

TROPICAL FERN AND EXOTIC PLANT SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 3

March 2019

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is in the air, quite literally as those of us with allergies are acutely aware. Plants of all types are putting on a spectacular show of blooms and new foliage. Begonias, mangos, avocados, Tillandsias, Petrea vines...to name a few.

Our March meeting will take place just after the spring equinox, so you should all be feeling reinvigorated and have no excuses not to attend the meeting and stay for the plant raffle!

I'd like to wish Emalyl a very happy birthday! Since she will be busy celebrating, she will not be providing food and refreshments as usual at our meeting, so please bring food or beverage to share with friends--potluck style. I plan on baking chocolate chip cookies from scratch, which you definitely don't want to miss!

See you soon,

Arielle

TFEPS February 25, 2019 General Meeting Minutes

Attendance: 40

Treasury report: \$13,907.18

Raffle Table: David Fernandez and Jesse Durko

Program: Chip Jones on “Hybrids of Chester Skotak:

Works of a Bromeliad Magician”

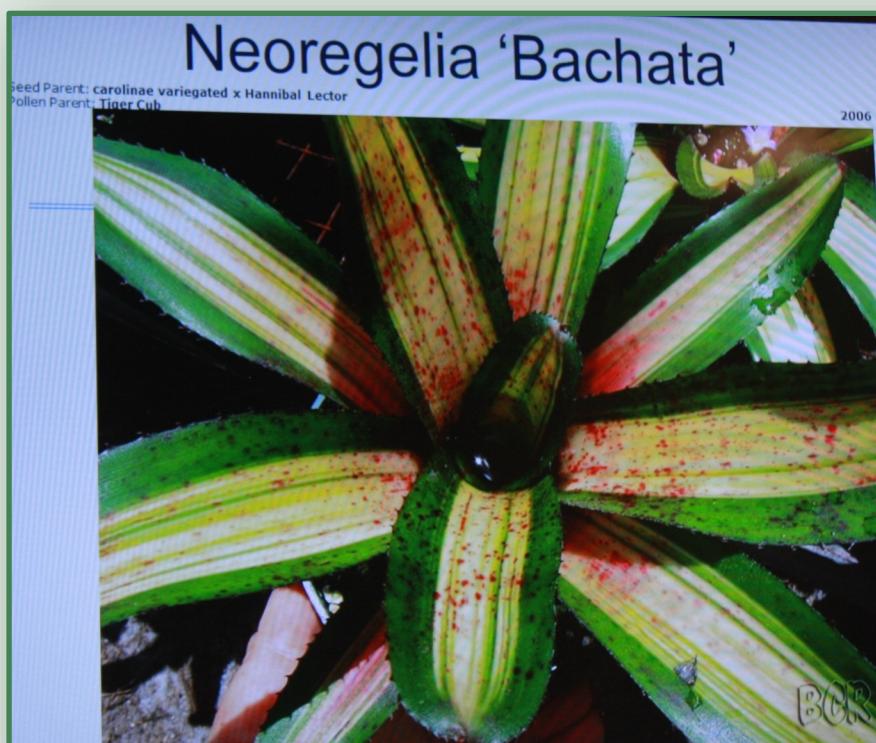
You should know right off the bat that Chip Jones once confided to a crowd that he likes to raise plants that are “slow-growing and can hurt you.” But, of course, we’re pretty sure he meant that in only the nicest sort of way. Do not be alarmed that Chip’s favorite families include bromeliads, cycads, and succulents. In his presentation to the TFEPS audience, there wasn’t even a minute’s delay needed to treat excessive bleeding. Instead, Chip educated and entertained the membership with a program about the hybrid creations of bromeliad wizard **Chester Skotak.**

But first it should be noted that the plants that Chip brought for sale provided clear testimony to his facility for growing an eclectic range of interesting species. Among the selections on his table were a cliff-dwelling *Zamia meermanii*, *Deuterocohnia brevifolia*, *Theophrasta americana*, *Sansevieria cylindrica*, a dwarf *Murraya paniculata*, the tree-dwelling *Zamia pseudoparasitica*, and *Adeonium socotrana*, grafted onto *A. radicans* to enhance speed.



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But by far his most prolific work has been his Neoregelia cultivars, such as: 'Picasso', 'Pimiento', 'Hannibal Lecter', 'Rafael', 'Shocking Pink', 'Silver', 'Macho', 'Arctic Blast', 'Orange Crush', 'Skotak's Sheba', 'Annick', 'Bobbie Hull', 'Morado', 'Skotak's Tiger', 'Aftershock', 'Alcatraz', 'Moon Over Fort Dix', and 'Moyna Prince' (named for a Miami resident).



Other growers have taken Skotak cultivars, but failed to manipulate them as successfully. What explains Chester's magic? Chip described it as a painstaking attention to detail. Chester grows his hybrids in hummingbird-proof enclosures and hand-pollinates them. He then sends them to Deroose Plants in Belgium for selection and, where appropriate, tissue-culturing. Deroose then returns the successful selections to Chester for growing. Then Floridian Eloise Beach travels to Costa Rica to make additional selections. By the time the final choices are made, the plants may have been growing for five years or more.

The hybrids that do not make the cut are then discarded!

That very high bar means that some of the culls can still turn out to be gems. *Neoregelia* 'Jeffrey Block' was salvaged from Chester's trash pile and became a big commercial success.

Parent Plants Commonly Used for Hybridizing

(caroliniae variegated cultivar) Blushing Tiger x Norman Bates

Blushing Tiger =

Seed Parent: Perfecta
Pollen Parent: Marnier-Lapostolle F2
origin Hawaii 1996

(On the subject of hybridizing, Chip has a beef with cycad growers: They are reluctant to cull mediocre cultivars. Palm growers, by contrast, readily cull; they may ditch 95% of their creations.)

