

Gainesville Bromeliad Society Meeting Minutes - January 25, 2026

Brian Dey called the meeting to order at 2pm. Attending were 27 members, 2 non-members and 10 invited guests, He welcomed all to the Sandy Burnett Commemorative Program, opened the silent auction of 4 plants and turned the floor over to Steven Provost.

Steve said the Sandy Burnett Commemorative Program will be held annually to honor the memory and contributions of Sandy to our bromeliad society. Sandy, who passed away last July, had been a dedicated member of the GBS for 16 years. She served at various times as the President, Vice-President, and Treasurer of our group, and also was a delegate to the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, where Steve met her years before he moved to Gainesville and joined the GBS. Sandy always volunteered for GBS plant sales and community out-reach events promoting bromeliads where her warmth, knowledge, and enthusiasm convinced many people to join the GBS. She also helped at the Extravaganza, a multi-day event put on by the FCBS.

Sandy was also involved with the Gainesville Garden Club, the Matheson History Museum, Paynes Prairie State Park and the Ukulele Club of Gainesville.

Steve introduced Whitney, Sandy's brother, who had been invited to this meeting, along with the Ukulele Club of Florida.

Eight members of The Ukulele Club of Florida, led by Mary Fukuyama, then performed three numbers in remembrance of Sandy. Everyone enjoyed their rendition of Country Roads, Everything's Gonna Be Alright, and This Land is Your Land.

Brian said this meeting will be an educational "how-to repot" presentation featuring him, Bob Stevens, and Steve demonstrating their repotting methods. Steve said Sandy always encouraged him to include some guest speakers to present basic, essential information to help attendees who are new to growing bromeliads, thus it is fitting to have such a meeting annually as an honor to Sandy.

Bob, Brian, then Steve in turn repotted a plant, each using a slightly different soil mixture and technique. There is no one right way. Brian's demonstration was the most dramatic in that he separated 3 Dyckias while gloveless without losing a drop of blood! He dumped the plants out of the pot, cut away at the connected roots until he was able to separate a plant, all without ever touching the top.

For soil mixtures:

- Bob prefers a combination of the \$2 composted soil from Lowes, perlite, coco husks or wood chips (any kind except fresh), some worm casings, slow release fertilizer at the root level.
- Brian grows agave, aloe, succulents, and many kinds of plants in addition to bromeliads and makes a large batch of potting soil for all varieties instead of a particular soil for bromeliads. His mix is 50% inorganic and 50% organic material. He includes some of the old soil, perlite, finely chopped coconut husks, Miracle Grow Tropical, pumice or chicken grit, Dynamite Slow Release fertilizer, sand.

- Steve uses equal amounts of composted soil and perlite with a couple of cups of 18-6-8 Florida fertilizer.

Though their soil mixtures and repotting styles varied, there were many points of agreement:

- All three wet the mixture after they make it or before use.
- All used the same basic tools - sharp clippers, serrated knife, long tweezers to clean out debris.
- All agreed the plant should be stabilized after repotting. Bob uses his thumbs to pack in the soil and skewers or chopsticks to help stabilize it. Steve pounds the soil in with a stick.
- All add labels with the genus and species. Steve puts 2 labels in each pot. He gets his from DP Industries in Maine, as they are durable and have all sizes. Use pencil that won't fade.
- All agreed the old roots should be cut off prior to replanting. Don't throw away the mother plant! It may produce more pups.
- Be cautious that you don't break off a small pup while you are separating your broms. Brian said watch out for that when you are pulling off bottom leaves, too.

Bob uses Styrofoam at the bottom of large pots to add bulk and cut down on weight. Steve recommends getting a blade sharpener for your clippers to keep them sharp.

Tootie recommended using cut-up mini-blinds for plant labels and Julieta said you can get a variety of free plastic pots at Grow Hub.

A brief business meeting followed:

- Brian introduced the new officers this year, Brian is the President, Steven Provost is Vice President, Gail Roser is Secretary, Mary White is Treasurer, Bob Stevens will be an "at-large" board member.
- Steve said our 1st plant sale will be February 15th at the Blossom, Brew and BBQ plant sale sponsored by the Gainesville Garden Club at First Magnitude Brewing Company from 2 - 6 pm. We have plants to sell at this event but can accept more if you have any to donate. We need volunteers to help with the sale.
- Jason Mellica will be the speaker at the February meeting. Tom Wolfe was scheduled to speak in March but is still recovering from knee surgery so had to cancel. Steve is working on a replacement. In April, Ray Lemieux will be our guest speaker.
- Mary was unable to attend but provided Gail with the Treasurer's report: \$589.02 in checking and \$4,066.27 in savings.
- Don't forget the World Bromeliad Conference April 14-18th 2026 in Costa Mesa, California. The speaker information is now on their web site.
- Steve asked members to report on their plant damage following the projected week of cold weather. Which plants survived covered or uncovered?

Following the meeting, there was a plant raffle and all went home with a new plant. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40pm