

TROPICAL FERN AND EXOTIC PLANT SOCIETY, INC. NEWSLETTER

Volume 17, Issue 18
February 2016

Message from the President

Hopefully, it will be a little bit warmer when you receive this than it is while I am writing it!

This month's speaker is Larry Noblick from Montgomery who is willing to give us advice about palms for our Florida gardens as well as to share his adventures as a plant explorer.

It's not too early to start thinking about our show in May – start looking at your collection for good entries in the competition and get them groomed and ready to go!

The Tropical Fern and Exotic Plant Society presents Larry Noblick who will speak on the *Experiences in the Life of a Palm Biologist*. Larry Noblick shares how he became a palm biologist and some of his adventures in collecting and studying palms in South America and other parts of the world. He will also share some personal insights on which palms have done well in South Florida with its soils, climate and hurricanes.

Date: Monday, February 22, 2016

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables

Corbin Building

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Born and raised in Ohio, Larry Noblick completed his BS in Biological Conservation (Wildlife Management,) completed his MS in Botany from Ohio State University and worked at a Conservatory in Columbus for a short time. Thinking he would like to teach, he completed a BS in education and taught junior high and high school for five years.

However, he wanted something more, so he served as a Peace Corp Volunteer in Brazil for two years, reorganized one herbarium at a Federal University in Salvador, Bahia, founded another one in Feira de Santana, married a Brazilian girl, and taught college in northeastern Brazil for four years. He became captivated by the palm trees of Bahia and the Atlantic Forest, then went back to school in Chicago (University of Illinois at Chicago) and worked out of the Field Museum on his Doctorate. He did post-doc at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables, Florida and since 1994 has worked for a research garden (Montgomery Botanical Center) in Miami which specializes in palm trees and cycads. He has had the opportunity to travel the jungles of the tropics in search of palm trees for the garden and he has even discovered a few new ones.

Who would guess: an Ohio boy with expertise in palm trees!!

Save-the-Date!

Don't forget to calendar the Exotic Plant Show and Sale scheduled for

Saturday, May 21, 2016 through Sunday, May 22, 2016,

9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

There will be further information at a later date.

Tropical Fern and Exotic Plant Society meeting notes:

Date: January 25, 2016

Topic: The Hunt for the Blue Amaryllis

Treasurer's Report: Balance - \$14,322.10

President called meeting to order at: 7:35 p.m.

Hospitality: Emaly and her most excellent compadres

Raffle provided by: Home Chaonovich

Meeting ended at: 9:10 p.m.

Dr. Meerow is well known in many plant circles for his exceptional knowledge of palms, bulb crops, and world-class genetic research. He works at the USDA Research station in Coral Gables known locally as Chapman Field, after its original heritage as an airfield most of a century ago. Dr. Meerow has been involved with breeding what we call 'Amaryllis' in the horticulture trade, which are actually *Hippeastrum* hybrids. To employ an oft-used phrase amongst the plant true-bloods, the "true" Amaryllis is a far different plant from our *Hippeastrum* hybrids in many ways, often showing its gorgeous 'naked lady' flowers several feet above the dormant bulbs in mid-summer. Dr. Meerow's work at USDA has yielded a number of commercial hybrids of exceptional color, shape, and even fragrance.

The program was seamlessly organized, and showed the wide range of the Amaryllidaceae in South America. Ranging from near-alpine petite plants growing in desolate, rocky, moonscape areas, to epiphytic (that was news to many of us) species from rainforest-savannah areas. The sought-after blue color is limited to a few genera of plants in the family, most notably the genera *Griffinia* and *Worsleya*. The latter is a montane species that produces stunning sky-blue flowers on a stout plant, which grows precariously on slanting, sheer granite cliffs in Brazil, at modest altitudes, but in impossibly difficult locales. It is difficult to grow in Florida without the aid of climate control, although it grows well in California and in select botanical conservatories. Some *Griffinia* species grow nicely here, although the blue color is rather pale by comparison to its noble cousin the *Worsleya*. The wide range of colors, flower types, climate variants and variability within a species makes the *Amaryllid* group worth more attention and cultivation in our areas.

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The common Christmas Dutch Amaryllis is a far and almost ludicrously artificial cry from its wild cousins, some of which bear striking flowers of surreal colors. This secretary has grown *A. papilio* with its “butterfly” blood-red vein pattern on a light lime green background successfully as a potted Cattleya orchid would be grown. Its flowers are worth the wait, and there are many diverse *Amaryllids* to be had, from the pan-tropics of many countries.

The program was both eye and brain-food for those interested in this plant group.

*Respectfully submitted,
Craig Morell, C.P.A.
Certified Plant Addict*

Mixed Marriages

By John Banta

The genetic marriage between tomatoes and pineapple seems to be a forerunner of many new combinations. The most recent is a Mexican lime and a red grape. Utilizing new genetic tools the Mexican lime has been modified with several genetic additions. The red grape, “Ruby Seedless” was the source of anthocyanin, the red pigment that confers many health benefits. The blood orange, “Moro” was also used in this combination to enhance the redness in the lime.

The remarkable array of genetic tools now available to horticulturists allows dreams to become real. We are now limited only by our imagination. By the way, that new red lime has attractive pink flowers.



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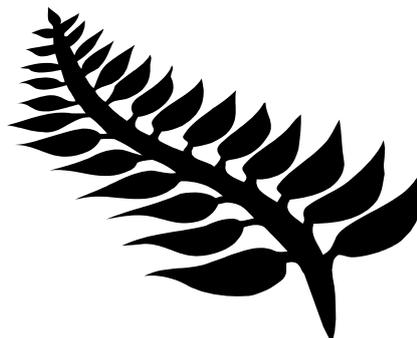
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Membership Application - 2016



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