

Bromeliad Society

The Show is this month!!! May 16-17

HOUSTON



Inc.

MAY 2026 Volume 59 Number 5



The President's View

By Michael O'Neal,
BSH President

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From behind-the-scenes greenhouse tours to auction excitement, my trip to this year's World Bromeliad Conference had a little bit of everything.

Another World Bromeliad Conference trip delivered again this year—great plants, great people, and more than a few memorable moments. I arrived a little early and squeezed in visits to a couple of botanical gardens, which made the trip even more worthwhile.

A highlight was a private tour of the Tropical Conservatory greenhouses at The Huntington Botanical Gardens, generously hosted by curator Dylan Hannon. The Huntington is a truly special place with magnificent collections throughout, and we're also in discussions with the curator of the Desert Gardens about a possible program later this year—stay tuned to see if we can make that happen.

The conference itself checked all the boxes. The speakers were excellent, and Gordon Stowe once again ran an outstanding Rare Plant Auction. It's worth recognizing just how much work goes into it—Gordon spent the better part of two full days preparing to make it run smoothly, along with help from Shirl, Aaron, Vickey and others. Fellow BSH mem-President's View (continued)

May Program

Shirl and Gordon will give a snapshot of Costa Rica and the plants found there.

Come join us.

1475 West Grey
West Grey Multi-Service Center.

7:00 pm
May 19, 2026

Zoom info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89412131955?pwd=KcnmZawPlxsZ6M7Cqyaazm4pEbiX4h.1>

Meeting ID: 894 1213 1955

Passcode: 194524

HOSPITALITY IS A - M



ber Scott Sandel joined as co-auctioneer, helping keep things lively and fun, and the effort paid off in a big way: over **\$7,000 raised** for the charity fund.



Now, let's talk plants... because that's why we're all really there, right? I hit a personal milestone by winning my *first-ever* WBC auction plant—without blowing the budget! I even held out for a full hour before buying anything (yes, that counts as restraint). Once I got started, I tried to stay selective—and mostly succeeded. Some plants are on their way from Bird Rock Tropicals, while others made the journey home in my suitcase. I picked up a few for family who couldn't attend and finally snagged a couple that have been on my "watch list" for a while. All in all—a successful (and controlled!) plant haul.

The event was hosted by the Saddleback Bromeliad Society, and they absolutely delivered. Their artistic entries—from the show to the auction to the table centerpieces—were creative, bold, and genuinely inspiring. I'll be sharing highlights at an upcoming meeting for those who couldn't make it. And I'm proud to say we had about a dozen members there representing us well!

➔ **Looking Ahead...**

Oh—and if you haven't heard, the next World Bromeliad Conference is headed to Thailand in 2028. I had a fun conversation with well-known Hawaiian grower David Fell, who described the venue as what you'd get if a botanic garden and Las Vegas had a baby. That certainly paints an interesting picture! ☐



As I write this, the ABCs are just around the corner, and I'm really looking forward to them. Mitch's mountings are on another level compared to anything I've done, and I'm eager to learn from his techniques and apply some of those ideas to a show entry. ☐



Show Time Is Coming!

Have you heard the theme? You should have—I mentioned it last month!
"Bromeliads: Nature's Sculpture"

It's a great theme with lots of room for creativity. What's your sculpture going to be?



Behind the Scenes...

We're putting the finishing touches on a new website landing page designed to connect with visitors from the show and make it easy for them to learn more—or even join on the spot. We're also working on online payments for memberships and renewals...

Which means... *no more excuses for late dues!* ☐



It Takes a Team

A lot of work is already underway for the show, and I want to thank our co-chairs and volunteers for everything they've done so far. As for me, I'm planning to try a new entry or two—and I'll likely be clerking for the first time. I'm looking forward to learning a lot there.

With everything ahead, it's time to get ready for a busy and exciting stretch.

May your plants grow strong and your blooms be frequent and spectacular. ☐☐

See you soon,
Mike

BS/H

Coming Events

**ABC's at Mercer Botanic
Garden
10-2 pm**

May 2

**Annual Show and Sale
(Judson- Robinson) 1-5
and 9-2pm**

May 16-17

**May General Meeting Cos-
ta Rica 7 pm**

May 19

**Quarterly Luncheon 1 pm at
Hickory Hollow**

June 7

**June General Meeting 7
pm**

June 16 Panel Discussion

**RSVP with Allyn Pearlman for the After Show party at
Los Tios 5192 buffalo speedway (west university) before May 12**

Reminders

XX

Updating Your Contact Info

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

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

ATTENTION MEMBERS!!

MARK YOUR CALLENDARS FOR THE 2ND QUARTERLY DUTCH LUNCHEON

Where?

Hickory Hollow BBQ
8038 Fallbrook Dr
Houston, TX 77064 (close to Sam Houston Race Park)

When?

Sunday, June 7, 2026 at 1:00 pm

Why?

