BSSF, INC BromeliAdvisory

Sept 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:
Editor: Tina Severson
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

September BSSF Meeting: Featuring Alex Bello



We are fortunate to have some of the best speakers right here within our own society! This month, our President, **Alex Bello**, will be our featured speaker.

Alex will be sharing highlights and insights from the **World Conference**, giving us an opportunity to hear about the conference and learn more about his experience there. He will also be providing the **raffle table** for this month's meeting.

This promises to be a fantastic presentation that you won't want to miss!

Thank you, Alex, for all you do for BSSF, Inc. We truly appreciate your dedication and everything you do for our society.

Meeting Details

Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026
Location: Corbin A at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
Time: 7:30 PM sharp

Please bring a **side dish to share** and join us for a wonderful evening with fellow bromeliad enthusiasts.

Silent Auction Reminder

Have something you'd like to donate to our **Silent Auction?** We would love to have it! Donations can be brought to the meeting and are always appreciated.

As a reminder, **BSSF, Inc. retains 20% of the proceeds from Silent Auction items**, with the remaining amount going to the donor. If you would like to donate more than the standard 20% to the club, we certainly appreciate your generosity!

If you have any questions about the Silent Auction or would like more information, please reach out to **Rene Izquierdo, our Silent Auction Chairman**.

We look forward to seeing everyone on September 15th!

President's Message

We have so many exciting things happening over the next few months that you won't want to miss!

This is also a wonderful time to invite your **friends and family** to become part of BSSF. Anyone who joins in **September will have their membership extended through 2027**, giving new members even more time to enjoy our meetings, programs, events, and the friendships that make our society so special.

Let's continue to grow BSSF and share our love of bromeliads with others. **Bring a friend, invite a family member, and help us welcome new members to our society!**

I look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming meetings and events. There is a lot to look forward to, and I hope you'll all join us!

Alex Bello
President, BSSF, Inc.







In Case You Missed It...

By Tina Severson

A Special Guest from San Diego



Our President, Alex Bello introduced our guest speaker, **Andy Siekkinen**, who traveled all the way from San Diego with the support of the **Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies (FCBS)**.

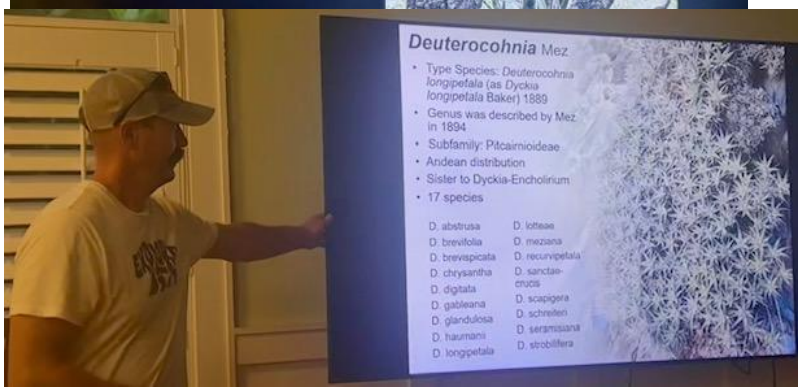


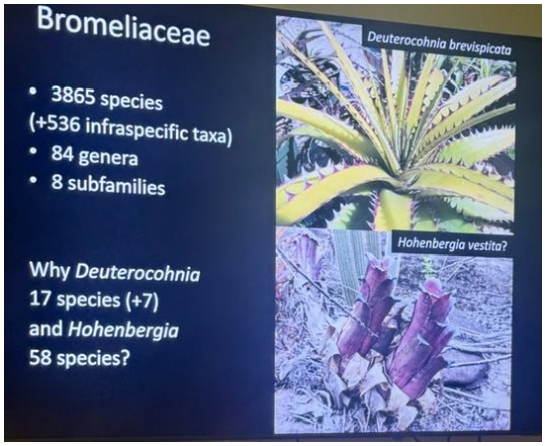
Andy's research schedule is usually hectic, but he took the time to share his fascinating work on two intriguing bromeliad genera: **Deuterocohnia and Hohenbergia**.



