

Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society of Tampa Newsletter



www.bromeliadguildoftampabay.org

July 2025

MEETING PLACE:

**Bill Castens Gymnasium Conference Room
Northdale Park and Recreation
15510 Hooting Owls Place, Tampa, FL 33624
Sunday, JULY 21, DOORS OPEN at 2:00 p.m.**

SPEAKER: 2:15 TO 3:00 p.m.

MEETING IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OFF THE GYM

**Speaker: Kenneth Stokes
“Naming of the Parts”**



Kenneth Stokes is a lifelong Floridian and plant collector. He grew up in rural Brevard County, where he carried on the tradition of gardening inherited from his mother and grandmother. In 1995 he joined the Bromeliad Guild and expanded over the years to be involved in many other tropical plant societies. Today, he has a large plant collection as part of the landscaping of the grounds of his home in south Tampa. He prefers to collect species plants rather than hybrids. He has Bromeliads in most of the genera that will grow in this area.

The parts of Bromeliads and plants in general will be named, where they occur and how they function. Such terms allow us to communicate clearly, when one has to tell a friend about a new acquisition or a plant meeting. It will also help one to understand future programs and presentations better.



Report of the June 16, 2025 Meeting

The June meeting was lightly attended with around twelve members and two visitors attending. This can be accounted for by the fact that it was Father's day, the Wolfes were absent due to Tom's knee surgery and the Byrams were on vacation.

Kenneth Stokes substituted for Carol and greeted the guests and speaker, Jason Mellica. He presented a nice selection of Bromeliads that he had hybridized and grown, after which members flocked to the display table to purchase plants.

There was then a short break before the business meeting was called to order. There were no raffle table plants, so there was no door prize.

There was only one birthday person present, Kenneth, who didn't need another Bromeliad.

The minutes of the May meeting were approved.

Our Treasurer was not present, so there was no report.

Kenneth brought in one Show and Tell plant. It was an *Aechmea bracteata* in bloom.

There was no new or old business, so the meeting was adjourned.

Kenneth Stokes

Upcoming Bromeliad Events

August 17-18 Annual Fall Plant Sale. Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society, Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Dr. Sanford, FL 9-4 September 26-27 2025

September 26-27 Bromeliad Extravaganza. Ramada Gateway, 7470 W. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway 192, Kissimmee, FL. Book your room by August 26 for a special room rate on BromeliadX.com

Sponsored by the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies and hosted by the Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society

8 Facts About Spanish Moss

A large part of the natural beauty of the South is the silver garland that hangs from our live oak trees. Spanish moss-draped oaks are the consummate image of the South and appears just about everywhere you turn. An image of beautiful Spanish moss hanging from majestic trees instantly reminds us of sultry summer days in the South. It's a symbol of nature at its most relaxed; but it's also very stately and refined, in a rustic sort of way.



But how much do you really know about Spanish moss?

Spanish moss is part of the bromeliad family which places it in the same plant family as pineapples and succulent house plants. Spanish moss is actually native to Mexico, Central America, South America, the United States and the Caribbean, where it can grow in a tropical environment. Here in the U.S., Spanish moss grows from Texas to Virginia, generally staying in the moister areas of the south.

Spanish moss doesn't kill trees

That's right. Contrary to popular belief, Spanish moss does not kill trees, limbs or branches.

If it's not Spanish and it's not moss, how did it get its name?

Spanish moss was given its name by French explorers. Native Americans told them the plant was called Itla-okla, which meant "tree hair." The French were reminded of the Spanish conquistadors' long beards, so they called it Barbe Espagnol, or "Spanish Beard." The Spaniards got back at them by calling the plant Cabello Francés, or "French Hair." The French name won out, and as time went by Spanish Beard changed to Spanish moss.

Spanish moss is an Epiphyte

Epiphyte: a plant that grows on another plant without directly gaining nourishment from it. Spanish moss receives all of its nutrients and moisture from the air and is not considered a parasite to the tree, it only uses the tree for support. The only damage it may cause is by breaking a weak limb. When the moss absorbs moisture its weight can increase tenfold. If there is enough bloated moss on a thin, weak, or dead limb it can cause the limb to break off.

It had many uses during the Civil War

The use of woven Spanish moss blankets and saddle pads was adopted by Confederate cavalry during the civil war. By the end of the war it was the most commonly issued blanket, which is probably not surprising, considering its abundance in the south. It was durable and waterproof, did not chafe the horses, and allowed airflow and evaporation of horse's sweat.

Spanish moss was once used for everyday items

Until around 1960 Spanish moss was used for all sorts of everyday items such as stuffing for car seats and furniture. Native Americans would use Spanish moss to make bedding. They even made clothes by spinning the inner black core and using it as thread when cloth material wasn't available. Moths are not drawn to Spanish moss, therefore upholsterers preferred to use it over wool, until synthetic fibers replaced both. According to Mental Floss (<https://www.mentalfloss.com/>), other uses for Spanish moss included: Lids for cooking pots, emergency blankets, insulation, mixed with clay to strengthen plaster, fiber woven into floor mats, to make string, rope and sacks, doll decorations and Voodoo doll stuffing.

