



# *Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.*

## *Newsletter*

Volume 16, Issue 3

March 2014

### *February in Review*

Date—February 24, 2014

Speaker- Dr. Mike Maunder

Topic—Botanical Gardens- The Good, Great and Weird

Treasurer's report balance- \$9847.12

President called meeting to order at—7:35

Hospitality— Almost everyone! Enormous selection, a King's Table

Raffle provided by—Bloomin' Good, several TFEPS members

Meeting ended at— 9:30 p.m.

Dr. Mike Maunder, former Executive Director at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, spoke this evening on his personal selection of botanical gardens, selected from the myriad he has visited. He was trained at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, and schooled at the University of Reading. A great many people locally and nationally are familiar with his ease of presence both on stage and in person, his endless knowledge of all things botanical, and possessing the rare talent to make you feel better after speaking with him.

After some interesting history lessons of how botanical gardens came into modern life via herbal and medicinal gardens of the 1500s in Europe, the "modern" botanical really saw its genesis as collections plants of note for gardeners in the late 1800s. Starting with the Pisa Garden in 1541

and several medicinal / herbal gardens in Great Britain (seemingly overseen only by directors whose names began with "Sir"..), some of the more familiar gardens sprouted in the late 1800s, such as the Singapore Botanical Garden, directed and created by Sir Henry Ridley. Many such garden directors are familiar to us by way of plant species names, such as Wickham, Ridley, Sloane, and numerous others.

Modern botanical gardens range a wide spectrum from very natural gardens such as Alice Springs in Australia to more artificial or contrived gardens, such as the South China Botanical gardens or Gar-

dens by the Bay in Singapore. The Eden Project in Cornwall, England, may epitomize an artificial garden, since its collections are almost entirely de novo on the site in the last few decades. Longwood Gardens was a highly structured and formal garden formerly a DuPont estate from the Golden Era of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as opposed to the Oaxaca (Mexico) Ethnobotanical garden, whose name says it all. There are gardens which bridge several genres, connecting ancient lands with agricultural and horticultural collections. Several gardens in the western US states are large land tracts comprised of chaparral or desert areas, some include zoological collections melted into a botanical setting. On his "Must-see" list are Kirstenbosch Gardens in South Africa, Arizona-Sonora Desert Botanical Garden, Nong Nooch in Thailand, the Huntington Library and Gardens in Pasadena, California, and the Arboretum d'Antsokay in Madagascar.

The power point program which accompanied his lecture was outstanding, and gave us all a better idea of the need for and value of botanical gardens, irrespective of size or locality. As agents for social change, as viable institutions that equal the rank of any other public service, and as species repositories and living banks for regional diversity, such gardens are a necessary part of the green world.

*Respectfully submitted,*

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

### *Next Meeting, Monday, March 24*

The **Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society** presents **Jody Haynes** who will speak on **Cycads** on Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm. The meeting will take place at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, in the Corbin Building.

**Cycads** represent the oldest extant seed-bearing plants in the world. Collectively, they are also one of the most threatened plant groups. As of the most recent **World List of Cycads**, there are 331 species in 10 genera. All grow in tropical and subtropical areas, and many are appropriate for South Florida. Jody will be talking about the many **Cycad** species and how to successfully grow and propagate them. He will also bring a number of species that will be for sale after his presentation as well as a couple for the Raffle.

There is no admission fee and the public is invited to attend this presentation. There will be plants donated by **Ree Gardens (Steve and Marie Nock)** for Raffle. Refreshments will be served.

# *The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.*

## Officers for 2014

### President

Ron Keifert (305) 445-7228

### Vice President

Marie Nock (305) 232-2257

### Secretary

Craig Morell (305) 667-1173

### Treasurer

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Debbie Lamb (305) 251-8675

Mike Twyford (305) 444-6332

Marnie Valent (305) 233-5929

Reggie Whitehead (305) 613-5944

*(and current officers)*

### Committee Chairs

**Membership** — Sherrin Smith (305) 213-2598

**Hospitality**—Emalyl Israel (305) 235-0886

Martha Bogaard (305) 661-2305

**Raffle Table** — Skye Palmer (305) 595-9291

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**Special Events** —Marie Nock (305) 232-2257

**Webmaster** — Bob Benaim (305) 793-9755

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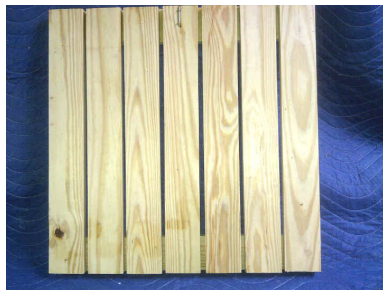
*The first Saturday of each month is a special day!*

SHERRIN A. SMITH (Miami Native)

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Contact – Bob Benaim, 305-793-9755 or

staghomrescue@gmail.com

## *Enjoyment is a Davallia fern*

Growing ferns for pure enjoyment has been a long time hobby for fern enthusiast Jule Pauliny and the rabbit's foot fern (*Davallia trichomanoides*) is one of his favorite subjects.

