



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 2

Editor: Reggie Whitehead February 2009

January in Review

Reggie called the meeting to order at 7:45 and welcomed members and guests. Thanks to Emaly Israel and Martha Bogaard for the refreshment table. The evenings Raffle table was supplied by Craig Reid. Adding to the Raffle table, Sherrin Smith donated bromeliads, and Argeo Hernandez donated begonias.

The Society held its annual election and the proposed slate was nominated and approved. The 2009 officers are: Reggie Whitehead (President), Leigh Elliott (Vice President), Karen Mashburn (Secretary) and Tom Moore (Treasurer).

Reggie mentioned and thanked our last Raffle Chairs, Michael and Sheila O'Dea, for their many years manning the Raffle Table. Craig Reid was asked to be Raffle Chair for 2009.

The society is also looking for a couple of people who will be our Chairman for our smaller venues like the Fairchild Spring Sale and the Ramble. We need someone to assume chair of these events.

Treasurer's Report shows \$17,896.85 in the bank; we're doing well.

Our new Vice President, Lee Elliott is in the hospital with back pain and 2 surgeries. He is on the road to recovery.

Tom Moore was our speaker for the evening. His talk was entitled *A Variety of Ferns*.

He brought in a great variety of ferns, some of which were king-sized. Tom is a long time fern grower, retired math teacher, and great educator.

Tom will cover a lot of territory in speaking about ferns, including their distinctions from other plants, as well as some plants which look like ferns but are not true ferns.

What is a fern? There are several criteria:

-- A fern has no flowers, berries or seeds.

-- Two basic requirements for ferns are:

1. They reproduce by spore and
2. They have a complex vascular system.

--Algae are other plants that reproduce by spore, but have very simple vascular systems.

--Pollination has not yet taken place in a spore. Fertilization occurs on the surface of a specialized structure called a gametophyte, and the process involves actual moving sperm-like cells.

--Millions of spores are released. They have to find moisture, grow a gametophyte, and if enough moisture is present the fertilization occurs. This is a different process from seeds.

Ferns are an extraordinary group of plants, ranging over much of the world, but our interests tend toward tropical ferns. They can range from almost moss-like species to giants the size and height of trees.

Of special interest to Tom is the group, *Angiopteris*. The trunk-forming tree fern genus usually has very large fronds (24-26 ft long in the wild). There are several species in the genus, most with bi-pinnate fronds, some with single-pinnate fronds. Spores are found on the back of the plant, in spots called sori. There are exactly 64 spores in the sori in this genus of ferns.

Tom postulated that this number arose from cell division which happens in mathematical accuracy, each cell dividing in 2 parts, then again, then again, and so on. The curiosity is what stops the process exactly at 64 spores.

Tree ferns are the tallest ferns in height; *Angiopteris* are the largest ferns in spread.

There are numerous fern allies which resemble ferns. One of the more interesting of the fern allies is *Lycopodium*, now classified as *Huperzia*. Tom brought in several beautiful specimens, including a neat blue-frond species called *Lycopodium goebellii*, and another species called *Lycopodium nummularifolia*. *Selaginella* is another fern ally with myriad species, one of which is an iridescent blue-green in strong light, and there is also a red-frond species.

There are perhaps 10-12,000 fern species in the world, and new ferns are being found all the time. They are the oldest plant group on the planet. The fern group has a 300 million

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Next Meeting, Monday, February 23

This month, *Begonias in the Landscape*, presented by Philip Iloo. Philip is a great begonia grower and for our February meeting, he will tell us how he grows beautiful begonias and how we can use them in our landscape. (This month's Raffle Table is supplied by Tim Anderson and the refreshment table will be courtesy of Argeo Hernandez) See you there, 7:30 p.m.

The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Officers for 2009

President	
Reggie Whitehead	(305) 666-0219
Vice President	
Leigh Elliott	(305) 255-7481
Secretary	
Karen Mashburn	(305) 661-7488
Treasurer	
Tom Moore	(305) 666-0219
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	
Craig Reid	(305) 251-0143
Webmaster	
Bob Benaim	(786) 243-0502

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

Plant Sale—February 21-22; Feb 28-March 1

7860 S. W. 124 Street
Miami, FL (305) 232-2257

Rare and unusual plants including: a great selection of Bromeliads; *Medinilla magnifica*, *miniata* and *Mt. Kinabalu*; *Cochliostemas*; collector Anthuriums and Philodendrons; *Osmoxylons*; over 300 varieties of *Crotons*; *Tabernaemontana crassa*; *Clusia orthoneura* and *lanceolata*; *Coccoloba pubescens* and *rugosum*; *Clerodendrons* in bloom; Palms including *Mauritiella armata*; and many other interesting species. — Steve and Marie Nock (Snock1@earthlink.net)

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years old heritage. The textbook of choice is Barbara Joe Hoshizaki's *Fern Grower's Manual*.

