



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 6

Editor: Reggie Whitehead June 2008

May in Review

The meeting of the Tropical Fern and Exotic Plant Society (TFEPS) was called to order at 7:50 P.M. by acting President Tom Moore, who stated that the Reggie Whitehead, was in New York. Tom welcomed all members and guests. He reported that the TFEPS Show and Sale would be held Saturday, May 31, and Sunday, June 1 at the Garden House of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (FTBG). He asked the TFEPS members to bring their plants on Thursday for display or for judging.

He requested that TFEPS members help set up the display on Thursday and bring a covered dish for the Judges Luncheon on Friday. He urged the TFEPS members to sign up for the membership table and the holding area on Saturday and Sunday. Tom asked that any TFEPS members who brought in plants for sale can bring a maximum of 30 plants. TFEPS takes 15% of member sales. Each plant must have two tags that list the name, cost, and owner of the plant. TFEPS will reimburse the member for each sale minus 15%.

Vivian Waddell donated six sealing wax palms to TFEPS.

Tom stated that the society would probably use the palms for sale at the TFEPS auction on October 27. Steve and Marie Nock and Craig Reed brought plants for the raffle table, which was organized by Sheila and Michael O'Dea. Dennis Murasaki contributed a "Hawaiian palm," which is not a true palm, and is a very rare plant. Cathy Scott donated a Fiji fan palm.

Bob Benaim reported that TFEPS has about \$13,000.00 in the Treasury. Emaly Israel and Martha Bogaards brought food and organized the refreshment table. Fern Hartnett also contributed food to the refreshment table.

Tom Moore introduced De Hull, the evening's speaker, as one of the preeminent experts on palms in South Florida. De discussed growing palms and other exotic plants in containers.

De lives on one acre near the Falls area and most of his yard is covered with container plants. He made the following statements about pot culture of palms and other plants:

1. The Hawaiian plant (brought in by Dennis Murasaki) is not a true palm and is an extremely rare plant that is close to extinction. It grows on edges of cliffs, grows best in filtered light, and should be treated like a succulent.
2. De discussed an unidentified small palm tree in a container that had gone through four hurricanes and a tornado during 2005 and has been neglected since 2005. Over the

(Review continued on page 2)

Next Meeting Monday, June 23

We welcome our good friend Dr. Bruce McAlpin who will speak on "Making a Good Impression."

How do you make a "Good Impression" in the garden, come to our next meeting and find out.

This is our last meeting before our summer hiatus.

See you at 7:30 p.m.

A Great 2008 Show and Sale

Once again, our valued members did a superb job of making sure that our annual Show and Sale was a spectacular success.

The society gratefully acknowledges all of the members who put in so many hours of hard work for our Show weekend. This event can not take place without you.

We thank the following members: Tom Moore, who stepped in and coordinated every aspect of the show; in addition to coordinating plant pickup and delivery, and general errands in conjunction with the show. Jason Lopez, whose masterful design brought us a beautiful plant display. Steve Forman who drove our rental vehicle to assist Tom Moore. Larry Weed, Glenda Weed, Rod Gates, Terry Weed our friends from New Orleans whose efforts are always first rate. Bobbie and Ben Hull, who once again came in from Apopka to put in long hours—a special thank you to Bobbie (and Rod Gates) who also served as clerks for our judges.

We thank our judges: Don Evans, Martha Kent and Craig Morell who donated time out of their very busy schedules to participate in our show and sale.

To our Luncheon Committee, headed by Emaly Israel and Martha Bogaards, whose tireless efforts provided a great Appreciation Luncheon.

To our members who sat at the Member's Table, and holding areas, plus helped in numerous

(Show and Sale continued on page 3)

The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Officers for 2008

President

Reggie Whitehead (305) 666-0219

Vice President

Tom Moore (305) 666-0219

Secretary

Karen Mashburn (305) 661-7488

Treasurer

Bob Benaim (786) 243-0502

Hospitality

Martha Bogaards (305) 661-2305

Emalyl Israel (305) 235-0886

Librarian

Juan Espinosa-Almodovar (305) 444-3103

Raffle Table

Sheila O'Dea (305) 253-4907

Michael O'Dea (305) 253-4907

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

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(Review continued from page 1)

past three years, the soil broke down in this container, there was no oxygen to its roots, and the condition of this palm declined. After removing the tree and dirt from the container, De found a few earthworms, which are fine for plants in the ground but not for plants in containers, and roots that were dead or in poor condition due to a lack of oxygen. Soil in containers breaks down over time.

3. Sealing wax palms are among the prettiest palms. Red sealing wax palms from Borneo grow in swamps and do not like nighttime temperatures below 80 degrees. The best way to grow sealing wax palms in containers is to place a saucer of water under the container. After the first cool night in the fall, this plant should be brought indoors until summer.

