



THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY'S

MERISTEM

Mar-Apr 2026



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callizona*
AKA-
Mexican
Weevil
AKA-
“The Evil
Weevil”

CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OFFICERS

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email- deb.mcphail@yahoo.com

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Party Chair—Vacant

RAFFLE TICKETS—Greeter/Membership table volunteers—Dolly Dalton, Luli Westra

RAFFLE COMMENTARY—Larry Giroux

GREETERS/ATTENDANCE—Betty Ann Prevatt; Dolly Dalton (dollyd@comcast.net), Luli Westra

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THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY

March Auction: Sunday, Mar 15th, 2026

April Party will be: Sunday, Apr 19th, 2026

Our March and April Meetings will be at the
Ft. Myers– Lee County Garden Council Building
2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers.

The facility is north of the Edison Gardens parking lot and about 1/2 miles north of our previous meeting location— Covenant Presbyterian Church. Virginia Ave is approximately 3 miles north of the intersection of Colonial Blvd. and McGregor Blvd. and is the 2nd Street north of the Edison Gardens

For the March Meeting Please bring food and donations for our **Annual Auction**.

Our Birthday Party will be held in **April** at the Garden Council Building

There will be **NO** membership sales allowed at the March or April meetings.

THE Normal Monthly MEETING SCHEDULE –

12:30 – 1:15 Doors open, check-in, membership, door prize tickets, raffle ticket sales, members donate refreshments & raffle plants, Show & Tell area set-up, speaker or member plant sales

1:15 – 2:30 Call to order, announcements, at this time members will get their refreshments and enjoy their lunch during the featured Program

1:45—2:30 Featured Program

2:30 – 2:45 Door Prize. Plant sales continue.

2:45 – 3:15 Business meeting followed by Workshop

3:15 – 4:00 Show & Tell & Raffle drawing followed by Adjournment and Clean-Up

Surprisingly, a number of members did not pay their 2025 dues. Please catch up for 2026. MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2026 ARE DUE in January Please contact Betty Ann Prevatt and RENEW. Membership renewal fees are \$15/20 single/dual; New member dues: \$20/25, single/dual payable by check or cash at the meeting or by mail to Betty Ann Prevatt, CBS Treasurer 2902 Second Ave. Fort Myers, FL 33916

The Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society is an active Affiliate of:



Cryptanthus Society



BSI



FCBS



FM/LC GC

Annual March Auction

Date: March 15th 2026 Place: Garden Council Building

At our normal meeting place and time (The Lee County-Fort Myers Garden Council building on Virginia Avenue, third Sunday of March) we hold our Annual auction. If it is a nice day, we will hold the event on the grounds of the Gardens, if not, inside the Council building. Recently the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies has retired from sponsoring the "Evil Weevil" Eradication Program; historically (for over 30 years), the CBS has donated thousands of dollars to this endeavor, including 1/2 of the proceeds of our Auction. We will now just continue to use our funds to pay for membership fees and donations to various programs, plant organizations and events which include the WBC, FCBS, BSI, CSI, LCFMGC, Luther/ Padilla Research Center at Marie Selby Gardens, CBS Show and Sales and local nature preserves.

Each year we ask the membership to donate nice plants and plant related items to be auctioned. These can include bromeliads, orchids, other tropical plants, tools, art work and collectibles. We understand how our colder than normal February weather may have affected your plants; don't feel your donations have to be perfect. The items are split between a "silence auction" and a regular auction. This makes it possible for our members to bring in desirable, less expensive items as well as the possibly higher ticket items. All donations are appreciated. The more the better. There are always bargains to be had and we always have fun.

We do the auction in lieu of our March meeting. We still have refreshments, but no Sales, Program, Workshop, Show and Tell or Raffle. Please still bring food for the Break. Of course any and all items are appreciated and will help. The Society business is kept to a minimum. The following is the schedule we will try to keep to leave at a decent time.

11:30AM-12:00 Noon: The location will be the same as last year and the procedure will be similar. Volunteers should arrive at the LCFMGC building to begin setup of tables and chairs about 11:30 AM. Starting about then we need bodies to help in a variety of areas- Setup, record keepers, runners, people to fill out donation tags, holding area keepers and people to show the items and pass out the winners' successful winning stubs.

12:15-1:45PM: We will be accepting donations such as bromeliads, other tropical plants, bromeliad and gardening related items, books and art. Bromeliads should be clean and healthy and appropriately labeled. If you are unsure about the name ask other members for an ID. Certain items will be selected from donations for the SILENT AUCTION. All items will be numbered and labeled and will be displayed until the Auction begins. Please register for your bidding number at this time. You can not bid in either Auction without a number.

