

Bromeliad Society



AUGUST 2026 Volume 59 Number 8



The President's

By Michael O'Neal,
BSH President

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One of the things I've been thinking about recently is that organizations, much like gardens, don't thrive by standing still. They grow, adapt, and occasionally try something new. That doesn't mean abandoning what has made them successful—it means building on that foundation while looking for opportunities to make an even greater impact.

Looking Ahead

At our July board meeting, much of our discussion centered around a simple question:



How can we continue fulfilling our mission while introducing more people to the wonderful world of bromeliads—and inviting them to become part of our society?

That question has led us to begin developing a Strategic Direction for the society—not a rigid long-term plan, but a way of helping guide our decisions over the next several years.



Looking Beyond This Year

As we've discussed different ideas, two themes have consistently risen to the top.
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August Program

If you were able to enjoy our ABC's presentation by Mitch Fontenot earlier this year, then you will be delighted to see and hear an expansion of that workshop at our August 18 meeting. If you did not attend the ABC's this meeting is a MUST!! Mitch will share creative ways to display bromeliads in your yard, design tips for outdoor spaces, and new ideas for showing off these plants anywhere.

August meeting: see page 18

Zoom info:

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

Meeting ID: 894 1213 1955

Passcode: 194524

HOSPITALITY IS N-Z
There will be a raffle.

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They're simple, but they've already begun shaping some of the conversations and decisions we've been having.

We're already beginning to put this thinking into practice:



Focus on the visitor experience.

Instead of simply telling people what we're doing, help them understand why they would want to attend, what they'll learn, and what they'll experience.



Go where plant enthusiasts already are.

Continue exploring opportunities to hold meetings, programs, sales, and outreach activities in places where people naturally gather because of their interest in plants.

As we consider future ideas, we can continue asking a few simple questions:



Are we helping people discover bromeliads?

Does this place BSH where plant enthusiasts already are?



Are we making it easier to engage with BSH?

- Does this reduce barriers to participation?
- Does this create meaningful opportunities for engagement?
- Does this make participation easier and more welcoming?



Working Together

Those ideas are already beginning to influence some of the opportunities we're exploring.

One exciting opportunity will be a joint plant sale with the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society this September. Many of us enjoy both bromeliads and succulents, and this partnership gives both clubs an opportunity to introduce members and visitors to plants they may never have considered growing before.

We're also exploring holding our Spring Sale at Jimbo's, with their assistance in advertising and promotion. We hope this partnership will bring our plants in front of a broader audience while making the sale even more successful.

Another exciting possibility is moving our Annual Show & Sale to Mercer Botanic Gardens. Many of you attended the ABCs there earlier this year and saw the beginning of the renewed relationship we're building with Mercer. We believe it gives us an opportunity to introduce our annual
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show to a larger and different audience—people who already have an interest in plants and gardens and may be discovering bromeliads for the first time.



Learning Together

Another area the board discussed is placing a renewed emphasis on education. We all enjoy collecting beautiful plants, but helping people grow them successfully is really at the heart of what a bromeliad society should do.

That means looking for more opportunities to share practical growing **knowledge and experiences**. It might be including culture information with seedlings we distribute, encouraging members to bring those plants back six months or a year later to compare how they've grown under different conditions, or simply providing more information about how featured plants are grown whenever we share them—whether that's at Show & Tell, in the bulletin, or on Facebook.

One of the things I've always valued most about our society is learning how different members succeed, or struggle, with the same plant. This is often where the best learning happens, and it serves as a continual reminder that there is rarely just one "right" way to grow a bromeliad.



As we place more emphasis on education, I'd encourage everyone to help.

The next time you share a plant in the bulletin, on Facebook, at Show & Tell, or even in the raffle or at a sale, consider including a little of its story. Where did it come from? How long have you grown it? Was it easy or challenging? A photo of what it looks like when mature or in bloom can be a great draw, too. Sometimes those few extra details are every bit as valuable as the picture itself, helping someone else grow that same plant successfully.



Your Ideas Matter

The board can make plans, but the society succeeds because of its members. If you have ideas for programs, outreach opportunities, partnerships, educational activities, or ways we can improve the member experience, I'd love to hear them. Some of our best ideas this year have come from conversations with members.