Deuterocohnia: Tough Plants with a Lot to Teach Us

Andy explained that many Deuterocohnia species have yellow flowers, while others display beautiful red and pink coloration. One





particularly fascinating characteristic is that some plants can produce flowers **multiple times a year**.



So, should you cut off the old inflorescence?



Apparently not!

If you cut it, the plant may simply try to bloom again from where you made the cut. Andy speculated that this repeated flowering may be an adaptation to their dry habitats. Instead of investing the energy required to produce an entirely new inflorescence, the plant can continue flowering from the existing structure.

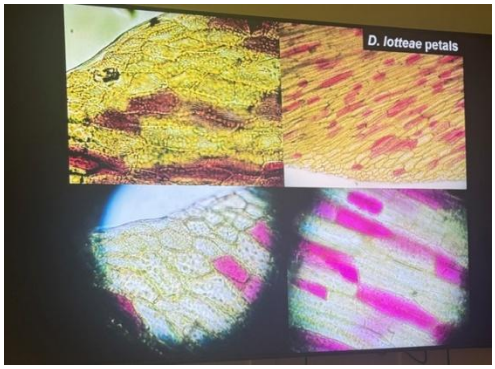


He also showed how some species develop increasingly branched and dense inflorescences with subsequent flowering.



Looking at Bromeliads Under the Microscope

One of Andy's favorite things is taking a closer look at plants to see what is happening beneath the surface.



He showed microscopic images of brightly colored petals and pointed out something particularly interesting: **the green areas of the petals actually contain chloroplasts**.

The red coloration comes from anthocyanin pigments within the individual cells. Under the microscope, you can actually see the individual cells containing the pigment rather than simply seeing a solid field of red or pink.



Andy offered the intriguing possibility that the chloroplasts in the petals might provide localized energy that could help with seed production—but he emphasized that this is **speculation and something that needs further research**.

Deuterocohnia Lotteae

Andy shared that **Deuterocohnia lotteae** is one of his favorites. He also discussed how some of the newer species have been much more readily collected and studied in Europe than in the United States.

European botanical gardens have historically maintained extensive collections of these plants, giving researchers access to specimens that can be difficult to find here.

Andy explained that many of the newer Deuterocohnia species have only been described within the last decade or two. Because they are relatively uncommon in cultivation and have received less attention from researchers, there is still much to learn about them.

And that's part of what makes the genus so interesting!

Hohenbergia: Variation Makes Identification Complicated

Andy then moved on to **Hohenbergia**, showing us just how much variation can occur within populations.



We saw plants ranging from green to red, pink, maroon and yellow, with tremendous differences in size, shape and leaf coloration.



One important lesson was that **a single clone doesn't necessarily tell us what an entire species looks like**.

Plants growing from seed can display tremendous variation, and hummingbirds may also contribute to natural hybridization and gene flow between populations.

Andy described populations where plants can look dramatically different even when they are growing relatively close together.

A Taxonomic Nightmare—But the Plants Don't Care!

One of the most entertaining points of the presentation was Andy's explanation of how difficult taxonomy can become when populations overlap and hybridize.

When plants bloom over long periods, there are more opportunities for hummingbirds to move pollen between populations. This can create continuous variation—or what researchers sometimes call a “gradation”—between groups.

Determining where one species ends and another begins can therefore become extremely complicated.

As Andy put it, **the taxonomy may be a nightmare, but the plants don't care!** They're still growing, reproducing and thriving.

Tough Plants Growing on Rocks



Andy also showed photographs of Hohenbergia growing in full sun, on solid rock and in the understory of trees. Some plants were surprisingly large, while others were quite small.



One plant he collected even had a large grub inside its base that had been feeding on the core. Surprisingly, the plant survived and continued growing.



The photographs also demonstrated how much growing conditions can affect the appearance and morphology of bromeliads. The same species can look dramatically different depending on its environment.

Hybrids and the Future



He explained that he is particularly interested in plants with **darker colors, interesting spines and unusual architectural rosette shapes**—characteristics that can make some of these less flashy species especially appealing to collectors.

Andy has been actively working with hybrids and has made **more than 20 different crosses**, with second-generation crosses now underway.

Hopefully, his work will result in many new registered plants entering cultivation.



What Should We Grow Them In?

Andy was asked about his preferred growing medium.