*Davallia trichomanoides* is an epiphyte which can grow on tree branches with a bit of moss, or on pieces of drift wood or feather-rock. It can also be treated as a terrestrial fern and grown among rocks on the ground in a shady garden. Very often it is grown in wire baskets or tree fern fiber containers.

If growing in a wire basket, choose a good wire basket, one that is flat on the bottom is easy to work with. Place a scrap of shade cloth on the inside at the bottom. This keeps the sphagnum moss from falling away as it deteriorates. Next put a layer of damp moss about 3 inches deep on the bottom, the fill the sides of the basket with a layer of moss one and a half inches to two inches thick — do not pack too tightly.

Then with a good loose potting mix, fill in the center leaving enough room in the middle for a clay pot. The size will depend on the size of the basket. Plug the drainage holes with a cork before placing in this pocket.

Cut some rhizomes from a large *Davallia*— these can usually be found along the sides and are quite loose. Now, place the rhizomes against the outside of the basket, carefully weaving them through several wires. Always keep the tiny roots facing into the moss. Fresh green fronds can be left on the rhizome — later they will naturally fall away.

Fill the clay pot with water as needed and it will slowly percolate down through the porous pot and water the fern evenly.

*Davallias* like shade and some humidity. In the spring, Jule cuts the old fronds off — as soon as the new fiddleheads can be seen.

Jule uses an old wine barrel which he has cut in half as a handy soaking vessel for his baskets. He often adds liquid fertilizer to the water. Then the baskets are hung from a line to drain. Rabbit's foot ferns like to be kept damp, but they must not be overwatered, as the rhizomes can become spongy and water-logged, especially at the bottom of the basket. They have few insects.

If you want a hardy fern, yet one that is soft and beautiful, the *Davallia trichomanoides* will give years of pleasure in your garden.

*(This article originally appeared in the Los Angeles International Fern Society bulletin).*

**DUES ARE DUE**

Dues for 2014 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

Dues are (still):

\$15.00 - single

\$17.00 - for two members at the same address

(Dues may be paid at our March meeting.)

(Also, if there are changes that we should know about, e.g. phone number or e-mail address, please use the application and include it with your dues.)

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED**

The current editor is retiring from this post and so, we are looking for a new editor. If you are interested in putting our newsletter together, please contact, Ron Keifert at (305) 445-7228, or e-mail him at: hwy253@hotmail.com

***Welcome New Members***

***Rochelle Seide and Alan Pinhas***

21299 Harrow Court  
Boca Raton, FL 33433-2040  
(954) 295-3512  
rseide21729@gmail.com

*March 24..... Ree Gardens*

**Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society**

**P.O. Box 902094**

**Homestead, FL 33090-2094**

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

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

**(Yearly dues are for calendar year - January - December)**

**This is for a New Membership: \_\_\_ or for Renewals: \_\_\_**

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

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

**Street Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## *A Walk on the Dark Side*

by John Banta

Being such visual creatures we tend to avoid dark situations. Charles Darwin was a member of the Lunar Society. This was a group of scientists who met once a month to discuss recent scientific advances. The Society derived its name from the fact that the meetings were always scheduled on the night of the full moon. The celestial illumination made travel to and from the meetings much nicer. It seems only natural that we are most comfortable in well lighted environments which means that we miss a lot of horticultural activity. A nighttime walk through your garden or greenhouse can be quite an education. Accom-

panied with an inexpensive LED flashlight you will discover many things.

The great orb spiders spin their immense webs after dark. Their eyes glowing bright red like hot coals. Snail and slug pests are easily found and eliminated. Other pests are also found once their cloak of protective darkness fails them. Many plants reproduce during the dark hours and emit delightful fragrances. A night walk through your plant collection is an adventure worth repeating. Try it! It is convenient and enlightening.

*Next Meeting, Jody Haynes, Cycads, Monday, March 24, 7:30 p.m.*

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