



BromeliAdvisory

Feb 2026

<http://www.bssf-miami.org>

Directors:

Alex Bello, President
Tina Severson, Immediate Past President
Pam Neumann, Vice President
Patty Gonzalez, Director
Blanca Clusman, Treasurer
Barbara Partagas, Secretary
Peter Kouchalakos, Director
Denise Karman, Director
Raquel Contreras, Director

Committees:

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Webmaster: Bob Benaim
Door Prize: Alan Herndon
Membership, Patty Gonzalez & Melody Ray
Mem. Plant Sales: Alex Bello
Special Events/ Refreshments: Sandy Roth
Hospitality: Denise Karman
Silent Auction: Rene Izquierdo
FCBS Reps: Maureen & Richard Adelman

Bromeliad Society of South Florida



Hands-On Kokodama Workshop

**Join us at Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Corbin A,
on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 7:30 PM
sharp for a fun and creative evening!**

Sandy Roth and Denise Karman will be demonstrating how to make Kokodama in this very hands-on workshop. Bring your creativity and get ready to craft your own living art.

As always, we invite you to bring your favorite dishes for this month's **Love Fest** theme. It promises to be a delightful mix of **education, creativity, and community spirit**. We can't wait to see you and your friends at this special event!



Your Bromeliad Society Membership Is Due

It's renewal time! Please don't forget to see **Patty** if you are ready to renew your membership for **2026**. Your Bromeliad Society membership is important to us, as it helps support our operating costs and future planning.

Membership Rates:

- Single Membership: **\$30**
- Dual Membership: **\$40**

Payment Options:

Memberships may be paid by **credit card, cash, or check**.

Thank you for your continued support—we truly value your membership and involvement in our Society



At our January 20, 2026, meeting, Vice President Pam Neumann presented a nomination to the membership to award **Alex Bello** a Life Membership. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously. We are honored to bestow this well-deserved recognition.

In accordance with our Bylaws, Alex has fulfilled all requirements for Life Membership. The relevant section is

quoted below exactly as written:



SECTION 5. Life membership may be conferred upon any person for outstanding achievement or service in the field of bromeliads and this Society. Outstanding achievement or service, as used in the prior sentence, means either achievement in the world of bromeliads, or service in the world of bromeliads or service to the Bromeliad Society of South Florida. The name of the candidate must be submitted in writing to the Board. If the Board approves, the nomination shall be presented to the Society at a regular meeting. Approval of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary for such life membership to become effective. Life members shall be exempt from payment of dues and may vote and hold office. Life members shall have all the privileges of active members. No more than 1 life member may be approved by the Board in any one year. A spouse or partner may be included with his/her spouse/partner and that couple would be deemed a single life member for purposes of the limitations outline in the prior sentence.

President's Message 🌿

This is a friendly reminder that BSSF membership renewals are due by March 2026. Your continued support helps us plan both fun and educational events throughout the year.

I warmly invite you to join us for an Open House at **Bello Tropicals Nursery** on **February 28th from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM**.

It would be my pleasure to welcome you to the nursery, share what we've been growing, and spend time together surrounded by the plants we all love. Whether you're looking for something special to add to your collection or simply want to enjoy a beautiful morning with fellow members, I hope you'll stop by. I truly look forward to seeing you there!



- Alex Bello

Welcome to Our New Members!

It was wonderful meeting many of you for the first time! We're excited to get to know you better and share our love of Bromeliads. We know you'll soon become raving fans, just like the rest of us!



We are also delighted to welcome back a longtime member we haven't seen in a while. It's truly wonderful to have you return to the fold — you've been missed, and we're so glad to see you back with us!



In Loving Memory of George
Peter Katsaras
Born March 7, 1941 – January
30, 2026

George Peter Katsaras survived by his beloved wife of 61 years, Eileen Katsaras; his daughter Tina Katsaras Severson and son-in-law Justin Severson; his sons Spiro Katsaras and Nick Katsaras; his granddaughters Athena Severson and Angelika Katsaras; his brother Dean Katsaras; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended family members whom he loved deeply.

To know George was to know true generosity. He loved his family fiercely, yet his heart was big enough to make so many others feel like his own. Growing up with him

was always an adventure — fishing trips, diving excursions, and countless days when we filled the boat with family and friends. Those memories and stories will live on through everyone who shared them.

George was a devoted schoolteacher whose passion for education extended far beyond the classroom. His students often joined our fishing trips, and he continually sought ways to help those less fortunate. My mother would say, “Your father collects degrees,” as he earned four master’s degrees simply for the love of learning. He pursued knowledge not for wealth, but for growth — and although he never cared about making money, we somehow always had everything we needed and more.

