



The President's View

By Michael O'Neal,
BSH President

moneal37@gmail.com

May has been a busy month for the society, and it's great to see so much activity packed into such a short time. From the ABCs to our show and auction, there has been a lot happening—and a lot of people contributing behind the scenes to make it all work.

ABCs: Learning, Exploring, and a Few Surprises

The ABCs at the beginning of May were a lot of fun! I'll admit I was a little disappointed in the turnout because those who attended had a really enjoyable experience. If there was a reason you chose not to attend—or something we could improve—I'd genuinely love to hear your thoughts. We want these events to be worthwhile and appealing to as many members as possible.

The tour of Mercer Botanic Gardens was especially interesting. We learned some things about the gardens that I never knew... and perhaps a few things about visitors that I may not have wanted to know. Visitors can certainly be thoughtless at times, but I'm proud to say our group represented the society well and were thoughtful guests throughout the visit. President's view continued

President's view continued

June Program: see last page.

Included in this issue are some plants from the 2026 show Head Table.

More Head Table pictures will be included in the July issue.

June meeting:

Zoom info:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89412131955?pwd=KcnmZawPlxsZ6M7Cgvaazm4pEbiX4h.1>

Meeting ID: 894 1213 1955


Passcode: 194524

HOSPITALITY IS N—Z

There will be a raffle.

The greenhouse tour was a lot of fun, giving us a look behind the scenes at Mercer's growing areas, methods, and some unique plants that aren't normally seen in the public gardens. Special thanks to Jacob Martin for taking the time to show us around, to Shirl for essentially hosting the event there, and of course to Mitch Fontenot for his excellent presentation on constructing his mounted creations.

Mitch has also put together a new bromeliad display area at Mercer that already looks great—and it's really just the beginning of what I think could become a very special feature over time. During our planning discussions, Mercer staff were kind enough to offer several potential locations for bromeliad displays. We decided to start with one area, learn what works well, and then consider whether additional displays make sense in the future. If any members are interested in helping us develop and maintain this growing partnership with Mercer, please let me know. I think we'll be working on a plan for that moving forward.

 I picked up a couple of practical lessons from the ABCs that will definitely improve my own mounting projects. One was the surprisingly elegant solution of putting a screw directly through the caudex of a stolon-mounted plant—simple, secure, and with very little downside. The other may have been even more basic: using two screw guns at the same time, one with a drill bit and one with a screwdriver bit. I have owned multiple screw guns for years and somehow never once considered doing this. What a time saver!

From Costa Rica to the World Conference

I'll be sharing some highlights and stories from the World Bromeliad Conference at our July meeting, so I hope many of you will attend.



Before then, we have a unique June program featuring four panelists with extensive knowledge of bromeliad pests and diseases. Whether you're dealing with scale, rot, or just want to learn how experienced growers approach problems, it should be an informative and practical discussion.

In the meantime, what a terrific presentation the Stowes gave on their trip to Costa Rica. The plants were beautiful, but honestly, the accommodations and meals looked pretty spectacular too. It certainly looked like an amazing experience and helped keep Costa Rica firmly on my travel wish list.

Great Raffle and Unsung Volunteers

We also had another great raffle at the meeting. If you're newer to the society, raffles are one of the best ways to pick up interesting plants at very reasonable prices while supporting the club at the same time.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Cherie and Frank for all the work they put into organizing and running it each month. Their efforts can sometimes go unnoticed because they make it look easy, but I truly appreciate everything they do to make it successful.

Show Season Success

A huge thank you to all of our show co-chairs and volunteers. The show went very well, and we'll soon have pictures on the website to prove it! Be sure to check this bulletin as well for photos of some of the winners and displays.

President's View Continued

While overall walk-in traffic was still lighter than we would like, we did gain a new member and had several visitors scan the QR codes from our new signs to learn more about the society. That's progress—and hopefully a foundation we can continue building on.

Adapting on the Fly

The auction dinner this year presented an interesting challenge when we were unable to secure a private room. Instead of fighting the situation, we adapted. We made some changes that allowed the auction to move faster and reduced the need for everyone to hear every detail of every item.

Feedback from several attendees was surprisingly positive, and we may explore incorporating some of those ideas into future auctions regardless of the venue.

Special thanks to Gordon for helping me adapt on the fly, and also to the Los Tios staff, who were very accommodating and worked hard to help us make the evening successful.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the heart of the summer growing season, I hope your plants are thriving, your shade cloths are secure, and your watering schedules are keeping up with the heat.

And if you have ideas for future ABCs events, volunteer opportunities, or ways we can make the society even better, please let me know. The best ideas often come from members who simply speak up.

May your plants grow well and your blooms be frequent and spectacular.

And if they grow especially well, perhaps your friends will become envious and join the society.

See you soon,

Mike

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@gmail.com

Don't forget to send me pictures of your plants. They don't have to be in bloom. For the July edition, get them into me by June 28.