Why Not? We love to socialize with fellow members & We love great Food!!!

See you there.

Call Shirl to RSVP





Aechmea recurvata x *Aechmea orlandiana*

Whipkey

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Neoglaziovia concolor
Whipkey



Neoregelia 'Fireball' x *Neoregelia 'Royal Burgundy'*

Whipkey

Getting Ready for the BS/H Show

What should I be doing to prepare for the Show?

If you have questions, speak to the 2026 Show Co- Chairs (Don Green, Vickey Gurka, Ruby Adams) , a local BSI judge, or a person who has previously entered plants into a show. Read your Schedule for rules.

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

GROOMING PLANTS FOR SHOW - 2026

By Rick Richtmyer and Scherie Townes

The Bromeliad Society Houston is hosting this years annual show and sale on March 16 – 17 at the Judsen Robinson Community Center, 2020 Herman Drive in Houston and I know you are looking forward to visiting with our friends from all over Texas and Louisiana. Prior to the show we will be selecting and grooming plants for exhibiting in the show. Please re-read your show schedule to make sure you enter your plants according to the proper divisions and classes and check the plant sources on the BSI.org and FCBS.com websites for the proper identification and spelling of your entries. This will speed up the classification process immensely.

Our topic for this month Cultural Tips article is “Grooming Plants for Show” which hopefully will aid in your show plant selection and grooming efforts. Much of the article was created by our past Cultural Tips contributor, Odean Head, who as we all know always entered exceptional quality plants in our shows. The majority of this article was previously published in the March 2013 and September 2023 BS/H Bulletin.

SELECTING PLANTS

Sometimes we have a problem getting started in our selection process because we are looking for a plant that is ready to be on the head table. I usually have to make several trips through my collection before I get very many plants to consider. I can move on faster with this process when I decide to defer making the final evaluations and selections until after the grooming has been attempted.

CLEANING PLANTS

This one step in the preparation of a plant for exhibit can make the difference between a blue ribbon and red ribbon entry. A thoroughly clean plant, pot and top dressing will immediately catch the judges’ eyes and make them feel that the entrant is proud of the plant and takes great care of it. If washing the plant with water from a hose doesn’t remove all the debris from a plant, use a selection of tweezers, artist brushes, clean water, sharp scissors, and Q-tips to loosen and remove leaves, insects, spider webs, dirt and other debris. Carefully remove any badly damaged lower leaves, check for any indication of scale. If judges suspect live scale on a plant, it will be removed from the show. While cleaning leaves, especially if coated with salts from hard water, try not to rub hard enough to remove scurf, which looks like a furry covering or scale like plates on the outside of a leaf. Scurf provides sun protection and directs water transfer to the plant and it will not grow back and judges will penalize for the missing scurf. Remember, artificial leaf shine or coloring is not allowed.

REPOTTING

It is usually easier to repot a plant than to clean the pot. This is also a good time to select a pot size that is in proper proportion to the plant. A larger pot will also make it easier to center the plant and cover any exposed caudex caused by leaf removal. Also be aware of what constitutes a standard pot A pretty pot will probably be classified as decorative and be placed in the Artistic, Decorative Container Division under a different set of judging rules (If you have some pretty or unusual pots, you should consider entering this division). Set the plant down and look at its conformation both from the top and from the side. Straighten the plant if needed and firm the soil around it so that it will stay straight. Be sure the mix on top is neat. Some use a special top dressing.

TRIMMING LEAVES

Leaf damage is a common cultural problem in growing bromeliads. Judges can also usually see where you have trimmed. If you have done a good trimming job they may not take off any points at all unless too many trims were necessary. Before you start cutting try to visualize what effect the cut will have on the plants appearance. If you have to cut a leaf tip back too far it could change the overall shape of the leaf as well as the Cultural Tips (continued)

plants conformation. Normally you should trim a leaf tip to its natural shape but how should you treat a finger-nail tip? Analyze the damage and the effect of the trim before you act. You may want to only trim the brown, changing its shape rather than take off the color. You may decide not to trim it at all if it will do more harm than good. In those cases the judges can usually see your dilemma and be lenient if there is little else wrong with the plant. Some trimming of leaf edges close to the base can also be done where there are no spines but try to keep a smooth leaf edge.

FINAL EVALUATION FOR SHOW ENTRY

Look at the overall appearance of the plant. Does it appear healthy and well grown? Does its foliage have the good sheen or scurf appropriate for the plant? Are the colors rich and the markings clear? How about its symmetry, is it appropriate? Is the size close to maturity? Check the leaf damage. Is it too severe? Does it need more grooming?

CAUTION- Do not be over critical. Fix what you can but expect to be short in one or more of these areas since there are few, if any, perfect plants.