Tom went through each fern on the table and gave a short talk on each one. Some of the ferns Tom brought in for display were:

Ophioglossum pendulum or the Ribbon Fern which is from southeast Asia.

Tom brought in a couple of Staghorns to show as well. Tom said that staghorns ferns comprise perhaps 18 different species. But there is a lot of discussion about whether there are as few as 15 species or as many as 19 species. They come from Southeast Asia, Australia, New Guinea, Indonesia and Africa. There is only one species in the New World, *Platyserium andinum*. (And no one is sure how this isolated species became native to the New World.) Tom also brought in a specimen of *Platyserium stemaria*.

There was a specimen of a *Adiantum raddianum* species. *Adiantum* species are generally known as Maidenhair ferns – the stem is characteristically dark brown, almost appearing black. Some species are runners, others are clumping types.

Polypodium – white hairs on the fronds of one species, *Polypodium bombycinum*, reflect the sun to keep it cool. This is a huge a diverse genus, some of which make good landscape plants.

Other ferns on display were *Microsorium whiteheadii* (named for Reggie), *Pleopeltis excavate* (a South African species), *Selaginella umbrosa*, *Campyloneuron angustifolium* (a narrow strap fern) and *C. phyllitidis*, with broader strap fronds.

This was a very interesting and visually pleasing program. Many of the ferns were growing in baskets, mounted on plaques of wood, or growing in soil in pots. The diversity of ferns was well evident tonight. The program ended at 9:15 after fielding numerous questions.

Karen Mashburn, Secretary

CHANGES!!!

Bob Benaim has enthusiastically accepted the job of Webmaster. Our web site has had some changes made to it.

Please check it out and let us know

what you think.

www.tfeps.org

Your club has also established a new e-mail address:

tfeps1@aol.com

We will be using this to send meeting notices. Please add it to your accepted addresses so that it will not be rejected as spam.

2009 Dues are due!

Membership dues for the Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society are currently being collected. The society has many interesting projects this year, and we would love for you to be a part of all of them.

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**

(If your address label reads 2008, dues are due now. If your address label reads 2009, you are covered until the end of the year.)

Dues may also be paid at the next meeting, **February 23**.

Raffle Tables for 2009

February 23	Tim Anderson
March 23	Richard Button
April 27	David McLean
.....	Home Chaovanich and John Banta
May 25	Ree Garden
.....	John Lucas

Please make check payable to:

**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.

Members Name: _____

Name of additional member: _____

Street Address: _____

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

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____ **Amount enclosed: \$** _____

The Economy and My Garden

by John Banta

I'm fortunate to live on 5 acres (except when it comes to tax time) with large areas of grass. Many of the huge pines have died over the years increasing the areas of grass. While filling the tractor with gasoline after mowing the grass I thought, "wait a minute! This grass is costing me money for nothing". My meager retirement resources have diminished alarmingly in the past few months as the entire economy fades to black. I went to the supermarket and had to pay almost \$1 for 2 turnips! Out with the grass and in with food crops. A deep mechanical tilling removed the web of tree roots which would have sucked up the moisture and nutrients destined for the soon to arrive vegetables. Pine-land soil is very acidic and I favor *cole crops* that require a very sweet soil. A heavy application of agricultural lime does the trick.

Already two rows of turnips are showing their green. And 3 rows of bush beans are showing their little green bent arms .

Radishes are to be planted this week-end and the structure for the pole beans (made of bamboo) ready to put up. No more spending big bucks for kerosene to keep the tropical exotics happy in cold weather. Although a few tropical vegetables (like pigeon peas) have a place in my new adventure of vegetable gardening. I believe that my home grown produce will save not only money but be healthier as well as I've never used any pesticides in the garden area. The tomatoes and peppers will avoid the nematodes and fungi problems by being container grown. Thanks to this rotten economy I've gotten a new lease on gardening.

Unfortunately the weather in the 20's removed all the beans and tomatoes and peppers. Next time "*Vegetable Games.*"

Next Meeting, Begonias in the Landscape — Philip Iloo, Mon., February 23; 7:30 p.m

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6880 S. W. 75 Terrace
South Miami, FL 33143***