He faithfully served as a church deacon, always putting others before himself. When I once asked why he helped everyone else before tending to things at home, he would say, “If I help others, God will take care of our family.” And He always did.

George also had a gift for professional photography and taught night classes at local colleges. His generosity and charitable spirit made many believe we were wealthy — not in money, but in kindness, faith, and love. He taught us to work hard, aim high, and believe that with perseverance, we could achieve what we reached for.

After the loss of his beloved grandson, Daniel Severson, on January 30th ten years ago, we never imagined we would be blessed with another decade with him. God called him home on that very same date ten years later. We find comfort in believing he was welcomed into eternal peace, reunited with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and joyfully reunited with his grandson Daniel.

In recent years, George joined the Bromeliad Society with his daughter Tina. He enjoyed learning about plants, but even more, he treasured the fellowship and friendships formed there — relationships that helped carry our family through seasons of grief.

Until we meet again.

We invite you to celebrate his life with us on March 7, 2026, at 1:00 PM at our church:
5880 West Park Road
Hollywood, FL

Following the memorial service, we will gather for a traditional Greek lunch known as Makaria, served in his honor — just as he would have wanted. Call Tina at 305-519-8733 for more details

Please click the link to RSVP:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd57fU3959CTSg845BikcxXmNxZmbS8WixZC1-LYvDDuwSt7A/viewform?usp=header>

With love and gratitude,
The Katsaras Family



In case You Missed It: – By Tina Severson



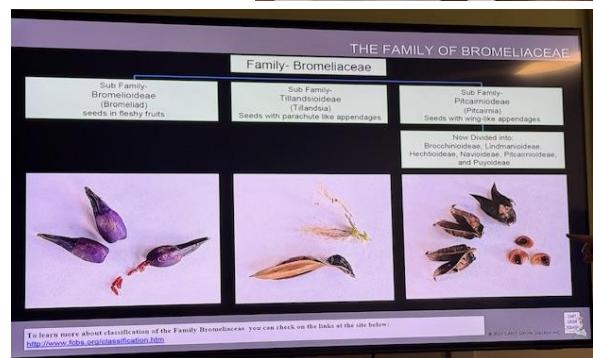
Stephanie Laruso began her journey with our bromeliad society alongside her parents at a young age and at the time didn't first find Bromeliads very



interesting Until later as she spent many years working with Alan and Rhonda Herndon at their nursery Tradewinds Tropicals, documenting plants through



photography and organizing them by genus. Her deep knowledge and passion for bromeliads is evident in the way she explains how



these remarkable plants reproduce and thrive. No animals are required for dispersal—many bromeliads have sticky seeds that swell when wet and adhere to trees, while others float and

eventually establish themselves. Hybridizing across distant genera has allowed growers to cultivate an incredible diversity of bromeliads.



Neoregelia is the genus most people recognize, as they are commonly sold in big box stores. Their variety is extraordinary, and most have flowers hidden deep in the center cup—one of the key traits that distinguish them. Thousands of people hybridize Neoregelia because they are easy and rewarding to grow.



weather. *Aechmea fasciata* was one of the first bromeliads ever sold commercially. *Aechmea nudicaulis* prefers lots of light.

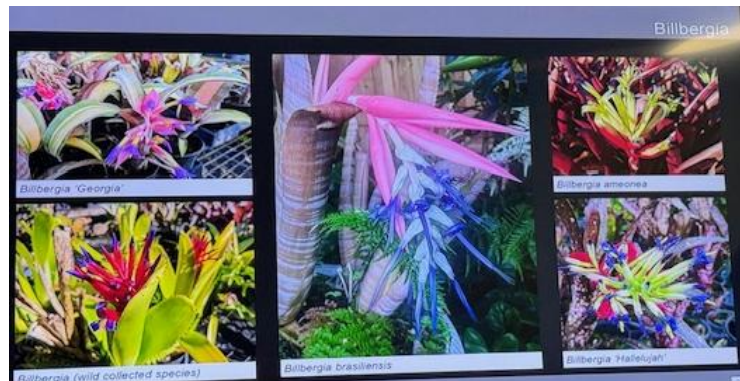
Bilbergias bloom quickly—blink and you'll miss it! If you see a bloom starting, watch closely. Their pups are excellent and reliable. Tubular plants prefer drier conditions, and Stephanie grows many of hers in lava rock.

