



# Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 15, Issue 3

Editor: Reggie Whitehead March 2013

## February Meeting in Review

Date—February 25, 2013

Speaker- **Craig Morell**, Horticulturist at Pinecrest Gardens

Topic- New Ways to do Things, and Revisiting Old Ways for new Gardeners.

President called meeting to order at—7:40 p.m.

Hospitality- Emaly Israel, Martha Bogaard, and Marie Nock

Raffle provided by—Ree Gardens

Meeting ended at—9:30

President Marnie Valent announced the new slate of officers, with most of the officers returning, including the Secretary, who also happened to be the speaker for this month.

Marie & Steve Nock provided a very nice Raffle table which made a pretty good profit for the society. Ellis Brown brought several plants and Ron Kiefert brought quite a few nice crotons so Tom Moore conducted a little auction and added \$70.00 to our coffers. We also celebrated Ron's birthday with a cake (that he baked himself) and ice cream.

Member Craig Kolthoff, injured at the December party, was present and was warmly greeted; it is good to see him mobile again, albeit slowly.

The program title says a lot regarding the ideas presented by the speaker. The fact that the speaker

and the secretary are the same in this instance leads to an interesting quandary: how to write the notes without using the first-person "I" in every sentence, so let's try using a more removed aspect.

Craig is a career horticulturist, working since 2004 at Pinecrest Gardens, the site of the former Parrot Jungle. In the last 8 years, he has persistently renovated the gardens' flora, adding a nursery, removing mass quantities of several dozen weed species, modernizing the irrigation system, and dealing with myriad pest problems, as well as surprises in topography, water management, and geology. The varied aspects of this renovation, combined with more than 30 years' experience, allows Craig the breadth of topics, both old and new, to speak upon tonight. One of the least-

## Next Meeting, Monday, March 25

The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, is pleased to present **Mr. Tom Moore**, who will speak on *The Nature of Ferns* at our next meeting, Monday, March 25 at 7:30 p.m., at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (the Corbin Building).

Tom is one of the founding members of our club and has been growing ferns for over 30 years and has a large collection of unique tropical ferns and fern allies. His lecture for this meeting will include a discussion on the various types of ferns in cultivation and how they grow.

This month's Raffle Tables will be supplied by **Bloomin' Good Nursery** (Richard Button and Delores Fugina). *See you there!!! 7:30 p.m.*

known "tricks of the trade" is to bury fertilizer into the soil or into the potting soil, rather than scatter the products on top. The buried fertilizer is far more accessible to the plant roots, breaks down more predictably, and is less accessible to wind-blown weed seeds.

Craig covered several wide-ranging topics, including:

--stabilizing the root zone moisture in a small pot (used for rooting cuttings or for water-demanding plants) by sinking a clay pot into a much larger pot of sand, or by sinking the smaller pot into the ground to keep the smaller pot from drying out quickly. The larger volume of sand will dry out before the smaller pot will, delaying the frequency of watering.

--using a tactic shown by John Banta, try using equal parts of vermiculite and perlite (totally inorganic) for rooting cuttings or sowing seed, rather than rely on peat-based mixes which hold a lot of water and can decompose unpredictably.

--root zone heating can dramatically improve rooting and seed germination when the medium is a very stable temperature, with no more than 3 degrees of diurnal variation in temperature. Setting an automatic thermostat at 78F will greatly assist rooting and germination, up to a maximum of 84F. Craig started the tactic by using a weather-proof heating mat meant for keeping swine warm, then graduated to a more sophisticated heating mat sold by a greenhouse retailer.