Coming Up This Month

Our August meeting features Mitch Fontenot presenting "**Creative Ways to Display Bromeliads.**" If you've ever admired a beautifully mounted bromeliad and wondered how it was created—or how to make your own displays even better—you will not want to miss it. Mitch brings creative ideas and practical techniques that can inspire all of us.

Thank you to everyone who volunteers, serves on committees, shares plants, mentors newer growers, and helps make this society what it is. Every contribution, large or small, helps ensure that Bromeliad Society Houston continues to grow, adapt, and thrive for years to come.

I appreciate every one of those contributions, and I hope you know they are never taken for granted.

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Until next time, keep those bromeliads watered, stay cool in the August heat, and maybe introduce a friend to the hobby. You never know who might discover their next passion.

See you at the meeting!

Mike

moneal37@gmail.com

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Note about Judson-Robinson

The Judson Robinson Recreation Center where we have held our annual show for longer than I've been a member of the BSH is closed indefinitely.

I haven't reached anyone for any official information, but I've heard from a friend that they had a pipe burst that filled the basement with nearly 5 feet of water and shorted out all of their mechanical and electrical equipment. And, just as bad, it apparently has water damage and is damp in many spots which are mildewing and growing mold on the walls and floors in this summer heat without any air conditioning. I'm guessing these will likely need to be remediated and replaced as well. It could be at least a month or two and maybe much longer before they open again. I just thought folks might like to know.

Mike

Reminders

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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@ymail.com. You have just received the updated directory dated 8/1

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

If you have a nandina from the March program earlier this year, send me a picture of how it's doing.

Raffle Plants Needed

If you should have a few duplicate plants or pups that you don't need, bring them for the Plant Raffle at the meeting. Include their names on the tags.

Raffle for July Brought in \$68

Donors

The Whipkey's
M. Fontenot
J. Schmidt
C. Lee
C. Nguyen

Winners

David Whipkey
Dru Anne Lundquist
Shirl Stowe
Vickey Gurka
Rick Richtmyer
Sheila Ross
Mike O'Neal
Sherie Townes
Don Green
Debbie Taylor

Bromeliad Glossary

ABC's - a workshop usually held in the spring for members; basics of bromeliad care are covered

Annual Elections – at the October Meeting an election takes place for officers and board members whose terms have expired. The newly elected take over in January.

Annual Show Party - a gathering of members held after the Annual Show in which there is an auction for rare plants.

Anther -the male part of the flower containing pollen

Bi-generic- the result of crossing two different genera

Bract - a modified leaf or scale, typically small, with a flower or flower cluster in its axil. Bracts are sometimes larger and more brightly colored than the true flower, as in poinsettia.

Bromeliad Annual Show and Sale =- an exhibit of bromeliads and their artistic arrangements based on a BSI standard show in which awards are given; plants are available for purchase.

Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BSR) - a listing of bromeliads with descriptions and pictures for identification of plants; found on the BSI web site (bsi.org)

BSI - Bromeliad Society International; parent society of Houston society; membership required for board members and officers.

Bulletin - the monthly newsletter for the society; it contains information about growing, pictures of blooming plants, a President's page and important announcements.

Christmas party - the gathering held in place of a monthly meeting in December; at a restaurant and with an auction for plants.

Common genera for the Houston Area =

Aechmea

Ananas

Billbergia

Cryptanthus

Dyckia

Guzmania

Neoregelia

Tillandsia

Vriesia

Conformation - When viewed from above, plant is symmetrical.

In profile, the typical shape of the species is present

Cultivar – a word derived from “cultivated variety;” a plant that is selected and reproduced by man.

Epiphyte - a plant that grows on another plant but is not parasitic, such as the nu)

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merous ferns, bromeliads, air plants, and orchids growing on tree trunks in tropical rainforests.

Family (In biological classification) - family is one of the eight major taxonomic ranks; it is classified between order and genus; bromeliads belong to the *Bromeliaceae* family of plants.

Floridanus - referring to Florida

Fulgens - referring to shining

Genus - Genus encompasses a group of species that are closely related; Example *Canus lupus* (wolf), *Canus familiaris* (dog)

Genera - plural of genus.