Vriesias often tolerate cooler temperatures and produce long-lasting blooms. Alcantarea are impressive, large plants that take years to bloom but are well worth the wait.

Tillandsia duratii is Stephanie's favorite—once you place it, you'll never get it off; it will live there forever. Quesnelias are fierce and spiny, but when they bloom, you understand exactly why you planted them. Pitcairnia are tough and can thrive even in very poor soil. Sincoraea

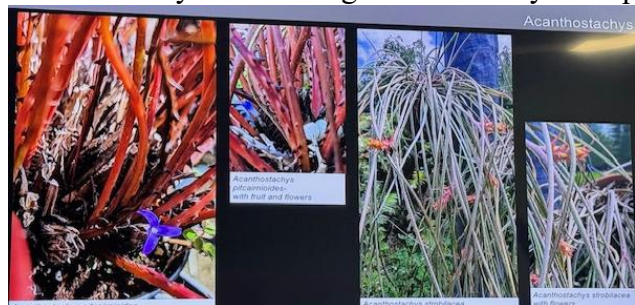


Hechtia-like Harakucum (Haraicum) is a newer genus—beautiful, extremely thorny, and surprisingly easy to grow, needing very little care. Aechmea was once a catch-all genus, and many remain favorites today. They bloom for a long time and are loved by hummingbirds. Some, like 'Shogun,' are easier to grow, while others such as *Aechmea ampla* develop bright red tips in cooler

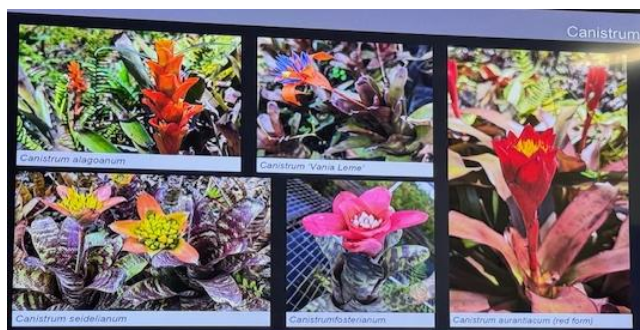


feature beautiful banding and tolerate high light levels. Nidularium prefer a lot of shade. Edmundoa are soft and inviting—animals love them.

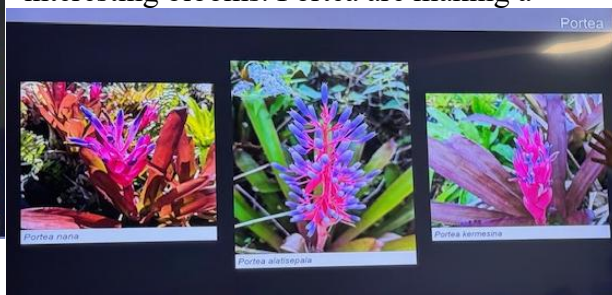
Acanthostachys is a small genus with only two species and can handle full sun. Hechtias often prefer drier conditions and behave somewhat like aloes when cut.



Canistrum have fewer spines, which makes



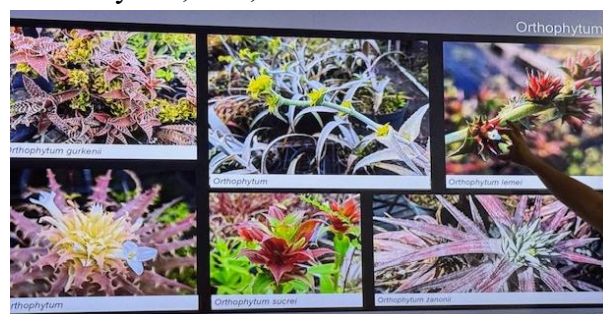
them especially appealing, along with their interesting blooms. Portea are making a



comeback; they clump nicely and are crowd favorites when in bloom. Goudaea produce long flower spikes, often with blooms that change color.



