

Gainesville Bromeliad Society Meeting Minutes - April 26, 2026- **DRAFT 2**

Brian Dey called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm, welcoming the 28 attendees and Ray Lemieux.

Steve introduced Ray Lemieux and said he lives in Sarasota and has been growing bromeliads for over 30 years. He is the Vice-President of the Sarasota Bromeliad Society, a former employee of Tropiflora, and a hybridizer specializing in Tillandsia and terrestrial bromeliads. Though greatly impacted by and still recovering from hurricanes Helene and Milton, he has brought a nice selection of plants to discuss today.

Ray described, one by one, his tableful of favorite bromeliads, his hybrids, and some unusual, interesting specimens. One mounted large cluster of *T. ionantha*, (commonly called “Blushing Bride” due to the brilliant flush of color when it blooms) had 4 different varieties in just the bottom portion of the mounting, each one with a different bloom color (including yellow). They can take a good deal of sun and will make a brilliant display when in bloom. Ray uses zip ties or strapping to attach his Tillandsias, not glue.

Ray showed Tillandsia ‘Pink Lemonade’, a beautiful hybrid recently released by Tropiflora. Ray hybridized that one from *T. exserta* x *T. chiapensis* in 2014 while employed at Tropiflora. He showed both parents, too, and said that *T. chiapensis* is used in a lot of hybrids. It was the pollen parent in Tillandsia ‘Regal Rene,’ a pricey, gorgeous plant he got at the 2024 WBC in West Palm Beach.

One favorite of his is *T. intermedia*, an unusual Tillandsia from Mexico that grows long, thin, and curly, with offsets shooting off from the bloom and also from the base of the plant. It forms long clusters of intertwined plants that look like they escaped from a Dr. Seuss book.

Ray has hybridized some interesting combinations. For instance, he combined the very robust *T. Fasciculata* ‘Tropiflora’ with the feathery *T. funckiana*. The interesting cross looked like a bunch of pine needles, is much smaller than ‘Tropiflora’ yet larger than *T. funckiana*. Ray combined a Brazilian species with a Mexican one from a totally different habitat, disregarding those who said such disparities would make them incompatible. He said the cross turned out quite nice. Interestingly, both parents were spiky but the cross is not.

Ray generously provided practical advice throughout his talk:

- Ray advised moving plants around to find where they best thrive. He showed two examples of *Tillandsia fasciculata* ‘Tropiflora,’ one had been in full sun and was a beautiful red color. The other one had been in more shade and was green and not as large.
- Ray said you can feed epiphytic Tillandsias with the Miracle Grow hose dispenser. The excess runs off, unlike with tank bromeliads. He sprays his once a month. Some clients he provides

plants to want flowers frequently and ask that he fertilize more often. He obliges and feeds those twice a month, but too much can damage the plant.

- Ray said for stingy or slow puppers, you can stab the plant right in the center to encourage it to produce offsets. He demonstrated the technique on an *Encholirium horridum*. Do not go all the way through the plant, just damage it a bit in the center. It won't flower after that but it will be stimulated to make pups.
- Ray said some plants with stolens have roots in the stolen. When separating the stolen, trim the old stuff off so the roots are exposed. He brought two *Deuterocohnia* - a hurricane-damaged *brevifolia* mound over a foot across and high, and *D. longipetala*. The *brevifolia* mound was so densely packed with little plants with long stolens/roots extending through the mound. You could clearly see the roots in a cut stolen of *D. longipetala*.

Brian thanked Ray for his talk and initiated the business meeting.

- He reminded all to bid on the 3 Silent Auction plants brought in by Nancy Mason.
- GBS brochures update- As we need to print new brochures, Brian had asked Leo Hernandez to draw something for the cover. Leo provided a beautiful bromeliad drawing we can use.
- The March minutes were distributed to the members prior to this meeting. An error noted by a member has been fixed. The corrected minutes will be redistributed to the members for review.

Mary gave the treasurer's report.

- As of 4/22/26, we have \$1080.02 in checking and \$4,467.28 in savings.
- Mary welcomed the new member who joined today: Sandra Pozzetta.
- Most members have paid their 2026 dues and Mary will remind those who have not.

Show and Tell

Nancy Mason brought in two plants for Show and Tell. Her beautiful *Tillandsia caputa-medusae*, an epiphyte that is indigenous to Mexico and Central America, gets its name from Medusa in Greek mythology. Its appearance resembles Medusa's head of wriggling snakes. Nancy has had her *Tillandsia flabellate* for many years. It is a terrestrial bromeliad that pups freely and blooms regularly each Spring.

Steve said:

- The May meeting will be at the Millhopper Library and the speaker will be Kenneth Stokes. He will give advice on what to look for if you want to be a bromeliad collector. The June meeting will be at the Tower Road library branch.
- Steve reminded all he is compiling a list of cold-weather tolerant bromeliads. Please continue to give him your observations so he can make a comprehensive list.
- Steve reminded all of upcoming events
 - May 2nd - the Master Gardener's Plant Sale at the Alachua County Agriculture and Equestrian Center in Newberry from 9 - 1pm.

- Fall plant sale at the Alachua County Agriculture and Equestrian Center will be October 17 from 9 - 4. As Steve is a member of the Gainesville Garden Club, we will have a booth. Brie Arthur, (The Plant Lady on YouTube) is the main speaker. She has been on the PBS show, Growing A Greener World and is known for foodscaping -mixing edibles with other plants.

The business meeting concluded at 3:12 and was followed by the Raffle.