ATTENTION MEMBERS!!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS 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



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Vresia flammea

C. Lee

Mulford B. Foster Best of Show - Horticulture



***Sincoregia burle-marxii*
Purple Form**

G. Stowe

Best of Division I Section A

Catopsis berteroniana

C. Lee

Best of Division II



SHOW PICTURES CONTINUED



***Aechmea* 'Bert'**

M. Fontenot

John Anderson Best Aechmea



***Dyckia* 'Medium Rare'**
(*dawsonii* x *marnier-lapostollei* 'Pink Spines')

M. O'Neal

Gary Gallick Best Terrestrial



***Billbergia* 'Pink Champagne'**

M. O'Neal

Best of Division IX



***Billbergia* 'Beadleman'**

M. O'Neal

Best of Division I

SHOW PICTURES CONTINUED



Tillandsia pucaraensis

J. Schmidt

Best of Division III Section A



Dyckia 'Dakota'

C. Nguyen

Best of Division IV Section A



Cryptanthus bahianus

M. Fontenot

Bob Whitman Best Cryptanthus Species

SHOW PICTURES CONTINUED



Tillandsia duratii

M. Fontenot

Best of Division VI



Tillandsia streptophylla

M. O'Neal

Best of Division VII Section A



Cryptanthus 'Living Colors'

F. Lee

Best of Division VII

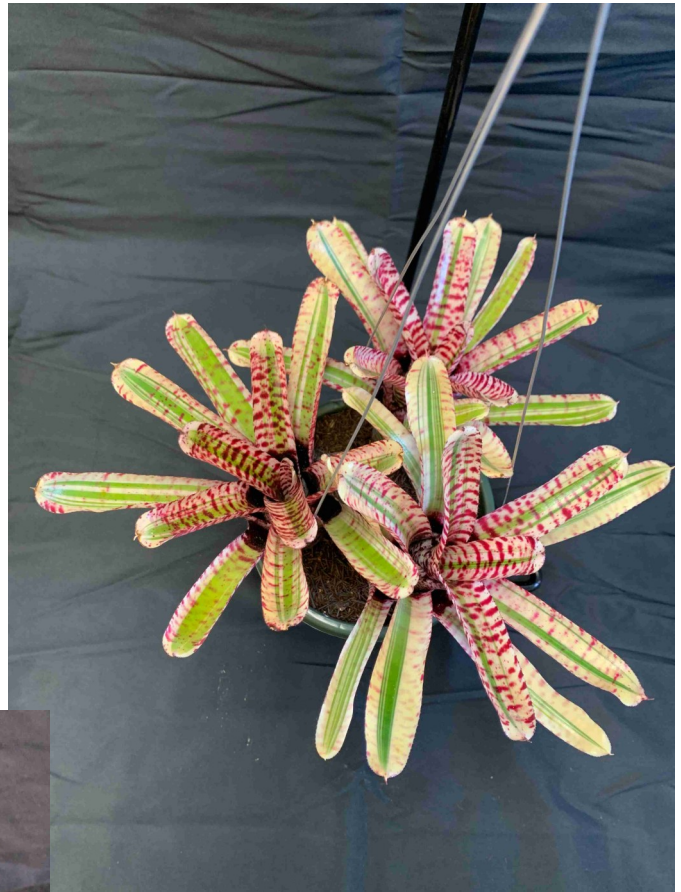
Warren Loose Best Cryptanthus Hybrid

SHOW PICTURES CONTINUED

***Neoregelia* 'Cantankerous'**

F. Lee

Odean Head Most Eye-Catching Neoregelia



Tillandsia harisii

R. Adams

Morris Henry Hobbs Best of Show - Artistic

GOOD GRIEF STILL SOME OF MY PLANTS ARE DYING

Some needs of a few of your plants might go against all that you naturally feel is good plant husbandry. There are more considerations to address about why some of your plants are not as happy as they can be. Further consideration of the elements your plant needs are tied to their native growing conditions. Let's examine some of these conditions.

Moisture Some plants grow in desert conditions that have high light levels and just a few inches to no rain during the year. These plants depend upon fog rolling in and moisture is picked up by the plant's trichomes catching that moisture. Still, this is a very small amount of moisture. In our environment we have heavy rain 9 to 10 months out of the year. If your plants thrive in a dry environment then our Houston rains will cause many growing problems. Simply protecting these plants from too much moisture might save those few plants. Move them into a greenhouse and place them on a do not water shelf to be watered very seldom. Examples are *Forzzaea warasii* and *Forzzaea leopoldo-horstii* both of which are easily killed by too much water. There is the opposite problem where the plant gets too little water when we conclude that a shower every two weeks is enough. Of course, the solutions is water on a regular basis whether it is from rain or the water hose. Keeping a plant diary recording when the plants receive water will make certain that you know when to add water when rain is too scarce.

