

TROPICAL FERN AND EXOTIC PLANT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 2

February 2019

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Can you believe that it's already the end of February?

Each new year seems to go by faster and faster. So, before any more time gets away from me, I'd like to introduce myself to those of you who haven't been able to attend our monthly meetings. My name is Arielle Simon and I'm pleased to be the President of the Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society this year.

Some of you may know me from my time working at Fairchild Garden from 2014-2016, during which time I was liaison to the plant societies. I've always enjoyed attending our meetings and look forward to what I'm sure will be an intriguing schedule of speakers put together by our Vice President Mike Twyford.

In addition to the speakers we have the opportunity to learn from each month, we also have wonderful plant raffles, delicious food and refreshments, and unique plants sold by some of our members. I strongly encourage all of you to come to as many of our meetings as you can, since each one is unique.

I'd also like to encourage anyone that is willing to take on a leadership role, be it helping chair the plant show and sale the first week-end in June, the auction in October, or offering to help out at any of our events.

I hope to see many of you this coming Monday.

MEETING REMINDER •

Monday, February 25, 2019 at 7:30 pm in the Garden House

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden , Corbin A

Guest Speaker: Chip Jones

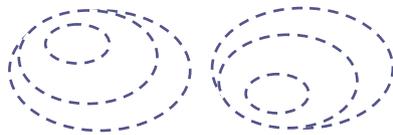
Jones Landscaping and Jones Landscaping Nursery
Davie, Florida

Topic: Neoregelias, Skotak Hybridization, and Various Plant Curiosities

Chip studied horticulture at Alabama A&M University. He interned in New England, South Carolina, and Miami before settling in Fort Lauderdale.

Chip enjoys orchids, bromeliads, palms, ferns and most anything slow growing or with big leaves especially cycads. He frequently travels to study plants in habitat and has visited more than 90 cycad species in situ.

For more information visit www.cycadflorida.com



FYI

March 8,9,10 is the 17th Annual International Orchid Festival at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

Enjoy a weekend of orchid vendors; an orchid show and exhibit presented by the Orchid Society of Coral Gables; lectures concerning all things orchids; enjoy live music; eat your way through the food court or, go shopping at the marketplace vendors



TFEPS January 28, 2019 General Meeting Minutes

Attendance: 36

Treasury report: \$13,773.43

Program: Tomas Bajza on “Giant World of Miniature Orchids & How to Grow “COOL” in Miami”

Tomas Bajza reached a momentous conclusion some 10 years ago: He could not continue to grow large orchids on an apartment balcony! So he got rid of all his large plants and embarked on a venture that enabled him to overcome the skeptics. In the last decade, he has succeeded in growing miniature orchids, not only on that fifth-floor balcony, but also inside the apartment. And many of those plants are considered to be better suited to cooler climates. Tomas places diminutive orchids into three categories: micro, miniature, and small. Small orchids may be only 3 inches high.

Although Tomas, president of The Tarzane Group, grows his orchids outside as much as possible, he has successfully found species that do well indoors. He utilizes simple glass receptacles, particularly orbs, in his indoor collection. Glass orbs not only look good, but they retain humidity. *Masdevallia* is an example of a genus that will grow well in glass orbs; he has plants that have been growing for seven years with the aid of sphagnum moss.

Vases also work well to conserve humidity indoors. Chains or hooks can be used to suspend moisture-loving species inside a vase. Species that like drier conditions can be hooked onto the outside of a vase. Live moss can be trimmed from time to time in the maintenance of an indoor miniature orchid. LEDs designed for aquariums can be used to supplement lighting. A fan is not necessary to boost air circulation.

Wooden terrariums also work, using gravel and moss as a base. Tomas refers to these structures as ‘vivariums.’

For the orchids he grows on his balcony, Tomas mounts plants vertically on wire. He also likes to mount plants on driftwood ‘trees,’ in particular those he makes from cholla cacti. Cholla is used a lot in aquariums because it doesn’t decay, and cholla mountings may last more than 12 years. Miniature orchids can also be mounted on bonsai trees. Orchids that like to dry out can be mounted without the use of moss.