--changing fertilizers from high-nitrogen to high-potassium will slow down foliage growth and improve

(Review continued on page 2)

***The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.***  
**Officers for 2013**

<b>President</b>	Marnie Valent	(305) 233-5929
<b>Vice President</b>	Marie Nock	(305) 232-2257
<b>Secretary</b>	Craig Morell	(305) 667-1173
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bob Benaim	(305) 793-9755
<b>Membership</b>	Sherrin Smith	(305) 448-2598
<b>Hospitality</b>	Martha Bogaards	(305) 661-2305
	Emaly Israel	(305) 235-0886
<b>Special Sales</b>	Marie Nock	(305) 232-2257
<b>Librarian</b>	Juan Espinosa-Almodovar	(305) 444-3103
<b>Raffle Table</b>	Skye Palmer	(305) 595-9291
	Argeo Hernandez	(305) 633-9099
<b>Webmaster</b>	Bob Benaim	(305) 793-9755

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

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

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 staghomrescue@gmail.com

flowering and stem production. The old dogma of using nitrogen to enhance growth can work, but at the expense of great rooting. Some plants do indeed need a higher nitrogen fertilizer above and beyond the 20-20-20 so often used, but a stronger and more drought resistant plant can be had with a higher-potassium product. Several new controlled-release fertilizer mixes show promise, especially those by Harrell's and Nutricote.

--One of the more promising media for growing plants is Turface, also called Profile, both of which are calcined clay and mined from the same mines as the product found at auto stores called Oil-Dri. The variety of Oil-Dri from the Moltan Corporation is a long-lasting product and can be worked into a potting mix effectively, or used alone for rooting or long-term growth. Member Bob Benaim mentioned that Turface is a common component of bonsai tree potting media, and shows excellent drainage properties while holding both water and permitting aeration. Turface and Profile come in multiple grades, Craig has used the coffee-grounds size for rooting cuttings and germinating seed, especially long term seeds such as palms and cycads. While the medium has been used for 50 years, it is "new" again in horticulture, popularly sold by sports field suppliers.

Many older tactics were shown and several new refinements of those tactics were brought up.

As previously mentioned, the raffle table was extraordinary, supplied by Marie and Steve Nock. One of the prizes of the evening was not a plant, but Marie's excellent pecan pie, obviously of great quality as judged by its rapid disappearance. The program closed at 9:15, and the meeting closed at 9:30.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Craig Morell, C.P.A.  
 Certified Plant Addict*

**DUES ARE DUE**

Dues for 2013 are currently being collected. Have you rejoined TFEPS? If not, *Please* do so today.

Please make checks payable to TFEPS (and mail to):

**Bob Benaim, Treasurer**

**P.O. Box 902094**

**Homestead, FL 33090-2094**

(Members who joined after October 2012 are paid up through December 2013.)

Dues are (still):

\$15.00 - single

\$17.00 - for two members at the same address

*(Dues may be paid at our March meeting. Our Roster will be published in April.)*

*Welcome New Members*

*Escutia, Salvador and Maria*

18305 S. W. 206 Street

Miami, FL 33187

(305) 505-5040

naturaltouchbysal@yahoo.com

*Spring Sale at Fairchild Garden*

The **FTBG Spring Sale 2013** will be held April 20 – 21, 2013 and will be part of the Food and Garden Festival.

*Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Show and Sale*

*June 1 and 2*

It's time to get those plants ready!!!

*Raffle Tables for — 2013*

March 25.....	<i>Bloomin' Good Nursery</i>
April 22 .....	Stelmar Gardens, Inc.
May 27 .....	Palm Hammock Orchid Estate
.....	Trinity Churchside Garden

**Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society**

**P.O. 902094**

**Homestead, FL 33090-2094**

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

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

**Member's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of additional member:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount enclosed: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Shocking News***

*by John Banta*

It is common knowledge that flowers attract their pollinators by the use of color, scents, shape and even signals that we can't see (ultraviolet patterns). Now it seems that we must add another method to flower's list of attractants. An article in *Nature* informs us that there is an electrical charge involved as well. It seems that bees and other flying pollinators carry a net positive charge due to bumping into tiny particles; pollen, dust and soot. These tiny particles dislodge an occasional electron from the flying insect resulting in it's carrying a net positive charge.

The flower with it's extensive root system is well grounded and carries an over all negative charge. When the positively charged pollinator lands upon the flower there is discharge. This discharge alters the relationship between the pollinator and the flower. The flower's reduced charge alters it's attractiveness to the next pollinator as well as reinforcing the first pollinator's memory of rewards. How many more of *Nature's* clever relationships remain to be discovered by us?

***Next Meeting, Tom Moore — The Nature of Ferns, Monday, March 25, 7:30 p.m***

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