1:15 PM- 2:15 PM: Refreshment Break This is the time for review of auction items and submission of bids for Silent Auction items, which will be

set up on side tables. Each item will have a bidding sheet for you to write your bidding number and an offer. Bidders can continuously up the bid as they wish. Bidding will continue until the Silent Auction items are randomly selected and sold to the bidder who has bid the highest. Please bear with us, we will still be receiving donations and labeling them until about 1:45PM, so things may look like a mad house!

2:15 PM: We take our seats and the Auction will begin following a brief business meeting and/or announcements from our President. During the Auction, Silent Auction items will be randomly removed and the winner will be announced. Until an item is taken to the auctioneer who will announce the winner, you may continue to raise your written offer. The auctioneer will with the assistance of those who brought the item or other commentators, describe the item and auction off the items to the highest bidder during the regular Auction. After an item has been won it will be returned to a holding area or may be given directly to the winner. You will be given a claim stub with the price you bid and the item's number, immediately after you have won an item.

Conclusion of Auctions: At the completion of the auction you take your claim stubs to the cashiers and pay for your items with cash or check. After you have paid for your items, the claim stubs will need to be shown to the workers in the holding area...so hold on to them. Your items will be handed over to you if they haven't already been given to you when you won it. We ask that you help us avoid any confusion. We want everybody to get exactly what they have won as quickly as possible without mistakes. Please note that this year we will again be using a two part ticket; one part stays with the plant and the winning bidder receives one part immediately after winning the item, which they will need to claim their winnings. This makes it possible for bidders to check out early since you will know exactly what you owe by adding up your stubs; however, we encourage members to stay until the completion of the Auction when we will have several people available to check you out.

Please come to the Auction and have some fun while supporting the CBS and the many other programs and organizations to which we contribute. Come early to volunteer to help setup. We'll find a job for you. Bring plant and plant related donations for the "silent" and regular auctions. Remember, we will still have a Break with refreshments, so bring those favorite food items. And of course, come and bid on all the great items; cash and checks will be accepted. Commercial members...please be generous. Your donations are greatly appreciated and are often the highlight of the auction.

Just because the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies is no longer a sponsor of the Mexican Weevil eradication program, this does not mean that the problem with the weevil is over or that there are not other organizations and volunteer groups working toward relief. Apparently after decades of trials, and thousands of dollars in donations and volunteer time, no effective solution was discovered for total eradication of the Mexican Weevil.

However, ongoing programs such as the treatment of populations at

risk with a Honduran fly introduction, replacement of spiking plants of endanger species to reseed decimated areas and chemical treatment of bromeliads in cultivation continue... all of which are aimed at least decreasing the Weevil populations and its damage; these remain top priority of other state and private organizations.

Below are a couple of articles to refresh our memories of the history of the Mexican Weevil here in Florida and helpful information about identification and treatment of the problem.

Invasive Bromeliad Weevil: How to Identify and Respond

First published at www.selby.org by Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, Florida

Florida's large airplants (*Tillandsia utriculata*, *T. fasciculata*, *Guzmania monostachia*, and others) have been under attack for over three decades by an invasive pest called the Mexican bromeliad weevil (*Metamasius callizona*). The weevil chews holes in the leaf bases of the bromeliads, then lays its eggs. All life stages of the weevil may be present in the same plant, taking roughly 58 days to progress from egg to adult. As the larvae feed and mature, they eat the base, mining into the stem and often kill the plant. Unlike most bromeliads *T. utriculata* does not produce vegetative offsets after blooming. If they get weevil-attacked before flowering — and some *Tillandsias* can take up to 10 years to bloom — they are unable to produce seed, contributing to their dwindling population.

