



# THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY'S

**MERISTEM**     *May-June 2025*



*Large clump of Quesnelia marmorata at the Edison/ Ford Winter Estates*

Photo by Larry Giroux

# CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OFFICERS

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**FALL SHOW CHAIR—TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON—Acting Chair: Julie Stein**

**WORKSHOP CHAIRPERSON—Acting Chair: Julie Stein**

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**DOOR PRIZE—Debbie McPhail 239-332-4607 or 239-910-3836 ;**

**email- deb.mcphail@yahoo.com**

**HOSPITALITY (Monthly Refreshments)—Diane Cornelison 239-233-7037**

**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**

**SHOW & TELL—Dale Kammerlohr 863-558-0647**

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# THE CALOOSAHATCHEE BROMELIAD SOCIETY

**May Meeting Sunday, May 18th, 2025**  
**June Meeting: Sunday, June 15th, 2025**

Our May and June 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/ Ford Gardens

Please bring food, raffle plants, Show and Tell Items and your extra plants for Friendship plants give-away.

There will be NO membership sales allowed at the May meeting; sales information for the June meeting will be announced next month.

**WE ARE CHANGING THE MEETING SCHEDULE ON A TRIAL BASES— PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING**

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 2024 dues. Please catch up for 2025. **MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2025 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



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## May Program “Billbergias” By Dave Johnston

**PLEASE NOTE THAT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING AND THE PROGRAM WILL BEGIN AS SOON AS EVERYONE SITS WITH THEIR FOOD. THE PROGRAM SHOULD START NO LATER THAN 1:45PM.**

For the May Program we are welcoming back Dave Johnston, owner and operator of *Bromeliads Galore*, a collectors nursery in Pinellas County. In the nearly four decades that Dave has been working with bromeliads, he has acquired a wealth of knowledge, which he has shared with plant societies...9 different programs to the CBS alone. His organizational skills have benefited the West Coast Bromeliad Society, the Tampa Bay Bromeliad Guild and the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies where he has repeatedly served in nearly all the Officers' positions. At this meeting, Dave will give a new program entitled- “Billbergias”. As usual he will be bringing a group of special plants from his collection of over 1000 plants for exhibit and for sale. The program will start about 1:45PM, so plan on getting there early to buy plants.

## May Workshop

We are in need of volunteers to present short workshops on your choice of topics. Please see Julie Stein for details.

## The 2025 CBS Bromeliad Show and Sale

Very soon the CBS Board will take a consensus of the membership as to whether to host our Biennial Bromeliad Show in conjunction with our Annual Bromeliad Sale at the Edison/ Ford Winter Estates. For us to have a successful Show we need to have the active support of the membership. Chairs and volunteers must commit to working on the numerous, various committees for the 3 day event. Of course exhibits and exhibitors will be needed.

BTW, one of the rules for showing plants in the Horticultural Divisions, is that you have owned the plants for 6 months. So if you plan on purchasing a plant for exhibit, know that our Show is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 5th.

## Bromeliad Exposé' By Larry Giroux

At our Anniversary Party, which was held at the Garden Council Building, our membership was treated to a walking tour of the Bromeliad Gardens at the Edison/ Ford Winter Estates.

For many years Tom Cowell, Debbie Hughes and the staff of the Edison/ Ford Winter Estates with

donations from so many generous bromeliad growers and sellers have created a large colorful area devoted to bromeliads. A large majority of the plants in the garden are bromeliad species with a few of the older hybrids lining the wide walkways. There is an on going process to provide plants labels or replace labels as well as to give each specific genus, species, hybrid, etc. it's appropriate lighting conditions for optimal growth.

In the following pages I've included narratives and pictures of some of these plants that we enjoyed on our walk. I encourage all plant lovers to make an effort to check out the bromeliad gardens.



On the front cover is a magnificent clump of *Quesnelia marmorata* growing epiphytically on a three legged stand. We were quite lucky to see this cluster at its peak bloom. This plant is endemic to the areas from Rio de Janeiro to Espirito Santo in Brazil; usually growing in tall trees up to 900 meters elevation.



There are two cultivars, which are popular and together with the normal form of *Q. marmorata* are often exhibited in shows. These are *Quesnelia marmorata* 'Tim Plowman' and the variegated 'Rafael Oliveira'

On the previous page is a photo of the cultivar *Quesnelia* 'Tim Plowman' with its curly leaves. It is a running joke that exhibitors use hair rollers on the leaves before a show to maintain the curls. (Photo by Dr. Larry Giroux). To the left is the variegated *Quesnelia marmorata* 'Rafael Oliveira'. This was discovered by Rafael Oliveira de Faria near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1995 and introduced into

cultivation by Chester Skotak. (Photo by Dr. Larry Giroux)

The picture to the right by Eric Gouda, shows the typical inflorescent found on this species and its cultivars. Although there are about 23 other *Quesnelia* species, there are no others that look like *Q. marmorata* in shape, which more resembles a *Billbergia*. As a matter of fact, when first described in the 19th century, it was



named *Billbergia vittata* and *Billbergia marmorata* as noted in the included plate drawing. It actually wasn't until 1965 that its current name was finally decided. It has a long history of name and genus changes.

