



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 14, Issue 2

Editor: Reggie Whitehead February 2012

January in Review

Date—January 23, 2012

Speaker-- Dr. Scott Zona

Topic —*A Botanical Tour of Chile*

Treasurer's report --
\$ 13, 889.03

President called meeting to order at— 7:37 p.m.

Hospitality- Martha Bogaard and Emaly Israel

Raffle provided by—Frank and Sally Tastinger
meeting ended at— 9:00 p.m.

President Mike Twyford opened the meeting at 7:40 and called for any other nominations other than proposed. The members voted and approved the candidates, with the occasionally faithful Secretary staying on for another year.

The officers for 2012 are **Marnie Valent**, President; **Marie Nock**, Vice President; **Craig Morell**, Secretary and **Tom Moore**, Treasurer. We sincerely thank the officers who served in 2011, and we gratefully thank the new officers for the coming year.

Marie Nock announced the Spring Sale at Fairchild Tropical Garden on April 14 and 15, 2012, as well as mentioning the

upcoming meeting speakers.

Marie introduced Dr. Scott Zona, well-known in many communities as a bona fide expert with palm taxonomy. He is Manager of the Conservatory and greenhouse at Florida International University in western Miami, a collaborator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden, author of more than 130 articles, and co-author of the newest edition of *Encyclopedia of Cultivated Palms*. Dr. Zona traveled to Chile recently to check out some of the most unusual plants in the world, many of which are found nowhere else (endemic species).

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Next Meeting, Monday, February 27

The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society presents **Jesse Durko** who will speak on *Using Color in Your Garden*.

The tropical landscapes that Jesse has designed are known for their color, texture and elegance. Though trained as a horticulturist, he has the eye and design sense of an artist. In his presentation he will share tips on plants to use as well as placement and care for best results in the South Florida environment. He will also bring plants that will be available for sale following his presentation. The Raffle Table will be supplied by **Redland Nursery**. See you at 7:30 p.m.

To be a Tree Fern or Not to be a Tree Fern

That is the question...

There are many ferns whose caudexes develop into trunks. But this alone does not a tree fern make. The true tree ferns, the **Cyatheas**, the **Dicksonias**, the **Cnemidarias** and **Cibotiums**, etc., are the plants that are scientifically classified as true tree ferns due to their hairs, scales, sori, spores and their arborescent structure.

However, there are many ferns—such as **Diplazium esculentum** (the Indian tree fern) or even **Blechnum brasiliense** (the Brazilian tree fern), that develop small trunks. In fact many of the **Blechnum** species form a trunk, but because of characteristics mentioned above, these plants are not tree ferns. Even our American tree fern, **Ctenitis sloanei** is not a tree fern. It is a member of the **Dryopteridaceae**, as are many of the **Pleocnemia** species, i.e. **Pleocnemia irregularis** and **P. hemiteliiformis** that develop small trunks.

The **Angiopteris**, very large tree fern-like ferns, are also looked upon as tree ferns, but they are not. They belong to an entirely different group of ferns, **Marattialean**. The true tree ferns are of the **Dicksoniaceae** (and taxonomists divide this group into yet another subdivision, the **Cyatheaaceae**).

So, a word of caution, just as the **Asparagus** and **Artillery** fern, are not ferns, all of those ferns who wish to be tree ferns when they grow up, sadly can not.

— Reggie Whitehead
(Originally written in 2004)

The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.
Officers for 2012

President	
Marnie Valent	(305) 235-5929
Vice President	
Marie Nock	(305) 232-2257
Secretary	
Craig Morell	(305) 667-1173
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Tom Moore	(305) 666-0219
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Martha Bogaards	(305) 661-2305
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Marie Nock	(305) 232-2257
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Juan Espinosa-Almodovar	(305) 444-3103
Raffle Table	
Skye Palmer	(305) 595-9291
Webmaster	
Bob Benaim	(305) 793-9755

Board of Directors will consist of the above officers and chairs;
and the following individuals.

