



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 14, Issue 7

Editor: Reggie Whitehead September 2012

June in Review

Date—June 25, 2012

Speaker- Benoit Jonckeere, Miami Beach Botanical Garden

Topic-Renovations at the Miami Beach Botanical Garden (MBBG)

Treasurer's report balance-\$10, 425.35

The Meeting was called to order at—7:45 p.m.

Hospitality- Martha Bogaard and Emalyl Israel

Raffle provided by—Larry and Glenda Weed

Meeting ended at—9:00 p.m.

President Marnie declared that the recent Fern show yielded 8 new members for TFEPS, and the event netted a small profit for the Society. Thanks go to the dozens of people who helped with staging the show, always a labor of love.

Our condolences go out to President Marnie Valent regarding the passage of her mother.

Our speaker for the evening was Benoit Jonckeere, who is well known in the area as the Director of the Miami Beach Botanical Garden, and prior to his current position, he worked at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden for many years. Benoit presented a slide program detailing the profound changes made at MBBG, primarily due to the re-design of much of the Garden by way of a landscape plan from renowned landscape architect Ray-

mond Jungles. The Garden is on Miami Beach's east side, within sight of the Atlantic Ocean, and directly across a busy thoroughfare from the enormous Miami Beach Convention Center. The small footprint of the Garden brought challenges to re-working a garden that has been in its current site since the 1960s. Benoit has seen the re-design project through from start to finish, overseeing many new details including massed plantings of bamboos, palms and a wide range of tropical plants.

The program concluded at 8:45 and the meeting ended at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Craig Morell, CPA
Certified Plant Addict*

Next Meeting, Monday, September 24

The **Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society** presents **Dr. Robert Pope** who will give *A virtual tour of the Miami Gardens by the Bay* on Monday, September 24 .

Gardens By the Bay is in Singapore and had its grand opening on June 28, 2012. It is likely the most unique botanical garden that has been established in the last hundred years.

Bob Pope is a retired biology faculty member from Miami Dade College. He was actively involved in acquiring plants grown in South Florida for use in Gardens By the Bay.

The Raffle Table will be provided by Gardino Nursery and Oasis Nursery.

See you at 7:30 p.m!

Annual Plant Auction

It is almost time for our wonderful, Annual Plant Auction. Our auction will once again be held at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, on Monday, October 22, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

People all over South Florida look forward to our auction, and we don't want to disappoint them.

Members are asked to participate in our annual fund-raiser.

To add to our collection we are also asking our usual friends at nurseries and plant shops to participate. Their generosity in the past has been tremendous and it is only matched by our own members' generosity.

Your donations may be of any plant of your choosing. Whether it is a fern, bromeliad, heliconia, aroid, flowering tree, orchid, or any plant that you feel would be a nice addition to our line-up of special plants. Please have plants at the garden no later than 6:30 p.m. so that they may be arranged.

If you are not able to donate a plant to the auction, we still hope you will come out and support us with your presence. To make things easier for purchase, checks and cash, will of course be welcomed.

We will need volunteers to help serve as arrangers, runners, and people to help man the holding area.

Another way you may donate is to assist our hospitality committee. In the past, many people have been very generous in providing wonderful treats for our refreshment table. If you would like to bring something for the refreshment table, please contact **Emalyl Israel** (305) 235-0886 or **Martha Bogaards** (305) 661-2305.

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

President	
Marnie Valent	(305) 233-5929
Vice President	
Marie Nock	(305) 232-2257
Secretary	
Craig Morell	(305) 667-1173
Treasurer	
Tom Moore	(305) 666-0219
Membership	
Sherrin Smith	(305) 448-2598
Hospitality	
Martha Bogaards	(305) 661-2305
Emaly Israel	(305) 235-0886
Special Sales	
Marie Nock	(305) 232-2257
Librarian	
Juan Espinosa-Almodovar	(305) 444-3103
Raffle Table	
Skye Palmer	(305) 595-9291
Argeo Hernandez	(305) 633-9099
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

Trinity Churchside Garden

*Landscape Design, Consulting;
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Amorphophallus paeoniifolius
by Ted Smits

Some years ago Don Keller distributed some medium sized corms of *A. paeoniifolius* to interested fern society members. I took two of them home and planted them in plastic flower pots because I lived in a trailer court.

Don's one admonition related to the danger of rot if the corms were kept too wet and so it became my practice to remove the corms from the damp soil after they became dormant, usually in late November or early December.