Grex - a group of species or hybrids; applied collectively to the off spring of a given cross from one seed pod.

Habitat - living location; bromeliad habitats in nature include tropical cloud forests, rainforests, semi-deciduous forests, savannahs, rocky, sunny areas and more.

Hospitality - attendees of meetings volunteer by bringing in snacks for the meeting. Last names are broken into two sections, A-M and N-Z; sections alternate months; the bulletin announces which section has the current month.

Hybrid - the offspring of two plants or animals of different species or varieties, such as a mule (a hybrid of a donkey and a horse).

Hydric (of an environment or habitat) - containing plenty of moisture; very wet: Compare with mesic and xeric.

Inflorescence - the complete flower head of a plant including stems, stalks, bracts, and flowers.

Mesic (of an environment or habitat) - containing a moderate amount of moisture. Compare with hydric and xeric.

Microclimate - a division of a climate area; Houston is in a humid, subtropical climate. There is climate variation within the Houston metropolitan area.

Photosynthesis- process by which green plants, convert light energy into chemical energy. During this process, these organisms use sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water to produce glucose (a form of sugar) and oxygen

Pistil—the female part of the flower

Pup - an asexually produced plant; pups can be separated from the mother plant when they are about one-third the mother's size; it usually has the same genetic traits as the mother plant.

Raffle – that part of the monthly meeting in which attendees buy chances to win plants

Rhizome - an underground stem

Saxicolous - living among rocks

Scale – an infection of tiny insects that forms on leaves and stems of bromeliads; parasites.

Show and Tell – portion of the bromeliad meeting in which individuals bring plants to exhibit or identify

Species - the level of scientific classification, which typically groups animals that are so similar that, when they breed, they produce fertile offspring.

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Sport - a plant that is morphologically different from the parent; Sports may differ by gene, foliage shape or color, flowers, fruit, or branch structure. The cause is thought to be a chance genetic mutation

Stoloniferous - plants with a creeping horizontal plant stem or runner that takes root at points along its length to form new plants.

Stoma - a tiny opening on a leaf for the exchange of gases

Streptophylla—"twisted leaf"

Terrestrial - a plant that grows on or in land supported by soil. Other types of plants are aquatic (living in water), epiphytic (living on trees) and lithophytic (living in or on rocks).

Trichomes - from the Greek *trikhōma* meaning "hair", are fine outgrowths or appendages on plants; on bromeliads they often give a silvery appearance.

Tropiflora - a vendor in Florida which provides plants for the show auction and the seedlings given away; many members purchase plants here.

World Bromeliad Conference - an international conference of bromeliad enthusiasts usually held in early summer in Florida; sponsored by Bromeliad Society International.

Xeric (of an environment or habitat) - containing little moisture; very dry. Compare with hydric and mesic

Zoom - each monthly meeting is transmitted to the internet via Zoom; members get the link in the monthly bulletin.

Cultural Tips

Rick Richtmyer
Scherie Townes

FEED ME, FEED ME!

Just as Seymour found out in the movie “Little Shop of Horrors,” his plant, Audrey, needs nutrients: food!!

Yes, bromeliads also look better, grow faster and have larger blooms given the proper amount of nutrients. The key word here is the proper amount; and how often. This is subject to the genus and species and current growing conditions, season of the year, age of the mix they are growing in. What I am saying is there is no one right answer, so experimenting is in order. Begin with a very dilute solution when using a liquid fertilizer, or a light amount of pellets if using a product such as **Osmocote**, **Nutricote**, **Magamp** or **Dynamite**.

The primary fertilizer constituents are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). In addition to the “big three” fertilizers should contain secondary trace elements including iron, calcium, magnesium, zinc, sulfur and manganese. These trace elements are essential for chlorophyll production and enzyme function.

Nitrogen is the most important as it is a major chemical in plant proteins and acts as a building block of plant cells. Paul Isley in “Tillandsia II” notes:

“most commercial fertilizer contains a high percentage of urea-based nitrogen however the nitrogen must be broken down by bacteria in soil before it becomes available to the plant. This is fine for potted plants but not for epiphytes that have no soil bound roots. Ammoniacal or nitrate nitrogen is immediately usable, but many fertilizers have little in their mix.”