It's a natural sponge and has been used as a covering to keep things from drying too fast, such as dug out canoes and cement. It also makes excellent mulch and the water it is boiled in is excellent fertilizer. Spanish Moss is often draped on chain link fences to

There is evidence that Spanish moss was used over 3,000 years ago to make fire-tempered pottery. Although the moss burned away during the firing, the distinctive pattern of the fibers is still evident in the clay pottery. Spanish moss is still used today by many Native American tribes. For example, the Houma and the Koasati of present day Louisiana use Spanish moss in the construction and decoration of small dolls.

Birds & Animals like Spanish moss

Many species use Spanish moss. Birds including warblers and orioles use it to build their nests. Rat snakes and at least three bat species live in Spanish moss. Boll weevils are especially drawn to Spanish moss, but moths are not, which is one reason it was preferred over wool in upholstery before synthetic fibers replaced both.

Other names for Spanish moss

Other common names for Spanish moss are Old Man's Beard, White Beard, Spanish Beard, Florida Crape and Wool Crape. Now, after learning all of this, the next time you see Spanish moss, which may be in just a few minutes from now, you may think something different about it.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture



Tillandsia usneoides

2025 Bromeliad Extravaganza



Friday & Saturday September 26–27, 2025

Registration: \$125 per person

After September 15, 2025: \$135 per person

Registration fee includes the two meals and all listed events.

Guest speaker information to be available soon.

Sponsored by the **Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies**

Hosted by the **Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society**

Friday Evening

- Barbeque buffet
- Bromeliad sale for registrants only

Saturday

- Huge all day Bromeliad sale open to the public
- Three seminars with guest speakers

Saturday Evening

- Italian buffet
- Rare plant auction open to the public

Hotel Info:

Ramada Gateway

7470 W Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy 192
Kissimmee, FL 34747

**For room reservations, call 407-396-4400 or 407-997-6662
from 9am to 5pm and ask for the Bromeliad Extravaganza rate**

- **\$85.80** plus tax for Courtyard Room or
- \$105 plus tax for Deluxe Tower Room
- Discounted Breakfast (\$5 off to \$12.95)
- Free parking
- Rates are guaranteed by the hotel until August 26, 2025

For Registration, please complete the following:

Name #1 _____

Name #2 _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Credit Card # _____

Expiration date: cvv _____

_____ of Extravaganza registrations @ \$125 each = \$ _____

Make check payable to SBTPS and mail to:

Gregory Kolojeski
660 Saranac Dr
Winter Springs, FL 32708

or register online at:

<https://sbtps.square.site/>

For more information:

BromeliadX.com

seminolebromeliadsociety@gmail.com

2025 Bromeliad Extravaganza

Hosted by the Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society

Schedule of Events

Friday September 26

Noon–6:00 PM Vendor Sales Set Up (Convention Center)

Noon–5:30 PM Registration Open

6:00–7:30 PM Barbeque Buffet (Covered Patio)

7:30–9:00 PM Registrants Only–Plant Sales Open

Saturday September 27

8:30 AM–1:00 PM Registration Open

9:00 AM–4:00 PM Plant Sales Open (Convention Center)

9:00 AM–5:00 PM Rare Plant Drop-off (Hospitality Room)

2:00–2:45 PM *First Seminar: Leonardo M. Versieux (Brazil)*
Topic: Brazil: Bromeliads of the Tropics

3:00–3:45 PM Second Seminar

4:00–4:45 PM Third Seminar

4:00–5:00 PM Vendor Breakdown

6:00–7:00 PM Pre-Banquet Cash Bar (Covered Patio)

7:00–8:30 PM Italian Buffet Banquet (Convention Center)

8:00 PM Rare Plant Auction (Convention Center)

Schedule Subject to Change

Ramada Gateway Hotel

7470 W Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy 192, Kissimmee, FL 34747

BromeliadX.com



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

Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of every month.

Plant sales at 6:30 p.m. Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Informative programs, Show & Tell, plant sales, door prizes, raffle & refreshments

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



July Birthdays - Happy Birthday to Ray Hernandez and Beverly Millar



Sunshine Greetings

Please notify Verna Dickey of any illness, surgery, birth of a child, death in the family, or other concerns you or another member may have.
Call 813-244-3637 or email vernadickey@aol.com

Officers for 2025

President: Carol Wolfe 813-376-5251 bromstudio@hotmail.com
Vice President: Tom Wolfe 813-391-1542 bromscape@outlook.com
Secretary: Steve Byram 813-361-4035 byramsteve@gmail.com
Treasurer: Shellie Sweet 813-661-8264 ninjasmomshellie@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Marilyn Byram 813-563-1532 bgtbnewsletter@gmail.com
Directors:
Mike Foley 813-289-7888 MHF0813@aol.com
Taira Hoopes 321-230-1337 memispris@aol.com
Martha Kirby 813-810-7617 mjkirby21@gmail.com
Mark Victor 727-271-0498 chermar75@yahoo.com



Bromeliads Online

Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay 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>



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.

Where: Bill Castens Gymnasium Conference Roo
Northdale Park and Recreation
15510 Hooting Owls Place, Tampa, FL 33624

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

Informative programs, workshops, Show & Tell, plant sales, door prizes, raffle
Visitors welcome!

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