I live in Winter Haven, Florida, now. As corms got larger in their pots, I moved them around strapped to a dolly to which an aluminum plate was added to support the bottom of the pot.

The foliage can die off in a remarkably short time and once the stems collapse and dry up, the pots are moved under a carport to keep them from getting any more water. After a week or two I dump the pots and store the corms dry for the winter.

In the Fall of 2001, for whatever reason, I just pulled my 50+ pots together under a large tarpaulin and let the corms sit in the soil all winter. And in the Spring, when I emptied the pots to revitalize the soil before growth started, I found that over half the corms were lost to rot.

I salvaged only three of fifteen large flowering corms that were in 25-inch diameter pots.

In the Fall of 2002 I was especially alert to both the weather and condition of the plants as they showed signs of dying off.

It sprinkled the morning I moved the plants. To facilitate movement of the dolly down the path between other plants, I folded the wet stems two or three times, accordion fashion, so the stems were directly over the pots.

It wasn't too long before I was looking for fire ants up and down both wrists and forearms as I tried to account for the stinging I was experiencing. There were none, and when the stinging subsided, a very itchy red rash, that lasted three days, developed over my hands and forearms wherever I had come in contact with the sap

(Amorphophallus continued on page 3)

***In Memoriam —
Marjorie Hartnett***



We sadly say goodbye to Marjorie Fern Hartnett, who passed away on August 30. Beautiful and eternally youthful Marjorie, or Fern, as she loved to be called when attending our meetings, was 95 years old. Fern was an incredible and generous woman, and always

brought a smile along with goodies to our plant society functions.

Marge originally from South Dakota, moved to Coral Gables in 1947 to take a sales manager position. While in Florida she worked as a social director, an actress and a teacher while becoming an integral and vital member of Coral Gables and the South Florida community.

Marge requested, in writing, "No change of anyone's schedule to attend my memorial service or funeral, because I will have neither. Instead, please do something nice for someone who doesn't get much attention. Take that person to lunch or send them flowers or whatever you choose to do."

(Amorphophallus continued from page 2)

of the stems I had folded over.

In casually mentioning the incident to Reggie Whitehead, I learned that I had come in contact with oxalic acid (due to the crystals of calcium oxalate) that the plants produce.

There had never been a problem handling and transplanting dry, intact, *A. paeoniifolius* before.

With Fall here again, when the plants show signs of withering, I will remember that "Patience is a Virtue" and let nature take its course.

(Reprinted from our October 2003 newsletter)

Ramble 2012

If any TFEPS member is interested in selling plants through TFEPS at the Ramble (Nov. 9 - 11), please contact Marie Nock, by Sept. 28th at snock1@earthlink.net or 305 232-2257.

Raffle Tables for — 2012

September 24..... *Gardino Nursery*
 *Oasis Nursery*
October..... *Annual Auction*
November 26..... *PCK Orchids*
December..... *Holiday Party*

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

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

___ Life Membership \$125. ___ Life Household Membership \$150.

Member's Name: _____

Name of additional member: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____ + _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Red Hot

by John Banta

I never made much money on all of the exotic and rare plants I grew over the years. Now, I find profit in the common pepper plant (*Capsicum*). I variegated a common ornamental pepper; named it "Fire and Ice" and paid for all of the laboratory expenses. Peppers and I have a hot affair going. *Capsicum* "***Black Pearl***" was variegated to produce *C. "Purple Pearl"* and now *C. "Christmas Bells"* is in production. Any plant that pays my bills like these peppers do demands my admiration and attention.

Peppers have been used for food for at least 7200 years. They all originate in the Americas in spite of the species name *chinense* that actually comes from

the Amazon region. Besides their heat, peppers offer other benefits. They contain a lot of Vitamin C, more than oranges; in fact Vitamin C was first identified from paprika and led to a Nobel prize for the discoverer (Albert Szent-Gyorgyi). The hotness of peppers is due to a number of *capsaicinoid* compounds, the most common one, capsaicin. To relieve the burning in the mouth from too much capsaicin; the best action seems to be a mouthful of milk as the casein locks onto the receptors that capsaicin binds to. The heat of peppers is measured in Scoville heat units. More about this next time.

Next Meeting, Mon. September 24, 7:30 p.m. Dr. Robert Pope, Gardens by the Bay (Singapore)

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South Miami, FL 33143***