

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa Newsletter



www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org

March 2026

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, March 15, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

At the home of Tom and Carol Wolfe

5211 Lake LeClare Rd.

Lutz, FL 33558

813-391-1542

President's Message:

Tom and I have really missed all of you over the last year while he has been recuperating. Our journey reminds me of Robert Burns's poem, "The best laid plans of mice and men." It certainly didn't go the way we planned!

Tom had been considering a knee replacement for some time and after our greenhouses were hit by hurricane Milton in October 2024, there was lots of work to be done. It was the first time in our fifty years of owning this property, that we had a greenhouse lost.

So we made our plans and Tom had the knee replacement done at the VA. The operation was a success and the first week Tom did really well using a walker and going to the cafe for his meals. However, during physical therapy, the therapist put him on the leg push back machine and advised him to stop the remote when it became too painful. He stopped the remote at #60 and the therapist asked for the remote and she then ran it up to #90! He yelled stop but it was too late, she had already broken his patella tendon in the left leg. He was taken to his room and from that point on had to have a nurse on each side to get out of bed and walk to the bathroom. After several weeks of excruciating pain, and being confined to the bed, he was only up with the assistance of nurses. He was diagnosed with a broken patella tendon and they operated to repair it.

After 6 weeks, we went home, but were soon back at the hospital, after Tom had a fall and broke his right wrist. We finally got back home on September 30, 2025, but later found that the repaired tendon did not hold. We are still in the process of diagnosing the best course of action from this point on to get him properly walking again. The VA, in typical government style, is slow as molasses. Growing up in NC, I used to cook molasses with my Grandad so I know how slow they cook!



So much for the best laid plans of mice and men! We never know where a turn in the road will take us but this turn in the road changed our lives, our children's lives, and our grandchildren's!

Of course, we haven't been able to be involved in anything besides Tom's care, but we so appreciate everyone who has stepped up to the plate and helped. Marilyn has been so faithful to send the Newsletter out, and Ken Stokes has done a tremendous job of leading the club, giving programs, writing articles, and recruiting speakers. Ken we are so grateful for all you have done.

These are my thoughts and suggestions of things that we might consider at our meeting:

- I. Many of you are wondering about the club's future and so are we. The purpose of this next meeting is to get together and to hear from each member and perhaps together, we can come up with a solution.
- II. MEMBERSHIP: We have been losing membership ever since we started making moves during the covid years, and with each move, the meeting place became closer or farther for some members. The new date or time didn't work for some members, and thus, the attendance suffered. Marilyn, Steve, Tom and I had hoped to go on a recruiting trip into the neighborhood meetings and share the information about our club but because of the aforesaid problems, that did not materialize.
- III. FINANCIAL: With the drop in membership, it caused a drop in resources. Since we aren't participating in shows, sales, the state fair, etc., our financial resources have dropped and our only income is membership dues. Financially, it is not feasible to continue renting a commercial building and having out of town speakers as the dues will not cover the cost.
- IV.. LOCATION: One consideration is meeting in members' homes. When I first met Tom back in the early 70's, he invited me to a bromeliad meeting in his home. I figured that I better not go, as I had never heard of bromeliads and I couldn't pronounce those crazy plant names! Later, after we were married, the club had grown so large that they rented a meeting place.
- V. PROGRAMS: As a remaining active member, would you be willing to talk about bromeliads to the group and to share from your collection?

These are my thoughts that I have shared with you. Please bring your ideas to the meeting. If you can decide what you could or could not do, I think that will help all of us make a decision about the club's future.

We want to hear from each one of you about what your ideas are, and what you think we can or cannot implement.

Looking forward to seeing you,

Carol Wolfe



Beginner's
Corner

What is the Difference Between a Parasite and an Epiphyte?

by Tom Wolfe

A parasite is a plant or animal that lives on or within another organism, from which it derives sustenance or protection without making compensation. In Florida, an example of a parasite is mistletoe, which produces yellow flowers and waxen white berries. It penetrates the bark and the cambium layer of the tree or branches and strangles the flow of water and nutrients.

The cambium layer is between two cellular layers. The xylem layer is on one side and the phloem layer on the other side. These layers are like a very thin filament of protecting the cambium layer. Mistletoe is found growing on species of oaks and other trees throughout Florida.

An epiphyte is a nonparasitic plant, such as certain orchids, bromeliads, mosses, and lichens. Bromeliads manufacture their own food from rainwater, bird droppings, organic materials like decomposed leaves, and so on. They use trees, shrubs, and fence posts, power lines, and etc, as a medium where their seeds can attach and germinate and grow. They use the host as a substrate only and take very little nourishment, if any, from the host.

Incidentally, saxicolous plants are grown on or among rocks such as dyckias, hechtias, and orthophytums. Orthophytums saxicola was a species named because of its growing in its rocky habitat.



Dues are Due

It's that time of year to pay dues\$. Please fill out the form in this newsletter and bring it to the next meeting, or mail it to Carol Wolfe at 5211 at Lake LeClare Rd., Lutz, FL 33558

Snapshots from February 15 Field Trip to McCrory's Bromeliad Nursery





February Birthdays - Happy 90th Birthday to Tom Wolfe!
March Birthdays - Paula Benway, Robert Nelson, Peter Wan

Bromeliads Online

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/366210778024864>

Bromeliad Society International— www.bsi.org

Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies— www.fcbs.org

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens— www.selby.org

Bromeliads Online - <http://www.bromeliads.co.nz/index.html>





BROMELIAD & TROPICAL PLANT SOCIETY OF TAMPA

Membership Application/Renewal

Memberships: January 1 to December 31 each Year

Please Print

Date of Application _____
Name _____ Birth Month _____
Second Name _____ Birth Month _____
Phone (____) _____ Email _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Please check one:

_____ \$25.00 Single Membership
_____ \$30.00 Family Membership

Make checks payable to BGTB
Submit with application to:
Carol Wolfe
5211 Lake LeClare Rd.
Lutz, FL 33558

FOR FIRST-TIME MEMBERS: How did you hear about BTPST?

____ Friend ____ Newspaper ____ Facebook ____ BGTB Website
____ Plant Festival or Show ____ Other (Please specify)

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa
Established 1963 as Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay
Informative programs, Show & Tell, plant sales, door prizes, and raffle

BTPST is affiliated with Bromeliad Society International, The Cryptanthus Society, Inc.,
Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc., and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, FL.

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa Newsletter

The Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa was established in 1963 as the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay. In July, 2022, it expanded its focus to include other tropical plants. BTPST is affiliated with the following: Bromeliad Society International, The Cryptanthus Society, Inc., Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, Inc., and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, FL.

When: Meetings are held on the 3rd Sunday of every month.

Time: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Where: TBA

**NEWSLETTER OF THE
BROMELIAD &
TROPICAL PLANT
SOCIETY OF TAMPA
21535 Northwood Dr.
Lutz, Florida 33549**