TRANSPORTING PLANTS

Getting all your plants groomed for show can be frustrating enough without any trauma on the way to the show. Take some extra time in packing your plants to make sure they do not damage each other or topple over. Sun coming through a car window will burn the leaves on a plant before you are aware of it, so be sure your plants are protected by some sort of covering such as a sheet or newspapers. Heat is also a danger so do not leave your entries in a hot car for any length of time. You would be smart to take some of your cleaning tools and maybe some extra mix or top dressing with you for a last minute check just in case you have a little mishap on the way.

Don't forget to attend the Bromeliad Show on May 16-17, See the areas of volunteering below. You can help out with just a couple hours of your time.

Participate, Participate, Participate!

AREAS of VOLUNTEERING

There are many ways to volunteer that would not tie you up for a long period. Consider:

CLASSIFICATION ASSISTANT (FRIDAY)
HOSPITALITY WORKERS (FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY)
HOSPITALITY DONORS (FRIDAY AND SATURDAY)
PLACEMENT RUNNER (FRIDAY)
SECURITY (SHOW DAYS)
JUDGES CLERKS (SATURDAY)
RECORDS CLERKS (SATURDAY)
AWARDS PLACEMENT (SATURDAY)

SEE OR CALL CHAIRS FOR VOLUNTEERING: VICKEY GURKA, DON GREEN, RUBY ADAMS OR, JUST SHOW UP ON FRIDAY. WE'LL PUT YOU TO WORK!

The passing of Audrey van Wright

Audrey was a member of our society for many years. She volunteered and helped out whenever she could. She passed at the end of April, 2026

Her service will be on Friday, May 8th at 10:00AM at Jerusalem Baptist Church, 2201 Tuam, Houston, 77004.

Rest in Peace, Audrey.



CULTURAL TIPS MAY 2026

SCHERIE TOWNES and RICK RICHTMYER

I cannot believe that it is already May and I have not done the remainder of the winter tasks to begin the growing year. By now we should have finished weeding the pots, removing dead leaves and winter fatalities caused by lack of heat, lack of water, air circulation and neglect. We have also inherited an additional greenhouse to maintain along with new plants that each are not our normal fare. Scherie keeps complaining about acquiring Dyckias! Our responsibilities of caring for the plants have changed due to separated greenhouses.

As we are transitioning plants to the acclimation of the rising temperatures and exposure to greater sun intensity and reduction of rain for the beginning summer months we should consider individual needs of our stressed plants. We have been searching for small tips that will aid you in these areas. If your plants are showing stress, you might begin your solution of the situation by researching the specific environment your plants were living in before they were collected from nature. Then examine your current environment and change what you can to more closely reflect the natural environment of your plants. Questions to ask that may help would be did your plant grow epiphytically, as a terrestrial, in direct sun, in partial shade or full shade? If they were terrestrial what was soil makeup? Did they have a daily shower, a weekly shower, infrequent rain, or desert like moisture? These pieces of information will help you with your frequency of watering, the location of the pot for correct sunlight, potting media components or should they thrive on being mounted without soil.

For plants that are mounted a common problem is how often to fertilize these plants. They do not have the luxury of procuring microelements from the potting mix, decaying insects or animal droppings so we must provide fertilizer. Two simple methods are available. The first is to keep a ½ strength spray bottle of fertilizer ready to spray on the mounted plants weekly. A second method is to place a water soluble pellet fertilizer, such as Osmocote, in a small porous bag, much like a tea bag that ties shut. These are commonly found in jewelry section of a store, and they will release a small amount of fertilizer each time you water.

After you acquire information about the natural environment of your ailing plant some solutions you can control are listed below:

ELEVATION – Face it we are about at sea level and cannot raise a mountain in your backyard. Plants that grow in high elevations will suffer for this deficit. These plants will not fair well in Houston.

WIND – All bromeliads need good circulation. Place plants that are sensitive to needing greater circulation should be placed nearer the fans in your greenhouse. This might be a good solution to prevent stem or root rot.

WATER – This is quite controllable as you can place plants with the same water needs together and keep to a calendar timed watering system for each group of special water requirements. Water quality is a more difficult need for some plants. Water testing will give you more information about what you need to do if your water is heavy in minerals. If you discover your water contains harmful elements such as copper and arsenic commonly found in well water or some municipal water you may want to consider a reverse osmosis system.

LIGHT – Again, you are totally in charge of how many hours of light and the light intensity that hits your plants. There are several different types of shade cloth that let different amounts of light to reach your plants. The most common types allow 75% or 50% of the sun rays to reach your plants.

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5/15
5/18
5/13

BROMELIAD SOCIETY/HOUSTON, INC.

52ND ANNUAL STANDARD
BROMELIAD SHOW & SALE
SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026
9 A.M. - 5 P.M.

(SHOW HOURS 2-5 P.M.)

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026
11 A.M. - 4 P.M.
JUDSON ROBINSON CENTER
2020 HERMANN DRIVE



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

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.



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

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