all depends on location, location, location.



Next month I am going to talk about the tools that I keep in my Bromeliad toolbox. If you have a special tool that you can't live without, send a short email to the Bulletin editor explaining what the tool is and why you like it. If possible include a photograph of the tool.

Hope to see you at the September meeting.

Editor's Note:

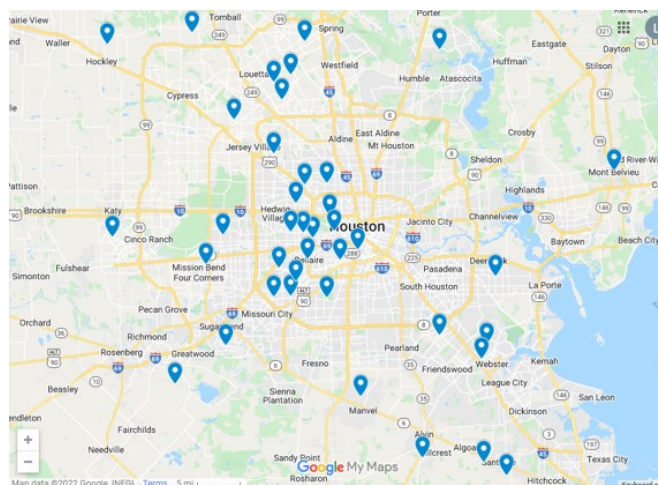
Send jpeg files of gardening tools to:

lindawhipkey@ymail.com

Give the name and what you use it for.

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Have you ever wondered where we all live in the Houston area? Well, this is the result of a survey of zip codes from a couple of years ago. The markers represent members. Most of us are centered in the southwest corner of the 610 Loop.



Plants That Repel Wasps

From Gardening Know-How

By Tyler Schuster

Hey there, yard warriors! If you've been dodging wasps like I have lately, especially with early fall creeping in, you know they can turn a chill afternoon into a full-on sting-fest.

That's why plants that repel wasps caught my eye. Wasps get cranky in late summer and early fall, guarding their nests like tiny sentinels and zooming after anything sweet. So keep your outside areas clean and free from food debris, especially sweet drinks.

Fragrant plants like mint or that lemony citronella hit wasps' senses wrong and throw off their ability to zero in on you or your food. I like to plant some spearmint by my patio table when the wasps start buzzing, and the wasp count drops dramatically, compared to before I planted it. The trick to using plants to repel wasps is interfering with their sense of smell. You've got to get hands-on, though. Rubbing crushed leaves on your skin or setting pots close to where you sit helps a ton, but it's not a force field that'll stop them cold.

[Spearmint](#) is that zesty herb with ruffled leaves, and its minty punch makes wasps turn around quick. They can't stand that menthol that hits them like a slap in the face. You can set a pot out by your back steps, and let it spill over the edge like a green waterfall, and it thrives with just a little water to keep it happy. Trim it with kitchen scissors to keep it full and bushy, avoiding the leggy mess it can turn into. I mash a few leaves with my fingers to slap on my arms before firing up the grill. I've even tossed some sprigs into my iced tea for a fresh kick.



[Citronella grass](#), with its lemony zing, is a wasp nemesis. This is thanks to oils, like *citronellal*, that throw off their tracking like

a bad GPS signal. Stick some in a sunny bed, and it will shoot up too quickly, swaying with those feathery tops that catch the breeze.

It likes rich organic soil and a good soak, but it's pretty care-free once it settles, only needing a trim if it gets too wild.

[Marigolds](#), with their bold orange blooms, pack a punch with resins that wasps hate. These *thiophenes* act like a [natural insect spray](#), and you can line garden edges with them to keep the perimeter safe. They soak up full sun and average soil, bursting with color from June to October. Pinch off dead heads with your nails to keep them perky.



[Growing lavender](#) gives you the benefit of its flowery oils for wasp control. One of the oils, *linalool*, send wasps packing. Plant some in raised beds or by your porch, where it loves sun and is a plant for sandy soil. It flowers from July onward with a scent that fills the air.

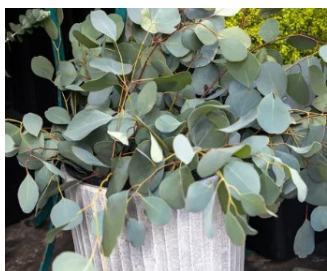
It barely needs water once it's happy, and I'd give it a haircut with hedge trimmers after blooms fade to keep it neat. A pot by the door works great, and I've rubbed the flowers on my neck for a light shield during picnics.

[Eucalyptus](#) contains a sharp oil called *eucalyptol* that acts as a wasp deterrent. It soaks up sun and needs [well-drained soil](#) that you can amend with sand.