Nitrogen helps in chlorophyll formation and makes healthy green leaves.

Phosphorous hastens plant maturity, promotes

cell division, stimulates the formation of a healthy root system as well as luxuriate flowering and plays an important part in other plant processes.

Potassium (potash) is essential for photosynthesis, strengthens plant stems, aids in disease resistance and winter hardiness.

Do not overfeed your bromeliads. Follow directions on the label. Remember when foliar feeding, begin by using a very dilute solution, especially if you are feeding weekly. Rainforest Flora sells a highly recommended fertilizer “Epiphytes Delight” which has a fertilizer ratio of 2:1:3 and contains water-soluble nitrogen as well as necessary trace elements. What do the numbers such as 2:1:3 mean? It indicates that the fertilizer has 2 parts nitrogen to 1 part phosphorus and 3 parts potassium.

Epiphytes of the Tillandsioideae group, (*Tillandsia*, *Vriesea*, *Guzmania* and *Alcantara*) that are growing without soil, such as those mounted on wood or cork and especially those growing in an enclosed greenhouse that do not have access to rainwater, need to be fed because their roots and leaves have no access to any source of nutrients.

Bromeliads should be fertilized on a constant schedule which is controlled by: amount of sunlight, temperature, rainfall or watering. Many growers reduce feeding in low light periods and during colder temperature in the winter months. **Osmocote**-14-14-14, **Magamp** 7-40-6, **Dynamite** 18-6-8, and **Nutricote** 18-6-8 are slow-release pellets which can be added to the top of the potting mix and watered in.

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Additional Cultural Tips:

1. Water your plants before giving them their nutrients. To prevent sunburn on the plant leaves water when it is cloudy, early in the morning or late in the afternoon when the sun is setting.
2. Never place fertilizer pellets in the cup (tank).
3. Your indoor potting mix should be regularly improved with leaf mold, decaying plants, earthworm castings and animal droppings. Indoors the plants will eventually use up the nutrients in the pot. Take the time to repot using fresh potting mix or add some type of fertilizer.
4. As you can see, fertilizing is an inexact science which should be started slowly and increased slowly until you are satisfied with the results.

References:

1. Jerry Baker: "Great Green Book of Garden Secrets": 2000
2. Cheryl Smith, Editor: "The Ortho Home Gardener's Problem Solver": 1993
3. John Kriegel: "Houston Garden Book"; 1991
4. Bromeliad Society of Queensland: "Starting With Bromeliads"; 2006
5. Paul T. Isley III: "Tillandsia II" ; 2009
6. Bromeliad Society Houston: Cultural Tips
7. Bromeliad Society International: "Bromeliad Culture Brochure"

Opportunity

Hello BSH Members,

Do you remember the first time someone stopped to admire one of your bromeliads and

asked, "What is that?" Chances are, you've had that conversation more than once. Those simple conversations often become someone's first introduction to the fascinating world of bromeliads. Now imagine sharing that same excitement with an entire room of gardeners.

The Idylwood Garden Club has invited BSH to present a program to their members, and I think this is a wonderful opportunity to introduce more gardeners to the amazing diversity of bromeliads. They've told us they're especially interested in exploring the incredible diversity of bromeliads and learning practical tips for growing them successfully outdoors and in containers here in Houston.

Here's what you'll get from the experience:

- Introduce a new audience to the amazing world of bromeliads.
- Share your favorite plants, growing experiences, and practical tips.
- Build confidence as a presenter in a relaxed, welcoming environment.
- Represent BSH while helping connect more people with bromeliads.
- Receive a \$100 honorarium.

The garden club meets on Saturday mornings in members' homes in the Idylwood neighborhood near I-45 South and Wayside Drive. Their meetings typically have 15–20 attendees and are described as casual and friendly. The remaining available dates are:

- **Saturday, October 3, 2026**
- **Saturday, April 3, 2027**

Whether you've presented many times or have been thinking about giving your first presentation, I'd encourage you to consider this opportunity. You don't have to do it alone—we can work together on ideas, topics, and presentation planning.

If you're interested or would like to learn more before deciding, please email me (continued)

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at moneal37@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to help connect more people with bromeliads!

