Message from the President

This month we have our show and sale to look forward to

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

Don’t forget to bring your show plants between 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm on Thursday, May 19 or, 7:30 am and 11:00 am on Friday May 20. Tags, stakes and sign-in sheets will be available to you then.

If you are selling at the Member’s Table, remember, no more than 30 plants per day. TFEPS will collect 15% of the sale price and if you sell more than 10 plants, you will be asked to donate two to a future raffle table.

Also, if you can donate a dish for the Judges’ Luncheon, please let Emalyl know at 305-235-0886.

Finally, if you use social media, please talk up our show and sale – publicity is expensive and we need to get the word out. I know we’ll have a beautiful show and sale and I look forward to seeing you all there.

MEETING: Monday, May 23, 2016
TIME: 7:15 p.m.
PLACE: Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Corbin "A"
10901 Old Cutler Road. Coral Gables, FL

Career horticulturist and plant collector, Craig Morell is Curator of Living Collections at the Kampong of the National Tropical Botanic Garden. Known as “the plant guy,” Craig will present “Plant Propagation and Restoration----Tips and Tricks and Curious Methods.”

Want to propagate a Begonia, grow root cuttings without special attention, deal with dust-like seeds, or repair a fern in a funk? Craig has some ideas that may be useful to you; the program will cover some heritage tactics, including marcottage, cloches, simple layers, PiP planting, soil pasteurizing and more.
Dr. Kushlan, PhD - University of Miami, is a highly respected and well-known ornithologist, well published with many titles to his name, benefactor to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (the Kushlan Bird Trail is his work) and a scholar on many fronts. He is a Board Member of several organizations, amongst them the Everglades Foundation, and the Institute for Regional Conservation.

He and Kirsten Hines, botanist and herpetologist, teamed up to write two books specifically written to assist local gardeners and those who are interested in attracting wildlife. There has been dramatic and prolonged loss of upland habitat, especially along the SE Florida coast, causing a similarly dramatic loss of birds, for which there is very little habitat left to roost in and feed upon.

The duo of speakers tonight suggested we all take a part in restoring some of the habitat needed to keep wildlife in our area. Several practical ideas were presented, e.g. landscaping with native species suited for our local soil; using a more diverse group of plants rather than monoculture of Ficus or clipped hedges; letting grass go to seed to provide food sources; and providing plant species that have abundant crops of small, bite-sized fruits such as Stoppers and Firebush. Even problematic plants which attract caterpillars provide food for birds which enjoy eating caterpillars.

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Containerized plants (a/k/a 'containerscapes') are better than no plants at all. Bird feeders are minimally useful, mostly in fall and winter when birds are migrating through, and the feeders are most useful when there is enough local landscaping to provide cover. Black oil sunflower seed is the preferred food source, not the mixed-grain materials so often seen.

The key elements to successful wildlife landscaping are N-E-D - Naturalistic-Ecological-Diverse. Their books detail many species of birds and their attractants, but the key message is to "Go Wild," and avoid the highly manicured, low-diversity land—scapes we see in many communities. A few insect pests on plants are OK, if we wish to maintain wildlife populations.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Morell, C.P.A.
Certified Plant Addict
Lessons from Unseen Battles

By John Banta

Most people that do any yard work in Florida can recount painful encounters with the “Imported Fire Ant”, Solenopsis invicta. These nasty ants invaded our area around 1950 from South America. It took another ant invasion, “The Tawny Crazy Ant, Nyjanderia fulva, also from South America to provide a clue to a quick and easy first aid treatment for Solenopsis stings. These two ants compete for the same food (insects, spiders etc.) and often fight with one another. The Fire Ant, with it's toxic sting normally looses because the Crazy Ants neutralize the Fire Ant's toxins with formic acid.

This leads us to speculate that plain white vinegar applied soon after being stung will react with the basic (high pH) fire ant toxin and lessen its effects.

The Tawny Crazy Ant not only eats many of the beneficial insects but also has the propensity to gather in great numbers in electrical equipment and short out circuits.

These unseen battles do effect us.
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Raffle Table:

   Ralph Hernandez  (786) 261-4856

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