May in Review

Date—May 24, 2010
Speaker- Dr. Jeff Block
Topic- The Complete Tropical Garden
Treasurer’s report balance-$ 14, 689.50, reporting that the Fern Sale netted no profit.

— President Mike Twyford called meeting to order at—7:45
— Hospitality- Imalyl Israel and Martha Bogaards
— Raffle provided by—John Lucas, and Duane and Rebecca Tannenbaum

Meeting ended at—9:10 p.m.

Reggie Whitehead spoke about the upcoming Fern Sale and Show, with attention being paid to the judges’ luncheon, and the need to have plants ready for the show.

Marie Nock introduced Dr. Block, a retired anesthesiologist from South Miami Hospital, and a long-time plant grower. Dr. Block started off by saying that he learned a great deal from plant societies. (Secretary’s note: he’s learned well, evidenced by myriad Blue Ribbons and crystal trophies). He also polled the audience about the length of time the members have been gardening, finding out that many of them were long-time gardeners, a decade or more in the craft. He went on to show a number of power point images of his property, which many have visited, and all have found exceptional. One of the many long-term investments made in his property was to furnish it with a reverse-osmosis (RO) water treatment facility capable of producing hundreds of gallons of near-distilled-quality water per day. Combining this with a permanently piped irrigation and misting system in his conservatory and in many of his mature trees, the epiphytes on his property are quite happy. Many growers have found out that ferns, orchids, palms, bromeliads and many tropical plants have trouble growing with calcium-laden water. The growth response is amazing, and many “difficult” plants grow surprisingly well with RO or rain water. For those who know his extraordinary palms, ferns and bromeliads, the proof is readily evident!

Regarding garden design, Dr. Block mentioned some of the standard principles of landscape architecture: good ventilation, mixed textures, long vistas, open space as a counterpoint to dense plantings, and wind breaks on the northwest side of the garden. His garden has good ventilation from the southeast, where warm humid air originates.

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Next Meeting, Monday, June 28

The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society presents John Banta who will speak on The Realm of Peacocks [Thai Gingers].

John has collected plants around the world and introduced them into cultivation in the United States. He is a plant hybridizer and innovator currently working on inducing variegation into plants. Peacock gingers from Thailand are one of his current passions.

John will have plants available for purchase, and this month’s Raffle Table is supplied by Larry and Glenda Weed. See you there — 7:30 p.m.

What A Show

This year’s Annual Show and Sale was as impressive as ever. Many beautiful, exotic and rare plants were everywhere, and our members showed up in record numbers to help mount this spectacular event.

First we’d like to thank Emalyl Israel for her tireless hospitality duties on show weekend. From the onset of this year’s show, assisted by Martha Bogaards, Emalyl was checking on members’ out meal preferences. She’s such a considerate person who remembered which members preferred vegetarian meals, or which members were allergic to which foods, or even remembering which special soft drinks, to serve. Emalyl’s greatest passion is to make sure that all of our members are well-fed and cared for during the duration of the show weekend. And we gratefully thank her for all that she does for us.

Our members, starting on Thursday morning, came in and worked tirelessly to set this year’s show up. Members who volunteered were, Jerry Valent (who helped designed the show this year), Bob Benaim, Mike Twyford and Miguel Nicolas (who set up the structure for the display), and Martha Bogaards, Sallye Jude, Jackie Gaudio, Vivian Waddell and Bobbie Hull (hospitality committee). We also thank Peter Kouchalakos, Rusty Knight (who came in from South Carolina), Michael O’Dea, Ray Roberts (Apopka, FL), Tom Moore and Lavinia Acton.

We also thank President Mike Twyford for successfully guiding us through the weekend; and we thank our vendors for once again providing extraordinarily beautiful specimens for our display, as well as having topnotch plants in their sales area.

There were lots of prize ribbons

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve Forman</td>
<td>(305) 662-2368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Lamb</td>
<td>(305) 251-8675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggie Whitehead</td>
<td>(305) 613-5944</td>
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nates so much of the year. Start a tropical garden by planting the canopy trees first, then work toward the ground level or understory plants. Consider planting micro-gardens, and leave some space for plants to grow into. Many plants grow well in micro-climates created by other plants.

Of particular interest to TFEPS, Dr. Block uses ferns of many types in his garden, including inspirational specimens of *Angiopteris* (especially the pinnate forms), as well as handsome specimens of *Platycerium* and *Davaliopsis* as ground covers. It becomes clear that water quality makes a huge difference in plant growth in these genera.

On a wet wall inside a long enclosed conservatory, we saw specimens of *Adiantum* growing with abandon. Dr. Block mentioned he used an old formula gleaned from Fairchild Garden, which calls for plastering coral rock walls with a mixture of buttermilk and manure, providing a potent smell, but a good organic base on which to grow plants.