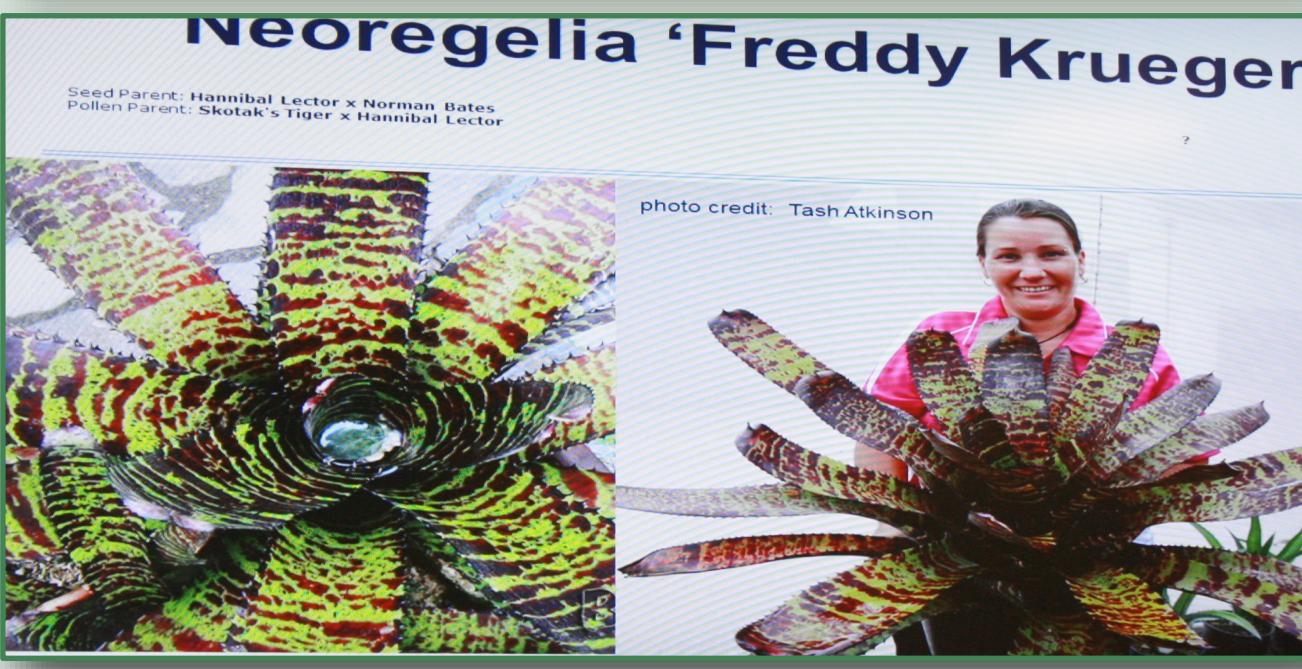


Chester the pineapple maker

Chester worked for Dole Food Company for years and has hybridized pineapples for color, but his moneymaker is breeding Guzmanias for Deroose. Guzmanias have to be grown for a long time, but in flower they last longer than tulips, and that makes Europeans happy.

Chip's closing remarks were a re-emphasis of what separates Chester from other hybridizers: They cannot always follow Chester's 'recipes.' The key to his success is his matching of knowledge with forms.

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Neoregelia 'Lorena'

Seed Parent: *carolinae* x *concentrica*
Pollen Parent: *concentrica* x *Takemura Princeps*

1990



Chester the Author

Searching for Miss Fortuna: The Hunt for a Bromeliad Hardcover – Print, January 1, 2007

by Chester Skotak (Author)

★★★★★ • 17 customer reviews

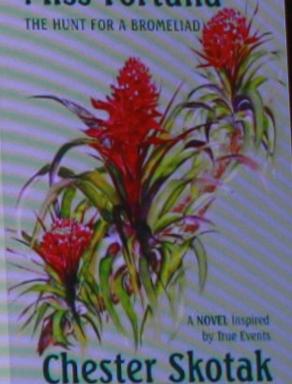
Hardcover
from \$7.96

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An intriguing novel inspired by true events. This bizarre adventure laced with offbeat humor, odd characters, and vivid descriptions chronicles an obsession with collecting a rare plant. After shelling out thousands of dollars in a cutthroat auction for one small but captivating plant, an unbridled frenzy drives The Man from Florida into a blind rush to gather more of those beauties from their hidden rainforest.

**Searching for
Miss Fortuna**

THE HUNT FOR A BROMELIAD



NEW TFEPS MEMBERS

Please welcome Ian Simpkins and David Hardy

Save the date

June 1&2, 2019

TFEPS Annual

Show & Sale



For more information see www.tfeps.org



FYI

Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Native Plant Day Saturday □ Saturday, March 23, 2019 □ 9:00-4:00

Bill Sadowski Park, 17555 SW 79 Avenue, Palmetto Bay
(1/2 mile west of Old Cutler Road)

Bromeliad Society of South Florida

Show & Sale □ Saturday/Sunday, March 30 & 31, 2019 □ 9:30-4:30
At Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

2019 OFFICERS:

President: **Arielle Simon (305) 588-5026** Vice President: **Mike Twyford (305) 525-7405**

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Webmaster:

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY !

EMALYL



TFEPS 2018 Show & Sale **Emalyl Israel** **Second Place** Blood Lily scadoxus



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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:

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Phone: H or C: _____

E-mail: _____

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H = Home Phone C = Cell Phone

Enclose check payable to: TFEPS

Please mail to: TFEPS – Membership

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