4. Cyclamen plants are grown in northern climates. Home Depot sells them in the fall and winter and they die in March or April in Florida. Geraniums and petunias also grow well in cool weather. Costco sells lilacs in winter and spring even though they will not grow anywhere in Florida, including the Panhandle.

5. South Florida has poor soil; in most areas, it is what we call *coral rock*; the proper name is oolitic limestone. This soil does not hold nutrition well and has a high pH content.

6. Potted plants die mostly due to over-watering or too much tender loving care. Research done at the University of Florida Research Center in Apopka has shown that most plants in pots can survive three weeks without water under normal conditions. Potted plants need a well-drained mix.

7. Begonias and aroids are basically "air plants" that are supposed to grow in trees instead of pots. There is total aeration with these types of plants.

8. Palms and orchids do not have aggressive root systems compared to ficus trees. De further observed that most rare plants do not have aggressive root systems.

9. De told us, **Do not** water or fertilize on the bud or flower of any orchid.

10. The oil crisis will have a very

(Review continued on page 3)

(Review continued from page 2)

adverse effect on the horticulture industry because people do not have the funds or extra dollars to spend on plants.

11. Potted plants have become easier to grow because there are many slow release fertilizers on the market, such as Osmacote and Nutracote.

Do **not** put any fertilizer in the center of the plant, including slow release fertilizer.

12. De uses organic fertilizer instead of pesticides because pesticides can be dangerous.

13. Gardenias are more susceptible to pests and insects because they are not native plants (to South Florida) and they prefer acidic soil.

14. Fiji fan palms can grow 30 to 40 feet high at full growth. They give a tropical Pacific look to a garden.

15. Lethal yellowing problems in palms have not been eliminated. Some palms, such as Fiji fan palms, are more resistant than others to lethal yellowing.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike O’Dea

(We thank Mike O’Dea for filling in as acting Secretary for this meeting — Good Job, Mike)

ways to ensure the success of our show and sale: Argeo Hernandez, David and Valerie Foster, Caroline Thompson, Chad Husby, Martha Bogaards, Sheila O’Dea, Mike O’Dea, Steve Grisham, Leigh Elliott, Lavinia Action, Marie Scherr, Jacquelin Gaudio, Emaly Israel, Sherrin Smith and Martha Kent.

This year’s show and sale brought in many new and wonderful plants to choose from and the vendors were more than happy to share their new plants with a waiting crowd.

The display, that Jason designed, was filled with lots of prize-winning entries. Many members took home lots of award ribbons (Blue, Red and White). However, a few members were fortunate enough to win some of the major ribbons, these were: **Best Flowering Plant, *Medinilla miniata*** (Ree Gardens); **Best Native Plant, *Lycopodiella cernua***, Chad Husby; **Best Fern, *Aglaomorpha meyeniana***, Martha Bogaards; **Most Unusual Plant, *Strophocactus wittii***, Bruce McAlpin; **Best in Show, *Kaempferia grandis***, Sid Gardino. The **Sweepstakes Winner** for most Blue Ribbons was: Ree Gardens (Steve and Marie Nock)

If we have been in remiss in not acknowledging any member who donated their time during our show weekend please know that we appreciate all of the member’s who participated in the show and sale on our great weekend. We offer a BIG Thank You, for another wonderful Show and Sale.

Raffle Tables for June

June 23..... Larry and Glenda Weed

Please make check payable to:

**Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society
17850 S.W. 280 Street
Redland, FL 33031-3321**

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Sweet and Sour

by John Banta

I was in a palm nursery recently, and was surprised by the condition of the plants. They were all so yellow. They almost looked as though they had gotten too much sunlight. I inquired about their condition. The cause was due to using too much sulfur coated time release fertilizer. The sulfur coating had driven the soil pH level to very acid (it was actually below 4.0). At this low pH certain elements as aluminum can become toxic to the plants. This was the situation here. An abundant dressing of dolomitic limestone eventually restored the palms to vigor.

The pH of soil in the Miami area is generally well buffered by the abundant lime rock that belies most of the area. Problems can arise when some plants

are potted in mixtures heavy in peat. Not all plants like an acid environment for their roots. Maidenhair ferns and begonias really want a "sweet" soil. That is a mix with a high pH (more than 7.0). The use of any fertilizer tends to lower the pH so pot cultured plants are often prone to growth problems often related to sweet and sour soils. The use of pea rock (little chunks of limestone the size of green peas) in the bottom of the pot provides a pH option for the roots as well as good drainage.

Next Meeting, Making a Good Impression; Bruce McAlpin, Monday, June 23; 7:30 p.m

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