Eucalyptus will slowly grow up to 6-8 feet. It only needs a drink now and then and its silvery leaves can add a cool flair to your landscape. After planting eucalyptus, wasps now steer clear of my favorite coffee spot in my garden. It's a bit of a project, but I enjoy the challenge. Eucalyptus trees are do best outdoors in USDA zones 8-11.

I've learned these plants need the right love to do their job. Most want sun to soak up, but mints like a shady nook. ➡

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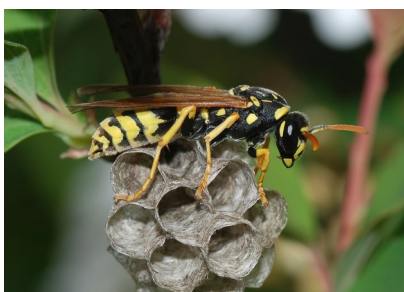


All crave good drainage to avoid root rot. Toss some bark mulch down to hold moisture in the soil.

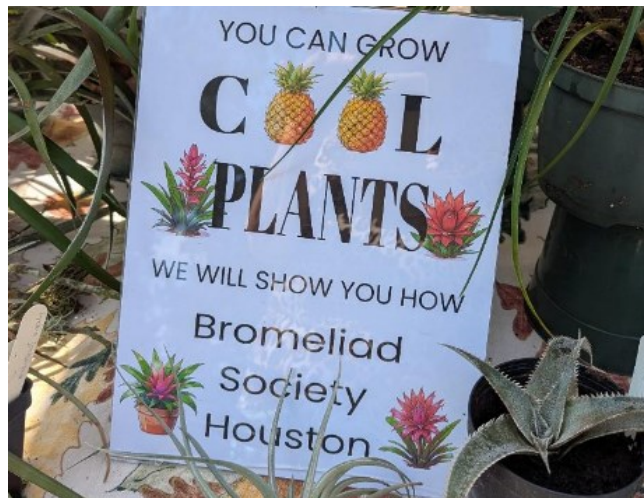
Pluck weeds by hand or with a trowel to keep roots comfy, which is a chore I do while listening to the radio. After flowers fade, you can snip with some shears to pump out more scent.

These plants won't wipe out wasps entirely, but they've made my yard a safer hangout this fall. I've had fun messing with lavender rubs and eucalyptus pots, and my barbecues feel less like a dodgeball game with the kids.

Try a couple of these plants that repel wasps next year – maybe while sipping a cold drink – and trade some cuttings with a friend to keep the party sting-free!



Spring Branch Farmer's Market August 9



Thanks to all who donated plants and showed up for the Market.

Next market to be determined.

Do you have a market close to you?
Let Scherie know.

281-772-7556

SEPTEMBER BROMS UNIQUELY BROMELIAD



Neoregelia concentrica var. *prosperinae*
Margo Racca



Ananas 'Golden Rocket'
Margo Racca



Dyckia estevesii
David Whipkey



Hohenbergia collection
David Whipkey

East London Bromeliad Society—South Africa

From their July newsletter

Not just East London, UK but they also have international members from as far afield as Africa, Italy, the USA and Australia. This group is from South Africa.

Plant of the Month: Artistic creations in South Africa
In celebration of their 16th anniversary, an artistic competition.



Lynn Friend with a flamingo and Tillandsia gardneri.



Lyn Odendaal with a beautiful cup and saucer display.



Brenda Wegner with a magazine rack filled with Tillandsia divaricata and Aechmea blanchetiana flowers.



1st Maureen Eybers with a spectacular arrangement of broms, plants and flowers.

BS/H:

Can we do better? How about a competition for bragging rights? I'll send them our pictures. 10 members participated in Africa. Can we beat that?

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Debbie O'Neal	9/16
John Schmidt	9/5
Sheila Skov	9/25
Phil Speer	9/12
Kathy Stahl	9/11
Noreen Tolman	9/12
David Whipkey	9/21
Jimmy Woolsey	9/16

August Program Summary

Dr. Sylvia Dee from Rice University presented an interesting look at climate change. She included the science, the effects on people and the earth and what we can do about it. Her descriptions were easy to understand and her analogies were spot on.

YOU CAN GROW

C  **L**

PLANTS

WE WILL SHOW YOU HOW

Bromeliad

Society

Houston



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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.tgcfnsoc.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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More News

The Next Quarterly Luncheon

It will be held on September 28,
2025. That's a Sunday.

Location:

Escalante's Tex Mex Restaurant
590 Meyerland Plaza, Houston

12:30 pm

Let me know if you can make it.
lindawhipkey@ymail.com

Last one of the year!

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August Raffle Information

Donors:

Cherie Lee
David Whipkey
Linda Whipkey
Mike O'Neal

Winners:

Vicky Gurka
Ruby Adams
Don Green
Patricia Buenaventura