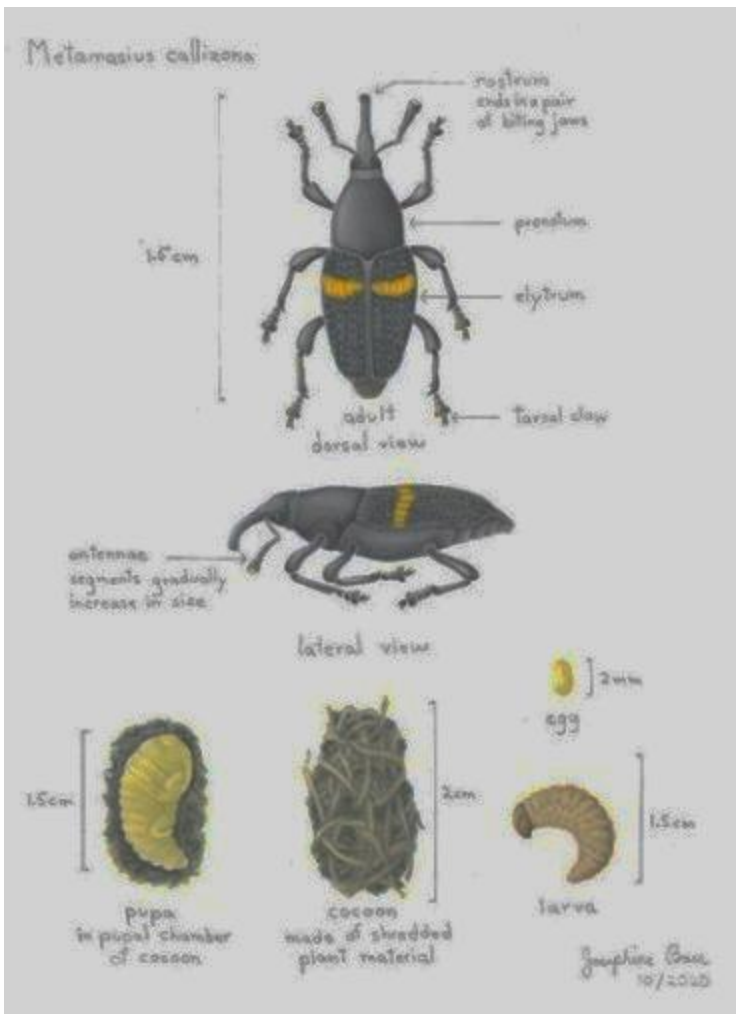
The Mexican bromeliad weevil was first encountered in a nursery in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in 1989. It was brought in through a shipment of bromeliads imported from Veracruz, Mexico. The beetle was unsuccessfully treated and within two months the weevil was found both north and south of Brevard County. By 2009 it was found in 23 additional counties and *Tillandsia utriculata* and *T. fasciculata* were added to the list of endangered species. In addition to attacking bromeliads in public lands, parks, and preserves the weevil is also known to infest private bromeliad collections and nurseries in which many more species of bromeliad may be mined and killed.

Adult beetles range from 11 to 16 mm long and are black with a thin orange band width-wise across their elytra (the hardened forewing of beetles). These invasive beetles, when observed, should be terminated as they do not have the same natural predators they do in their native habitats.

Citizen Science can be used to help track the spread of the beetle by documenting populations of *T. utriculata* and any damage that may be caused by the Mexican bromeliad weevil. If you find them or suspected damage caused by them, please upload your observations onto the iNaturalist database.



A common scene in Florida since 1989, a *Tillandsia utriculata*, completely destroyed by the Mexican weevil. If the meristems of certain bromeliads, which do not produce offsets vegetatively, are destroyed before maturity, then blooming, seed production and seed dispersal is not possible. Photo credit: Teresa Marie Dreams.



The Weevil Is In My Collection! Now What?

By Karen Andreas

First appeared in the FCBS Newsletter, February 2009

In each issue of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies newsletter, Drs. Howard Frank, Ron Cave and Teresa Cooper publish a report on the Mexican bromeliad weevil and their progress in the effort to control this menace. What can the back yard grower do if the weevil makes its way into your collection?

Because the bromeliad community occupies such a small niche in the world of big chemical companies, there are no chemical solutions labeled for use against the Mexican bromeliad weevil. In the absence of research and solutions by the chemical companies, we have to rely on anecdotal evidence - according to those who have fought the weevil, what has worked best to eradicate the weevil from back yard collections.

First of all, you cannot fend off the weevil with preventative spraying. You never know when and where the weevil will visit your collection, and if you are doing preventative spraying, you are wasting expensive chemicals for no sure reason.

Among bromeliad growers who have successfully fought the Mexican bromeliad weevil, the chemical of choice is imidicloprid, made by Bayer and often called Merit; it is in Advantage Garden, which you can find at garden centers as a spray. This is a systemic chemical, which means that it will last for several months in the bromeliad leaves. The larvae of the Mexican bromeliad weevil will ingest imidicloprid as it eats the bromeliad leaves and will die. Imidicloprid is not harmful to birds or animals (it actually is an ingredient found in some flea medicine). You can use the rose formula straight from the bottle. For the tree and shrub formula, use 1-2 teaspoons per gallon. There is no point in treating your entire collection if you do not currently have a problem. Treat only new plants coming into your collection or only if you have a confirmed infestation.