Best,

Michael

Editor's Note:

Your presentation does not have to include a PowerPoint presentation. If, however, you would like to have one, resources are available to help you.

A successful presentation is made by just going through **Tell Me More** from our web page.

We have a new member:

Melisa Rutherford

Ladyrebel35@yahoo.com

Remember to say Hello.



September 25-26 FALL SALE

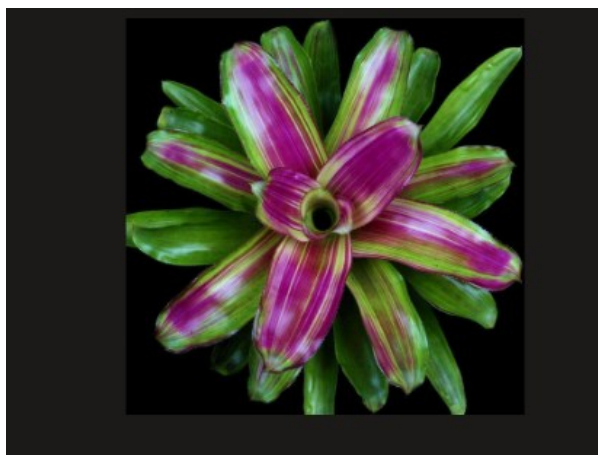
Together with the Fall Sale of the
Cactus and Succulent Society

West Grey Multi-Service Center
In the Gym
1475 West Grey

Setup on Thursday evening Sept 24 after 5pm

Sale is Friday, 9-5 and Saturday 9-3.

Sept. 25 and 26



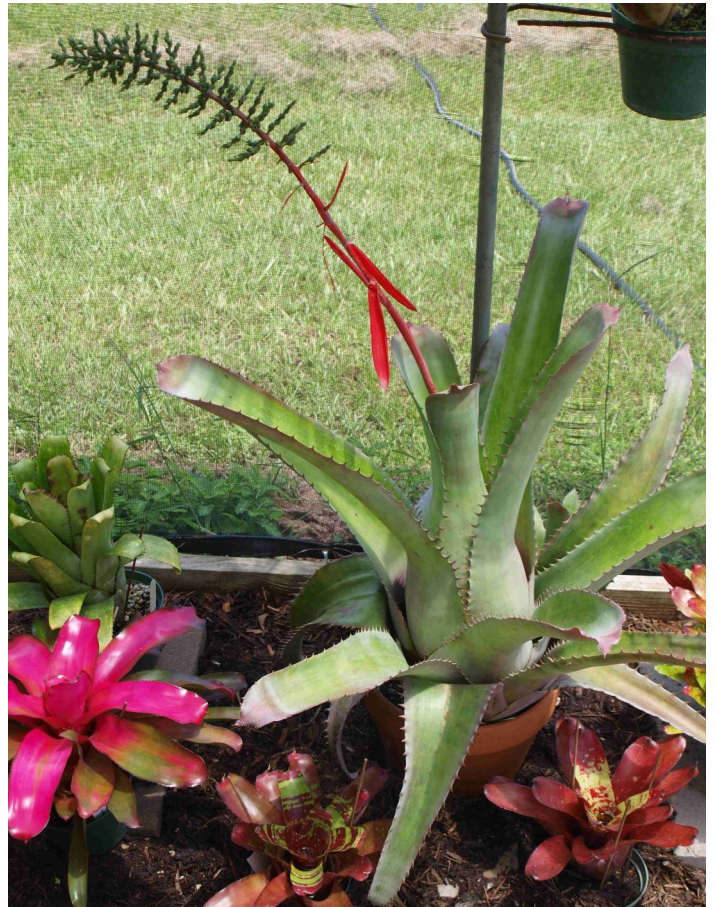
August Seedling is Neoregelia 'Lila Candystripe'

A Grant Groves hybrid of unreported parentage. A medium variety, mature at about 16 inches across in an open rosette shape. Leaves are about 2.25 inches wide and are colored the same as a *Neo. 'Lila'*, but instead of the solid lilac, the color is in stripes up the leaves. A nice novelty plant.

