



The Rob Branch Labor Day Sale

by

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After a summer that was feast or famine for rainfall and one of the hottest on record, it was time to take a trip to Sarasota for the sale that officially kicks off the fall sale season. If you were one of the folks waiting at the gate for the sale to start, you got to see all of the rain you wanted. Rob was kind enough to open the gates a little early for prospective customers to take cover before the torrential downpour started.

Dr. Rossi was loading up plants from Faith Bishock's booth to take back to St. Johns Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve as folks entered the sale. Just across from Faith's booth, Aaron Apsley was selling artwork and tote bags. Other vendors were present selling a variety of foliage plants, bromeliads, and sweets that allowed a buyer to stock a tropical foliage garden and enjoy a dessert after they were done.

Over a dozen CFPACS members were present at the sale putting the final touches on their gardens during the growing season. There was plenty of foot traffic; enough to nearly empty Faith's booth by the time we left. In my own case, a *Chambeyronia pyriformis* (formerly *Kentiopsis*) made its way into one of the custom tote bags purchased from Aaron Apsley. Several other palm fans were carrying plants out of the gate, some with plans on stopping by the succulent society before heading back to their home gardens.

It was great to see everyone and swap freeze survivor stories. Many of the folks we talked to were surprised to hear about the number of coconut survivors along the I-4 corridor in areas like Sanford, Orlando, Winter Haven, and Lakeland. Equally as surprising were the number of palm deaths from the *Chambeyronia* genus. Everyone had a mix of good and bad stories, with varying degrees of optimism or skepticism over whether to replant the same species or move forward with species that were more resilient to our freak cold events. Rob's garden appeared to be close enough to the Gulf to dodge any of the serious damage the folks just 15 more minutes inland experienced.

The Fall Meeting for 2026 is now on the horizon in October. We hope to see a large turnout for the meeting and enjoy some BBQ with friends, new and old. Enjoy the slowly decline temperatures and humidity and we look forward to seeing everyone there!



Eager customers wait in line for the gate to open with rain on the way.



A photo of the first three tables at Faith Bishock's booth. Notice the nearly empty table at the end.



If you were one of the folks replanting crownshaft palms, you had your choice.



If you lost a Chambeironia, replacements were available.



Hydriastele – not for the faint of heart.



Areca vestiara – hope everyone that had one got it to come back.



Aaron Apsley's watercolor booth keeps a few patrons dry.



Gardening does make you hungry.



Plenty of tropical foliage to fill those small spots in your garden.



Rob's place was nice and green for the sale. The rain amplified the effect.



Chambeyronia pyriformis - the bounty for the day.

Additional Links:

- [2026 CFPACS Fall Meeting](#)
- [CFPACS Events Link](#)

NOTE: PalmTalk is migrating to another server and has been offline for a few days as of this writing.