

Gainesville Bromeliad Society Meeting Minutes - August 23, 2026

Brian Dey called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm. He welcomed the 22 members present and opened bidding for the silent auction.

Steve reminded all that the library prohibits commercial sales in their meeting rooms. Members can select and set aside broms to buy. The guest speaker will take the selected plants outside and collect payment in the parking lot after the meeting.

Steve introduced the guest speaker, Dave Johnston, a member of the Florida West Coast Bromeliad Society, a bromeliad grower for 41 years, and the owner of Bromeliads Galore in Pinellas Park. He grows over a thousand different varieties of Bromeliads, and has also created some beautiful bilbergia hybrids. We asked him to speak on some lesser known Bromeliad species and he has created a program titled, "Orthophytum, Sincoraea and Hybrids thereof."

Dave said he chose to speak about Orthophytum and Sincoraea together, as they have many similarities. Both of them are native to Eastern Brazil. The 11 accepted species of Sincoraea are found in Bahia and in Minas Gerais. The 66 accepted species of Orthophytum are found in those states, too, but have a wider range that includes 4 additional Brazilian states. Most Orthophytum species are lithophytes, with the rest being terrestrial. Sincoraeas grow on rocks and cliff faces, but keep in mind there is some dirt and debris on those surfaces. They can be grown as terrestrials in a loose, well-draining potting mix. Both Orthophytum and Sincoraea grow at a low enough elevation to survive here. Dave said bromeliads should have a native habitat of under 3,000 meters to grow well in Florida. Most Orthophytum species in Brazil exist in a temperature range of 55 - 93 degrees while the Sincoraeas enjoy a 67 - 86 degree range so they can take the Florida heat, but not the full summer sun. Dave said some of both genus can acclimate to colder temperatures. The rainfall in their native habitat is similar to Florida. Dave said he has had to use a fungicide on them to get through the summer, though.

Dave's slide show included many different forms and colors of Orthophytum. He pointed out pups on the inflorescence of one, commented that Orthophytum gurkenii doesn't do well in Florida, and said Orthophytum zanonii is one of his favorites. Hybridizers from around the world have made many beautiful Orthophytum hybrids with fun names like 'Spark of Insanity', 'S'More', 'Copper Penny', 'Heavy Metal'. Next came the bigenerics, with Orthophytum crossed with Neoregelia, Aechmea, and Cryptanthus.

Dave said many of the Sincoraea species look similar to each other. S. Navioides has been used to make many hybrids. There were slides of many beautiful bigenerics. The two adjacent photos of the bigeneric, xSincoraechmea Sunburst did not look at all like they were the same plant, The immature plant was a pale gray and the blooming one a vibrant red, yellow, and orange. One standout, xSincoregelia Supernova was created by Lisa Vinzant in Hawaii. Dave commented that you can grow that here, but don't expect the colors to match the vibrance of the one grown in Hawaii.

Dave said most of the photos in his slide show came from florapix.nl. They have excellent photos in a searchable database. BSI frequently uses them for the photos on their website.

A short business meeting followed the presentation.

Brian said:

- We're developing the program for next year and would like your thoughts on speakers, field trips, etc. Expect a survey to be emailed to you soon. Please complete it and share any thoughts and ideas you may have to make the meetings more enjoyable or better for you.
- If you need a name tag, let Gail Roser know and she will make one for you.
- Some brochures are being made with Leo's artwork on the cover to pass out at the Fall plant sale.
- July minutes were sent to all. There was a motion to approve, it was seconded and all approved.
- Regarding the October 25th field trip to Cedar Lakes Woods and Gardens:
 - Bring a bromeliad for Cedar Lakes. The entry fee is discounted with your bromeliad.
 - The club will pay your entry fee. (Normally \$12, but will be \$9 for us with your brom.)
 - We'll meet at Hobby Lobby at 1pm to caravan to Williston. Car pooling is encouraged.
 - You will get an email with complete information closer to the field trip date.

Mary gave the Treasurer's report: As of 8/17/26 we had \$362.02 in Checking and \$4,468.78 in Savings.

Steve said:

- We have 3 more meetings this year. The September 27th speaker, Terri Bert will give a talk on "How to Be a Bromeliad Collector." We will be back at the Millhopper Library. Our field trip to Cedar Lakes will be in October and November is our holiday gathering and officer election.
- The FCBS will hold the 2027 Bromeliad Extravaganza on July 17 & 18th, 2027 in the Miccosukee Casino and Resort in Miami. The South Florida Bromeliad Society will sponsor it and the theme will be "You Can Bet on Bromeliads."
- The 2028 World Bromeliad Conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand in May 2028.
- Steve reminded all of the Gainesville Garden Club and Master Gardener Program Fall plant sale at the Alachua County Agriculture and Equestrian Center on October 17 from 9 - 4. Please email Steve if you can volunteer for this event.
 - Brie Arthur, the Plant Lady on YouTube, will be the featured speaker. She is a distinguished horticulturalist and an engaging speaker.
 - Mary said it will be even bigger this year and will not conflict with a home football game. She suggested that you bring your plant donations to the September meeting - potted please.

The business meeting was followed by the Raffle. Thanks to all who donated plants.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.