He explained that he has gradually moved toward a **looser bark or coco-chunk-based mix** rather than a heavier terrestrial mix.

For South Florida growers, however, he recommended something considerably more inorganic because of our naturally high moisture levels.

Lava rock can be useful for growing these plants in Miami, where keeping the roots from staying too wet is an important consideration.

The goal is to provide enough moisture around the roots without allowing the plants to remain overly wet.

Thank You, Andy

Community Events:

Coming up this weekend! If you want to assist and volunteer to help get new members for our BSSF, INC Club please reach out to Alex Bello



Tropical Plant Bazaar

Hosted by the Bromeliad Society of South Florida, featuring 12–15 vendors selling bromeliads, orchids, and tropical plants in the Palmetum and Rainforest areas. Regular admission applies.

Tropical Plant Bazaar
Saturday–Sunday, September 12–13, 2026
Palmetum & Rainforest Area
Adult $27.95 | Senior $20.95 | Child (3–11) $14.95 | Child (2 & under) Free

Join the Bromeliad Society of South Florida for a weekend plant sale featuring 12–15 vendors specializing in bromeliads, orchids, aroids, and tropical plants — a great chance to shop rare finds while supporting the Society's community mission.

Ticket Information

You will receive your confirmation and eticket(s) via email. If you do not receive your tickets, please check your spam or clutter folders. You must present your etickets upon arrival.

Tickets Click Here

BSSF Volunteers Needed: Redland International Orchid Festival



We have a wonderful opportunity for BSSF members to help support our society while **raising funds for future activities and programs of our club!**

The **Redland International Orchid Festival** will be held at **Fruit & Spice Park from Friday, October 16 through Sunday, October 18**. We have been invited to participate by providing volunteers, and **BSSF will receive $65 for each volunteer shift worked**. Volunteers will also receive admission to the festival on the day they work, along with raffle tickets and a commemorative pin.

This is a great opportunity to enjoy the festival, spend time with fellow BSSF members, and help raise funds that will benefit our society and support our future activities.

Volunteer Shifts

There will be two shifts each day:

- **8:00 AM – 1:00 PM**
- **12:30 PM – 5:00 PM**

Each shift is approximately **5 hours**. There are no scheduled lunch breaks, although short bathroom breaks are permitted. Please plan to eat before or after your shift.

Important: All shifts are outdoors, mostly under shade, and it can be **HOT!** Please bring a large water bottle and anything else you may need to stay cool and comfortable.

How to Volunteer

We are **not guaranteed a spot**, so the more flexible you are with the days you can work, the better our chances of being selected. Members are encouraged to be available for **Friday, Saturday, and/or Sunday**, without specifying the preferred time. This will help make scheduling easier if our society is selected.

If you are interested in volunteering, **please let me know as soon as possible** so I can provide our volunteer information to **Karina Motes**.

If selected, all volunteers will be coordinated through one designated BSSF liaison, who will receive the Google Form link for submitting volunteer information.

Interested in helping BSSF raise funds for our future activities while enjoying the Orchid Festival? Please contact Tina Severson as soon as possible!

Thank you for supporting BSSF and helping us take advantage of this great fundraising opportunity!

Bromeliad Society
OF SOUTH FLORIDA

BSSF, INC.

AUCTION

Rare Bromeliads & Tillandsias at Fantastic Prices!

A great opportunity for collectors or novice plant lovers!

Tuesday, October 20, 2026
7:30 PM Sharp

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
Garden House

Open to the Public!
Food and Fun!

If you have extra beautiful bromeliads you want to donate please make sure they are clean and bug free.

BSSF, INC. will appreciate it!

Fall Maker's Market

Saturday, October 24th
10 am - 3 pm

Come join us for a day of fun, creativity, and caring!

A variety of makers will be at our studio selling their unique creations, including jewelry, candles, pottery, wood turned items and more. Take a tour of the Ceramic League studios and watch artists at work.







305 PINK PACK
For ALL Cancers!

Featuring an Empty Bowls benefit for 305 Pink Pack in support of breast cancer awareness month.

Ceramic League of Miami

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Vendor spaces available

Call Diana Gonzalez at 305-793-0597

For more information

8873 SW 129th Street • 305-233-2404

www.ceramicleaguemiami.org

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 itch even better!

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Tina Severson