Orthophytum are known for producing pups directly on their flower spikes. These eventually fall, root, and “walk” across the



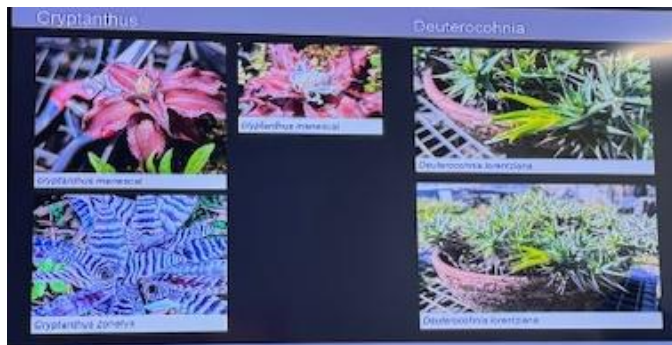
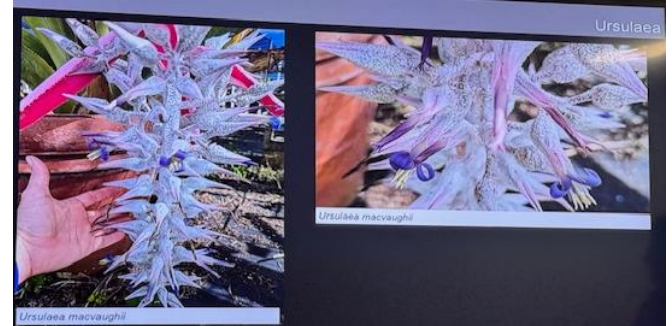
yard—perfect for rock gardens. Dyckia love water; Stephanie recommends placing them in



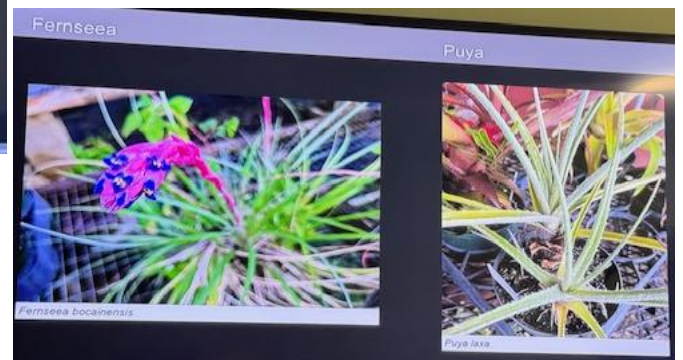
pots with trays of water underneath. Feeding them helps maintain their vibrant color, and unlike many bromeliads, Dyckia typically do not die after pupping. Hummingbirds love their flowers.

Hohenbergia are another favorite due to their striking form. They are pollinated by

hummingbirds but are cold sensitive. Navia may seem unremarkable until they bloom—then they truly shine. Cryptanthus love shade, as do Deuterocohnia. Ursulaea are



massive plants that most people simply



don't have room for. Most Puya do not grow well here, though their flowers are spectacular. Some unusual species even produce pups where a bloom would normally appear, as shown in her "Oddities"



photos.



Stephanie also highlighted the many creatures that live in and depend on our plants. Because of this, she avoids pesticides entirely. Countless animals drink from bromeliads, and she especially cherishes her frog friends—beautifully captured in her photos.



Community Events:



Orchids in Bloom



March 14 & 15, 2026

10:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

General admission included • Members get FREE tickets

Step into a Botanical Wonderland

Each spring, Orchids in Bloom transforms Fairchild into a multisensory celebration of color, fragrance, and conservation. With over 150,000 blooming orchids, world-class exhibits, captivating cultural performances, and hands-on science for all ages, this two-day festival is one of South Florida's most anticipated spring experiences .

Whether you're an orchid collector, a weekend wanderer, or a family looking for an unforgettable day out, Orchids in Bloom offers an experience like no other.



Save the Date: April 2026 BSI World Conference

The 2026 BSI World Conference (WBC) will take place from April 14–18 at the Hilton Hotel in Costa Mesa, California.

Plan your visit to Costa Mesa, located in Orange County, which was recently named the Fourth Safest City in California. Notably, eight of the top ten safest cities in the state are in Orange County.

Travel is convenient with John Wayne Airport (SNA) just three miles from the venue, and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) approximately 42 miles away.

For the latest updates and information, please visit the official conference website:

<https://www.bsi.org/new/conference-corner/>

From the Editor: Share Your Exciting Community Events!

Do you know about an upcoming community event that our members would enjoy? If so, we'd love to hear from you! Please send me the details, along with any photos or links, for inclusion in our upcoming Advisories.

While we are particularly interested in events related to botanical gardens, plants, and horticulture, we welcome submissions on any topic that might be of interest to our members. Whether it's a local workshop, garden tour, or any exciting community event, your input is always appreciated.

To ensure your event makes it into our next issue, please send the information to me at least a week before our meetings. I always strive to highlight events that I think our members will find exciting, but your contributions will make it even better!

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Tina Severson