*Billbergia marmorata* Lem. (1855)

*Libonia marmorata* De Jonghe ex Lem. (1855)

*Billbergia vittata* sensu Baker (1889)

*Billbergia speciosa* sensu Wittm. (1891)

*Quesnelia effusa* Lindm. (1891)

*Aechmea marmorata* (Lem) Mez (1892)

*Quesnelia marmorata* (Lem.) Read (1965)



Another species seen on our walk through the gardens was *Alcanterea imperialis* as well as probably a cultivar of it. This very grandiose appearing plant both in its foliage stage and especially during blooming has become a status symbol in many gardens. Its mature 4-5 foot rosette of wide leaves makes it unique as does its “hair” or “grass pups” that develop long before it blooms and then there is its bloom, which when it finally develops after 7-15 years will reach over 6 feet tall and be covered with thousands of large flowers See included pictures.



Although un-tagged, presumably these two plants are *Alcanterea*s, the one to the right is likely *Alc. imperialis* and the one in the foreground is a cultivar of *imperialis*. They are probably years away from blooming. Photo by Dr. Larry Giroux.

To the right is a photo by Pedro Nahoum of the long anticipated inflorescence of *Alcantarea imperialis* with its numerous large flowers.

For nearly 150 years this plant oscillated between the genera *Tillandsia*, *Vriesea* and *Alcantarea*. There are now over 40 species included in this relatively new genus, few have the grandeur of *Alc. imperialis*.



An isolated grass pup of *Alc. imperialis*. Photo from [www.palmtalk.com](http://www.palmtalk.com).

A specimen of *Androlepsis skinneri* was seen in berry stage with its long white/ yellow inflorescence hanging in the walkway during our tour. It was obvious that it was getting its preferred bright light exposure by its rich dark red colored foliage. This is another example of a unique bromeliad due to its dioecious nature. That is when a species has male and female flowers on separate plants and fertile seeds are not produced unless at least one of each plant is available to the pollenating vector such as birds, ants or other insects. Another interesting fact about this plant is that in cultivation even with plants of both sexes present, non-viable seeds are usually produced according to internet sources. Offset

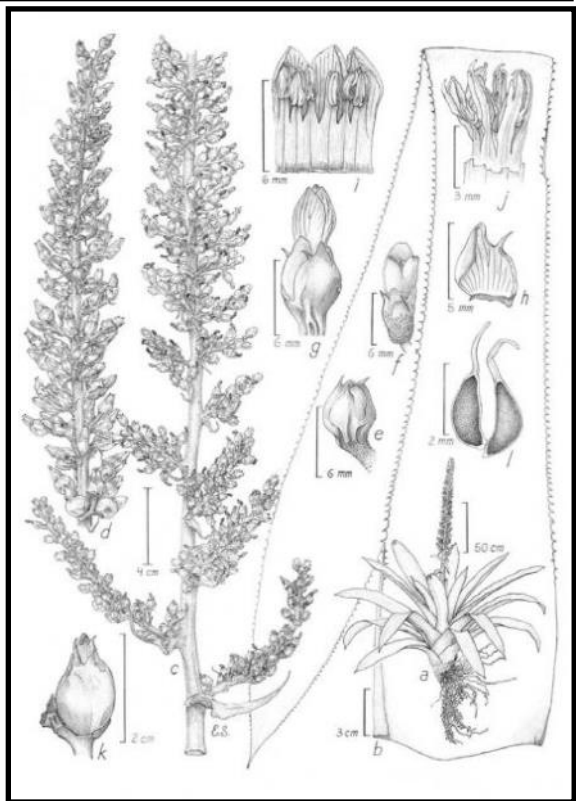
propagation is the most reliable method to obtain new plants. Also bizarre about this plant is that it was first identified in Peru and then thousands of miles away in Central America. Did the indigenous people carry it to different areas?



There are only 3 species in this genus and the other two have blue/ lavender flower petals. I could not find whether they were dioecious.

To the right is the descriptive drawing of *Androlepsis skinneri*. It demonstrates the difference between the male and the female plants, namely, the narrower, more compact inflorescence of the female plant and the longer lax branches of the male inflorescence.

Although seeds are produced in cultivation they seldom spout.



*Androlepis skinneri*. a, habit; b, leaf; c, male inflorescence; d, detail of the female inflorescence; e, button; f, flower in anthesis; g, post-anthesis flower; h, sepal; i, open flower showing detail of androecium; j, androecium; k, fruit; l, seeds (S. Sinaca 238 and P. Valdivia 1250 and 1402). Artist: Edmundo Saavedra

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Register at Trybooking <https://www.trybooking.com/CXJKS>

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THE BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND



**2025 Bromeliad Extravaganza**  
September 26th to 27th, 2025  
Kissimmee, Florida (near Disney)  
Conference Registration Fee: \$125  
([Online Registration](#) or [Mail-In](#))

Sponsored by the [Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies](#) and hosted by the [Seminole Bromeliad & Tropical Plant Society](#), this will be Florida's biggest Bromeliad event of the year!

The **2025 Bromeliad Extravaganza** will include a Friday night dinner (BBQ buffet), three Saturday afternoon seminars (including [Leonardo Versieux](#) from Brazil), a Saturday night banquet (Italian buffet) with a rare plant auction, and last (but not least), the biggest Bromeliad sale of the year in Florida. The Bromeliad sale (an area of almost 6,000 square feet) is open to the public on Saturday from 9 to 4.

The hotel is the **Ramada Gateway**, 7470 W Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy 192, Kissimmee, FL 34747.

Register online today at:

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

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*Bromelia humilis*— Upper picture is *B. humilis* growing at the Edison/Ford Bromeliad Garden. Below is the dramatic change that occurs during its blooming.  
Photos by Dr. Larry Giroux

**This is your May-June 2025 CBS Newsletter**  
***Please note the change in the meeting schedule!***