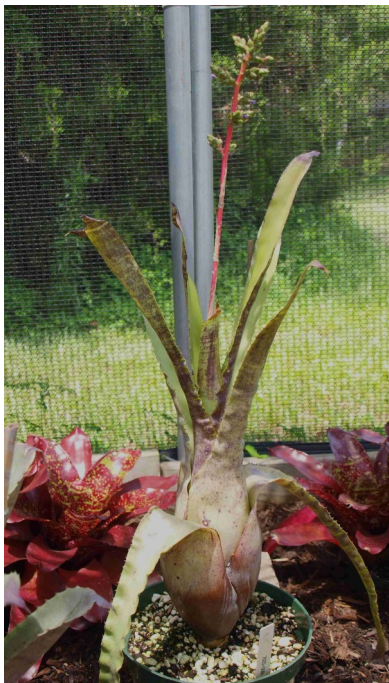
August Broms



Aechmea 'Waikiki'



Aechmea bracteata



Hohenbergia pennae



H. bloom



Neoregelia 'Charm'

August Brooms (continued)



Neoregelia 'Lila'



Neoregelia Oppenheimer x pauciflora

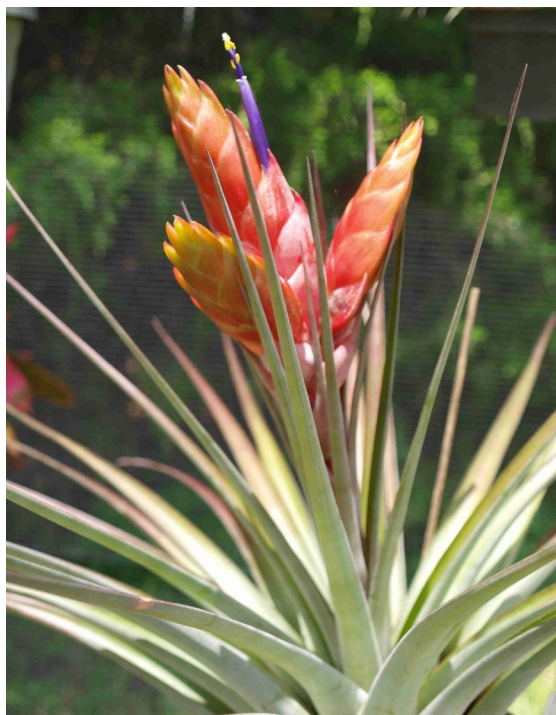


Neoregelia 'Shelldance'

August Broms (continued)



Tillandsia 'Coconut Grove'



Tillandsia fasciculata
'Tropiflora'



Tillandsia fasciculata 'Magnificent'

August Broms (continued)



Tillandsia flexuoso

All pictures courtesy of the Whipkey's

BULLETIN BOARD



AUGUST Birthdays

Gordon Rowell
Scherie Townes

8/17
8/13

The next **quarterly luncheon**
will be worth the drive. It's at:

Mel's Country Café

Sept 30, 2026
1 PM

Tomball/ Magnolia Area



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

Creative Ways to Display Bromeliads (August program)



Looking for new ideas to showcase your bromeliads? Discover creative displays that can transform your garden, patio, or favorite outdoor space.

One of the joys of growing bromeliads is finding creative ways to display them. Whether you have a sprawling garden, a small patio, or just a few favorite plants, thoughtful placement and design can transform ordinary spaces into eye-catching displays.

At our August meeting, Mitch Fontenot will expand on the popular workshop he presented at this year's ABC's, sharing creative ways to display bromeliads in the landscape and around the home. Drawing from his own experience and design ideas, Mitch will demonstrate practical techniques for arranging bromeliads, selecting display locations, and creating attractive outdoor plantings.

Whether you're just beginning to landscape with bromeliads or looking for fresh ideas to enhance an existing collection, you'll leave with practical inspiration and creative concepts that can help you showcase your plants in new and exciting ways.

What You'll Learn

- How to choose the best locations for bromeliads in your landscape
- Creative ways to mount and display bromeliads
- Design ideas that create attractive outdoor spaces
- Tips for combining bromeliads with other landscape elements
- Practical ideas you can use to showcase your own collection

Meeting Details
Speaker: Mitch Fontenot
Date: August 18
Time: 7:00 PM

West Grey Multi-Service Center
1475 West Grey
Houston

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