Light and the direction that it comes from is also dependent upon the requirements of individual needs of a specific plant. A morning sun is gentler to your plants than a harsh afternoon sun. Keeping a diary of how many hours per day a plant receives light will give you an idea of whether it is getting the native requirements. This is another example of keeping a growing diary.

Fertilizer Sources and needs of fertilization are another huge factor to consider. Does the plant naturally grow in a soil rich in humus or does it grow in fast draining, humus poor soil? To provide the proper amount of natural fertilizer knowing the environment of you plant is once more very important. This topic is complex and will be discussed in a future article.

Temperature is the final big consideration for plants from different environments. Our temperatures in Houston, Texas have very large swings from the heat of August in the upper 90s to low 100s and the freezes of January and early February from 32 degrees to even in the teens for a few days. One can see a plant that lived in the desert in their native habitat being very at home in our summer temperatures but completely in trouble during our winter months. We must consider what we have to provide for the plants that are out of their comfort temperatures to provide adequate protection from the swing of temperatures.

We have our work cut out for us researching the needs of our variety of bromeliads. We need to provide protection from all of the variations of our environment that can harm or even kill our charges.

QUICK TIPS

◇ Tip 1

◇

If you use drift wood to mount your epiphytes make certain you know where the wood came from. Wood that has been floating in salt water can absorb and hold salt that can harm your plant when

the roots attach to the wood. Soaking the wood in fresh water, and changing the salt filled water several times can remove salt from the driftwood that would be harmful to your plants. Mitch Fontenot gave an excellent discussion about this topic at our recent ABC's. We mention this topic because not all members were able to attend the ABC's.

◇ Tip 2

Should new plants be isolated from your collection and for how long? Absolutely. You will not want to release them into your collection until you have checked for insects such as scale, mealy bugs, aphids and thrips which can hide for days. Also look for caterpillars, snails and slugs that show up quickly. There is also a risk of unhatched egg cases, mildew and sticky secretions that indicate aphids. Grasshoppers can make a meal of your bromeliad leaves in a very short time including the most inopportune time just before a show. Especially plants from Florida should be checked because they might carry the "evil weevil", *Metamasius callizona*, a very invasive Mexican bromeliad weevil, that will devastate an entire collection of tillandsias by boring holes through the plant stems causing rot. Control of these pests and diseases will be discussed at the June meeting.

◇ Tip 3

If you have been fighting weeds in your gardens, greenhouse paths, or around your pots a quick solution is to spray vinegar directly on the weeds. This will kill them and make them easier to remove. Do not spray anywhere near your bromeliads.

◇ Tip 4

The preferred fertilizer for most bromeliads is higher in potassium (K) with a lower level of nitrogen (N). For *Vriesea*, *Guzmania*, *Alcantarea*, *Cryptanthus*, *Dyckia* etc., a fertilizer with a more balanced Nitrogen (N) potassium (K) and phosphorus (P) is suitable. Fertilizers are to be applied sparingly. Some bromeliads such as *Neoregelias* and *Billbergias*, do not like any added fertilizers except as young pups before they develop their color.

Source: FNCBSG N.S.W. October 2019

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JUNE Birthdays

Sue John	6/4
Cherie Lee	6/1
Eddie Novak	6/24
Mike O'Neal	6/13
Sheila Ross	6/12
John Sarkisian	6/12
Gordon Stowe	6/17

MAY RAFFLE

Donors: Ruby Adams, The Whipkey's,
and The Lee's

Winners: Mike O'Neal
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Shirl Stowe
Don Green
Scherie Townes
Rick Richtmyer
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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



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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JUNE PROGRAM

Pests, Rot & Mystery Problems? Bring Your Questions!

For most bromeliad growers, it's not a matter of if you'll encounter pests, rot, fungus, scale, mealybugs, mites, or mysterious leaf damage—it's when.

At our June meeting, a panel of four experienced Bromeliad Society Houston growers will share practical advice for identifying problems, preventing damage, and helping your plants thrive. Drawing from years of hands-on experience, our panelists will discuss common bromeliad pests and diseases, treatment options, and preventative measures that can help keep your collection healthy and looking its best.

Best of all, you'll have an opportunity to ask questions and learn from real-world experiences during an interactive Q&A session. Whether you're dealing with a current problem or simply want to be prepared for future challenges, this program is packed with practical information that every bromeliad grower can use.

What You'll Learn

- How to identify common bromeliad pests and diseases
- Treatment options that actually work
- Ways to prevent problems before they start
- When to treat and when to monitor and wait
- Answers to your own bromeliad questions during the Q&A session

Meeting Date

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

Social Time: 6:30 PM

Meeting & Program: 7:00 PM

Location

Metropolitan Multi-Service Center
1475 West Gray Street
Houston, TX 77019