By the way, one beneficial side effect of imidicloprid is that it works wonders on black scale.

Remember, the main way the Mexican bromeliad weevil is distributed is by people transporting bromeliads from an infested area. Do not take, swap or buy plants from areas of known infestation unless you know they have been inspected and treated for the Mexican bromeliad weevil. Most commercial growers already have a management program in place; many small growers and hobbyists do not. If you find that one fabulous bromeliad you just have to have and the source gives you no reassurance about the weevil, isolate it from your collection when you get home and treat it with imidicloprid.

Never take bromeliads from their habitat. Many of Florida's bromeliads are endangered or threatened. Collecting plants from lands such as parks is illegal. In addition, you could be helping to spread the Mexican bromeliad weevil.

Originally published in the newsletter of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, February 2009. (<https://fcbs.org/>)

(Editor's note: Seven, a commonly used topical pesticide has shown some effectiveness against the Mexican weevil. Imidicloprid has been shown to affect adversely the bee population even in small doses. Using it in a closed shadehouse or greenhouse on non-blooming bromeliads and as a soak may minimize exposure to pollen collecting insects. Personal body contamination should be avoided by using appropriate safety equipment and precautions.)

**46th Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society's Anniversary Party
Ft. Myers– Lee County Garden Council Building
2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers.
Sunday, April 19th 2026**

As of the printing of this Newsletter the 46th Anniversary of the founding of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society by a small dedicated group of people headed by Gene McKenzie will be celebrated this year at the location we have our general meetings...the Ft. Myers– Lee County Garden Council Building 2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers.

IF A MEMBER WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER THEIR HOME FOR OUR PARTY, PLEASE CONTACT JULIE STEIN ASAP TO ALLOW TIME FOR CHANGE OF VENUE. THANKS.

Members are asked to bring a favorite pot luck dish to share, such as casseroles, vegetables with dip, little sandwiches, cakes, cookies and about anything else that is edible. CBS supplies the paper and plastic goods, iced tea, punch and a meat entree. If you prefer other cold drinks, bring your own, there will be plenty of ice.

Try to arrive around noon with your goodies so that the tables can be arranged buffet style. For those of you that cannot get there early, don't worry it is always closer to 1PM or later that we start to eat and the festivities begin.

After lunch there will be a raffle of bromeliad plants and items brought by members as gifts (no, you don't have to wrap and ribbon them). But, they should be nice, clean bromeliads or bromeliad related items that anyone would want to win. We have opened donations to other plant families such as orchids, ferns, fruit trees, native plants, etc. We are a diverse group of growers, who enjoy many different plants, so if you have extras of other types of plants donate them to our special holiday raffle. Tickets are still 3/\$1, so buy a lot. Friendship Plants are also welcome... these are those extra plants from your garden that might be of value to other members. These freebies are always appreciated. But please, please...make sure you spray your plants or wash them very well...we don't want any members to bring diseases back to their collection.

New members or anyone that needs more information, contact your Editor Larry Giroux at 239-850-4048 or Julie Stein at 919-522-1182. Bring your significant other, friends and relatives and expose them to our hobby, while enjoying the hospitality of our society. If there is any additional information we will pass it on as the date draws near.

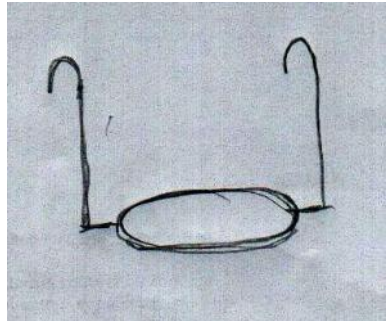
Minutes of the CBS General Meeting LC/FM Garden Council Building January 18th, 2026

Call to order: 1:18 by President Julie Stein

In Attendance: 24. **New Member:** Barbara Barton

Announcements: Julie asked if there was anyone willing to host our April Anniversary/Spring Party, since she cannot do it this year, as she will be in California judging at the World Conference. She also reported that the Garden Center here would appreciate any bromeliad donations we might have for their garden. The Garden Council has dramatically removed old and dense plantings of bromeliads in the area designated for the “Bromeliad Garden” and there is now room for many more shade-loving plants as well as those that can tolerate more sun. Please bring plants to donate to the garden to our next meeting. Lastly, she noted that the Garden Center receives grants based on how many visitors come to the garden, so she encouraged everyone to stop by to sign their attendance sheets and visit the garden.