There was lively discussion about cold damage from the first quarter of the year. Dr. Block mentioned that magnesium based fertilizers, especially magnesium sulfate, had healing effects on plant tissue. As a physician, he noted that the magnesium core of chlorophyll is almost identical in structure to iron in human hemoglobin, acting in the same ways. Many members volunteered their examples of plants which were hit by cold weather. The University of Florida has an excellent weather site called FAWN, for the Florida Automated Weather Network and can be seen at [www.FAWN.org](http://www.FAWN.org). Dry air, cold soil, poor health, and wrong-plant, wrong-place combinations proved deadly to some plants. Dr. Block made mention that healthy plants will withstand and recover from cold events better than stressed plants. He suggested we look positively at weather events, learn from them, and most importantly, SHARE the information. The information is priceless to many growers, not just locally. His collection has 2 state champion trees, a gigantic Silk-Floss tree, *Chorisia speciosa*, and a venerable ‘Haden’ Mango from dec-

(Review continued on page 5)
Sid and Regina Gardino with Best Show — Adenium obesum

Philip Iloo with Best Flowering Plant — Dendrobium amabile

Duane & Rebecca Tannenbaum with Best Florida Native — Campyloneurum phyllitidis

Steve and Marie Nock Sweepstakes Winners for Most Blue Ribbons — Featured here with Anthurium regale, one of their prized specimens

Sherrie Macchia with Best Fern in Show — Doryopteris ludens

Glenda and Larry Weed with Most Unusual Plant — Lecanopteris lomarioides

Our Judges: Craig Morell, Dr. Lester Kallas, Martha Kent and TFEPS President Mike Twyford

2010 Show and Sale
(Review continued from page 2)

ades ago, part of the sprawling mango groves which carpeted the area 60 years ago. Dr. Block finished his program at 9:10 with a call to arms to share information about cold damage, and how plants respond to weather events. His program was enlightening and made many of the members want to install their own RO water units.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Morell
Secretary, CPA (certified plant addict)

(Show and Sale continued from page 1)

awarded this year, and some very spectacular specimens introduced. (See color photos of show plants and Major winners. Also, more photos on our website: www.tfeps.org.

As always, the exhibit featured some rather unique plants, one was the “cat-tail” *Hildewintera colademonsis* cactus beautifully grown and carefully brought in by Dr. Bruce McAlpin.

Another interesting plant was *Acanthostachys strobilacea*, the pine cone bromeliad, with its long, gangly pencil-thin leaves. Yet, another favorite of the show was a *Neophytum ‘Galactic Warrior,’* with its extra-terrestrial, spiny, red leaves.

Once again our Show and Sale was a success because of our very generous and talented members. Thank you for a great weekend. — Reggie Whitehead, Show Coordinator

Raffle Tables for 2010 — 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Raffle Table Details</th>
<th>Hosts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 28</td>
<td>Larry and Glenda Weed</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>No Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2010</td>
<td>No Meeting</td>
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<td>September 27</td>
<td>Richard Button</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>Annual Auction</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 22, 2010</td>
<td>Peter Kouchalakos</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2010</td>
<td>Holiday Party</td>
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<td>January 24, 2011</td>
<td>Sid Gardino</td>
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<td>February 28, 2011</td>
<td>Tim Anderson/Redland Nursery</td>
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<td>March 28, 2011</td>
<td>Steve Nock/Philip Iloo</td>
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<td>April 25, 2011</td>
<td>David McLean/Craig Reid</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 23, 2011</td>
<td>John Lucas/Rebecca &amp; Duane Tannenbaum</td>
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The Realm of Peacocks
by John Banta

I admit that I’m taking advantage of the back page this month to promote this month’s program “The realm of Peacocks.” The program deals with my favorite country, Thailand and my most favored plant genus, Kaempferia. Peacocks are synonymous with extravagant displays of color and beauty. Any visitor to the temples in Bangkok quickly realizes that Thailand’s art makes the baroque style seem absolutely austere. It seems only natural that Thailand should be the epicenter for a genus of gingers known as peacock gingers. Peacocks are native to the Asian rainforests. This evening we shall view some of the riches of Thailand; not the least are endemic Kaempferia, peacock gingers, that are admired for their beautiful leaves as well as stimulating thoughts about how and why the leaves are so decorated. With over 200 slides to view I still expect to see many of the plants featured in the program sold to members who wish to enrich their gardens with clever plants that hide underground when Winter comes. And dare I hope that some members will try their hand at hybridizing these beauties to produce new and more beautiful Peacock Gingers.

Next Meeting, Monday, June 28, John Banta, The Realm of Peacocks [Gingers] — 7:30 p.m.

This Newsletter is also available through PDF and our www.tfeps.org website.