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Tomas also maintains an Intensive Care Unit. He resuscitates travel-weary orchids in a jar in order to raise the humidity. He also uses plastic containers in which he has punched a hole. He then adds some moss. His success rate is about 50%. *Masdevallia* is an example of an orchid which doesn't travel well, but can be revived.

Cork is another good medium to use for mounting miniature orchids. Tree fern bark seems to be good, but it may end up retaining moisture, so Tomas doesn't use it anymore.

Regarding nutrition, Tomas's base products are made by Technaflora. One brand, MagiCal, contains magnesium and calcium; the other, Sugar Daddy, contains magnesium and sulfur. He also uses several supplements. Grow More, a seaweed extract which promotes good roots; Reputme, an MSU (for Michigan State University) orchid fertilizer; and Dyna-Gro, a 7-8-6 orchid fertilizer. He fertilizes his plants every time he waters, but at $\frac{1}{8}$ strength.

Tomas irrigates his plants with reverse osmosis water or rainwater; the latter is best if used right away. Although not all miniature orchids are fussy about water, those from Papua New Guinea and South American rain forests can't get by on water out of the faucet. Publix water is pure enough, since it has no additives.

Among the miniature orchids that Tomas keeps outside year-round is *Bulbophyllum polliculosum*, one of the cool-weather-loving species. It doesn't need continuous cool temperatures to flower, but benefits from drops of 20-30 degrees. If the winter weather isn't cool enough, the plants will grow, but not bloom. However, miniature *Dendrobiums* can stay outside all year, as can *Cattleya/Sophranitis coccinea*, *Constantia microscopica*, and the appropriately-named *Laelia liliputana*.

Some of the species which like cool climates will appreciate being kept indoors from April to October. Among them are *Dendrobium violaceum*, *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, *Dendrobium leucocyanum*, *Dendrobium subacaule* and *Dracula niesseniae*. Of course, it may be easier to just grow the plants inside year-round. Some blooms may last 7-8 months. Nevertheless, putting the orchids outside in winter to experience temperature drops will be helpful.

Corybas geminigibbus is a tuberous terrestrial orchid; it goes to sleep in the winter. In general, the deciduous species are more trouble to grow. But many other miniatures, including some *Dendrobiums*, are easy to cultivate. Water and fertilizer storage capacity in miniature orchids is, naturally, limited. They just can't take as much abuse as the large species. A grower can trim moss and clean the bowl every three months, but Tomas confides that he is not fussy about cleaning.

Out of Africa.

By John Banta

Over 20% of the land mass of the earth is Africa. Well known for its remarkable fauna but poorly known for its flora. Colonial powers with few exceptions neglected the astounding plants that flourish there. Because the floral richness is not obvious in horticultural collections today there exists grand opportunities for individuals to enhance their collections with remarkable, novel plants.

Recent advancements in communications allow us to find not only information about African plants but also sources for obtaining them. An example : My interest in gingers led me to find a grand paper by Paul Maas and his wife's monograph " The Costaceae of Africa". The many colored pictures of these handsome plants makes one wonder why they aren't more often seen in collections. Our present day opportunities for introducing new plants into horticulture are as exciting as the grand, rich years of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yes there are difficult barriers to negotiate like regulations and paper work but earlier importers suffered many problems too. Why don't we accept the challenges of introducing neat, new plants into our collections?

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Platycerium grande

TFEPS 2018 Plant Show and Sale



MOUNTING PLAQUES

Made of 1" x 3" Pressure Treated Lumber

12' x 12" - \$ 7.00 15' x 15" - \$10.00

18' x 18" - \$13.00 24" x 24" - \$20.00

Contact—Bob Benaim 305-793-9755 or,

bobbenaim@gmail.com



Membership Application - 2019

YEARLY DUES ARE FOR CALENDAR YEAR JANUARY—DECEMBER

We offer 4 different memberships options:

- Yearly: _____ \$ 15.00 for individual
 _____ \$ 17.00 for two members at the same address
Lifetime: _____ \$ 125.00 for individual
 _____ \$ 150.00 for two members at the same address

This is for a New Membership: _____ or for Renewal: _____

Please Print

Name: _____

Phone: H or C: _____

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Zip Code + 4: _____ + _____

H = Home Phone C = Cell Phone

Enclose check payable to: TFEPS

Please mail to: TFEPS – Membership

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