Program: Jason Mellica, an enthusiastic botanist and hybridizer out of Sarasota, gave a lively talk on how he grows many of his bromeliads much like they grow in nature. He says if we can mimic how they thrive naturally, they will be much “happier”. For example, some *Neoregelias* grow high up in the forest canopy, attached to the upper branches of trees, which allows for fantastic air circulation and ideal light, gently filtered through the tree leaves.



So, he likes to nestle his pots into circular metal hangers and hang them high up on bars in his shade houses. They love it, he says. Jason also showed us many of his new hybrids, explaining why he chooses the plants that he does for crossing. For instance, if he wants a plant with bands, he will

This is a drawing of the style of galvanized plant hanger used by Jase. Unlike typical 3 or 4 wire hangers, this type will not cut into the plant and is less likely to slip off the bar from which it is hung.

choose a *Neoregelia* Tiger hybrid to cross because the bandings will probably show up in the offspring. Additionally, if he wants a plant with curvy leaves, he will cross a Neo with really thin leaves with one that has much thicker leaves. One last interesting thing he showed us was a beautiful, very full multiple *Neoregelia*, where the “mother” was still completely intact, but had not yet flowered. He called this an example of “advanced traits”, his



Julie Stein donated a pair of the hybrids made from the cross of *Aechmea recurvata* x *cyclindrata*, registered as *Aechmea* 'Suenos'. The plant donated is an un-named hybrid probably made by David Shigii. Photo of 'Suenos' is from Tropiflora Nursery's Cargo Report, where this plant is usually available.

personal term for when a plant pups without flowering.

Workshop: Julie asked everyone to put on their thinking caps and come up with some ideas for future workshops. Several ideas were passed around, like the best way to re-pot our bromeliads when they become too big for their containers. Anyone and everyone are welcome to share ideas, and even help put on workshops. As you come up with possible Workshop ideas, please don't wait, send them directly to Julie at FLAGIRL56@aol.com.

Door Prizes: We gave away two beautiful plants brought in by Julie Stein. The plants were both *Aechmea* 'Suenos' hybrids, probably created by David Shiigi at his farm in Hawaii.

Show & Tell: Members brought about 15 plants for Show & Tell. Dale Kammerlohr led the discussion and donated many of his own beautiful, unique hybrids which he's been working on for years, to the Raffle. The *Neoregelias*, which Dale donated do not have names or parentage, but rather a hybridization number and are not registered. Please check with Dale if you are thinking of registering his plants with a name.

Raffle: Dr. Larry Giroux with Luli Westra's and Betsy Burdette's help gave away about 15 plants including many *Tillandsias*, *Neoregelias*, and a *Billbergia Casa Blanca*, which, as Larry pointed out, is particularly slow-growing because of all the white in the leaves (with diminished chlorophyll).

Meeting adjourned: 4:03

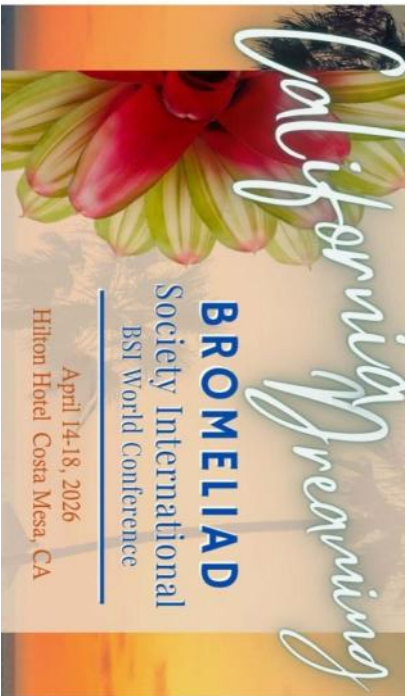
Respectfully submitted by
Alison Ackerman

***Billbergia Casa Blanca* is a hybrid of *Billbergia Caramba* x *Afterglow* made by Bob Spivey. Photo from an internet sales ad by Etsy.**





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The BSI WBC 2026 will include speaker presentations, a judged plant show, a special plant sale, a rare plant auction, bus tours, a banquet with keynote speaker, and more! For additional information, to register and make hotel arrangements go to <https://bromeliadconference.com>

This is your March-April 2026 CBS Newsletter