Steve Forman	(305) 662-2368
Debbie Lamb	(305) 251-8675
Mike Twyford	(305) 444-6332
Reggie Whitehead	(305) 613-5944

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Dr. Zona showed a grand series of extraordinary images, reminiscent of the old Lowell Thomas television explorations, which so many of grew up watching. His images showed the incredible diversity of the country, from the near-Antarctic Tierra del Fuego to the more temperate, nearly Southern-California central valley, to the razor-topped Andes which delineate the eastern boundary. Many of the plants he went to see have modern analogs on our gardens, such as **Alstroemeria**, **Salpiglossis**, and **Calceolaria**. Other plants of interest were **Schizanthus**, **Scyphanthus**, and the unusual **Loasa**, the type genus for the Family **Loasaceae**. No tour of alpine Chile would be complete without seeing the monumental **Puya berteroniana**, the giant trunk-forming bromeliad of the dry Chilean rocky slopes. This species can grow to 20 feet or more in height, with a crown of barbed leaves over 8 feet across, but has a tough time living almost anywhere in the US except California. There are smaller species in the genus which grow nicely in Florida, but they are petite plants.

Dr. Zona showed a series of habitat images, showing off the flora which some of us plant fanatics know, such as the imposing and curious **Araucarias** (NOT the Norfolk Island Pine species), and **Jubaea** Wine Palms with their grand crowns and massive trunks up to 6 feet thick. **Nothofagus**, a tree more common in Europe and temperate USA, was a commonly seen tree throughout much of Dr. Zona's travels. Mixed into the program were images of Fuchsia plants in cheery flower anywhere there was water. Dr. Zona mentioned that in the warm months, and with the snow-capped Andes fairly close by, there was an abundance of waterfalls, streams, rivers, and in Midwesternese lingo, gully-washers. One of the most memo-

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rable images was of an unusual small groundcover, *Cruckshankia hymenodon*, with foliage that resembled a **Kalanchoe**, but with brightly colored bracts that resembled a **Mussaenda**. The program illuminated everyone about the fantastic diversity of a country we know rather little about, except their fruit and vegetable produce which grace our store shelves.

Dr. Zona closed the program at 8:30, answering a small blizzard of questions. He can be reached at zonas@FIU.edu.

Respectfully submitted,

*Craig Morell, CPA
Certified Plant Addict*

2012 Dues are due!

Membership dues for the Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society are currently being collected.

Dues are: \$15.00 - single

\$17.00 - for two members at the same address

Lifetime Memberships are available at: \$125 per individual, \$150 for two members at the same address. This one-time rate is valid for the life of the Society. Please make check payable to: **TFEPS**, and mail to:

Thomas G. Moore

c/o TFEPS

6880 S. W. 75 Terrace

South Miami, FL 33143

Dues may also be paid at the next meeting Monday, **February 27**.



Raffle Tables for — 2012

February 27 *Redland Nursery*
March 26 Steve and Marie Nock
April 23 Philipp Iloo and David McLean
May 28 Tim Anderson and Craig Reid

Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society
6880 S. W. 75 Terrace
South Miami, FL 33143

___ Individual Member \$15. ___ Household Membership \$17.

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Butterfly Blues

by John Banta

What could sully the joy of watching the erratic flight of yellow and white butterflies against the clear blue Florida sky? A vegetable garden! The frantic zippy flight of the bean skipper alerts me to examine the pole beans for the pale yellow eggs laid upon the young leaves. Few pests are more vexing to the vegetable grower than butterflies or rather their larvae. Hand picking the caterpillars and squashing them satisfies the urge for revenge but demands too much time searching for them. There are plenty of chemical remedies to kill these pests but I want to eat these vegetables and one of the values of the home garden is to avoid ingesting pesticides. Nature to the rescue in the form of bacteria. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (available as Dipel dust) at about \$10

for a pound. Another bacterial product is Spinosad derived from the bacteria, **Saccharopolysora**, available from Amazon for about \$16 for 32 ounces. It works in an entirely different mode from the Dipel.

Then there is diatomaceous earth that also controls caterpillars at about \$2 a pound for food grade. The battle with the butterflies for my vegetables has lots of effective fire power. I look forward to tomatoes that are free from the festering holes left by greedy caterpillars.

Footnote: *The tomato caterpillars were completely wiped out after one spray of Spinosad. Now that is progress!*

Next Meeting, Monday, Feb 27, Jesse Durko, Using Color in the Garden, at 7:30 p.m.

***Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.
6880 S. W. 75 Terrace
South Miami, FL 33143***