



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 3

Editor: Reggie Whitehead March 2009

February in Review

The meeting was called to order by President Reggie Whitehead at 7:45.

Treasurer reported \$18,159.60 in the account.

The beautiful and full raffle table was provided by Tim Anderson and speaker Philip Iloo.

Reggie announced that Marie Nock has agreed to Chair the Spring Sale and the Ramble for the Society. (A *BIG Thank You!* to Marie).

We will need a chairperson for our June 6 and 7 Show and Sale. Several members made announcements of upcoming events, for instance:

Marge "Fern" Hartnett announced that on March 14, there will be a free St. Patrick's Day Festival at the Fred B. Hartnett Ponce Circle Park.

Jeff Chait announced that on March 14-15, the annual Palm Show and Sale will take place at the Montgomery Botanical Center.

The Villagers Garden tour also will be held on Saturday, March 14 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Interested parties should see Sallye Jude for tickets.

Another announcement was: On March 21 and 22, the Pinecrest Garden Club will hold their annual plant sale at the Pinecrest Gardens Backyard Paradise Festival (interested members should see Karen Mashburn).

The final announcement was made by Michael O'Dea, who informed us that the International Orchid Show and Sale would take

place the weekend of February 27 thru March 1.

Begonias

The subject of the program this month was Begonias. Our speaker was Philip Iloo, an experienced horticulturist from Homestead. Philip grows a wide variety of plants such as Begonias, Hoyas, Orchids and other unusual plants. Philip stated that Begonias prefer to be grown on the dry side, and need a well-drained soil. Recommended is Fafard #2 bag mix from Pro Source in Homestead. This is a common peat mix, and is available from many sources, but usually only from wholesalers. If growing begonias in the ground, incorporate this into the soil. Begonias also like soil which is a bit acidic, and they appreciate fairly bright light but not much direct sunlight.

Philip brought many beautiful and diverse begonias, most of which can be used in our landscape. They are:

Next Meeting, Monday, March 23

This month: *The Romance of Fragrance*, presented by **Dolores Fugina**. Dolores of Bloomin' Good Nursery, will discuss flowers and their fragrances. Dolores will bring in fragrant blooms and tell a little about how flowers use their fragrances for "romance." (This month's Raffle Table is supplied by **Richard Button and Dolores Fugina**. The refreshment table will be courtesy of **Reggie Whitehead**). See you there, 7:30!

- **Begonia odorata 'Alba'**. Most begonias prefer shade or partial shade except this one. This plant will even tolerate salt water inundation!

- **Begonia 'Bandit'** prefers extremely well drained soil. In the landscape it can take sun all day.

- **Beg. 'Coccinea'** (pink) grows to 14 ft on canes if assisted by a trellis. It has large pendant 'chandeliers' of bright pink flowers, and grows well in a lot of sunlight.

- **Beg. 'Maurice Amy'** is another cane type that does well here in landscapes, and has colorful foliage.

- **Beg. 'Looking Glass'** grows to 2 ft. The leaf color adds variety to the landscape, and is used mostly for its foliage color, not its flowers. It rarely blooms here.

- **Beg. 'Jim Wertson'** grows to 5-6 ft and is spectacular in the landscape. Philip said it is one of the most robust begonias, and is in high demand. Whenever people see it they buy it.

- **Beg. 'Foliosa'** is a species that won the people's Choice award in the Begonia Show. It must be grown dry, even in sphagnum moss. Philips said that it can go dry for many days and still do well. Over-watering will kill it fast.

- **Beg. 'Caribbean King'** is a rhizomatous type and one of the speaker's favorites. It is spectacular.

- **Beg. 'Tom Ment 2'** is beautiful with symmetry. Had dots on the leaves and pink flowers.

- **Beg. 'Dragon Wing'** has red or pink blooms and is always in

(Review continued on page 2)

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	(305) 248-2770

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

FOR SALE

Hundreds of Tropical Plants
at our
Annual Show and Sale

June 6 and 7

Trinity Churchside Garden

Behind the Eleventh Street Annex Restaurant

*Landscape Design, Consulting;
Medicinal, Weird, and Native Plants*

DAVID MCLEAN

14 S.W. 11 Street Open Sat and Sun and by appointment (954) 768-0423
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315 Just west of South Andrews Avenue

The first Saturday of each month is a special day!

SHERRIN A. SMITH

PLANT, PET, AND HOUSE SITTING; Personal Assistance

Miami Native

305 448-2598 Phone 305 668-4622 Fax

E-mail: sas56chevy@aol.com

(Review continued from page 1)

flower. The leaves look like angel wings.

• **Beg. 'Paleata'** has a white bloom in winter and is beautiful. It is grown for its large plate-sized round, pebbly leaves. Snails like them, however. Grow in low light for best results.

• **Beg. Iron Cross** – another favorite of growers. This is a whole class of Begonia. Grow in shade, dry. The key to growing this begonia is to not get water on the leaves. This prevents fungus. Many growers hand-water this group, taking care to water just the soil.

When using Begonias as landscape plants, site them where they receive morning sunlight and shade the rest of the day, preferably in raised beds or mounded soil areas. Plant begonias on higher ground or in a raised bed so that they drain. Water once a week if dry.

Rhizomatous types tend to bloom in winter. For **Begonia odorata**, prune twice a year if you want them to look better because they tend get tall and spindly. Philip prunes his to just 6-8 inches tall.

When begonias start to look tired and old, re-work the old begonia bed with new soil and replant.

Begonias do not like granular fertilizer. He suggested using Dynamite or Osmocote slow-release fertilizers.

You can buy begonias at the Pinecrest and Coral Gables Farmer's Market and at plant shows. (*The Miami Begonia Show and sale will take place on April 25 & 26 at Fairchild*). Phil Iloo, will open his nursery in the summer for a small festival. Watch for information about it. There will be lectures, food, etc. We want to thank Philip Iloo for generously donating so many plants to our Raffle table AND thank Tim Anderson for his generous contribution as well.

Karen Mashburn, Secretary

Visit us at: www.tfeps.org

2009 Dues are due!

Membership dues for the Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society are currently being collected. 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 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, **March 23.**

New Members and Lifetime Members

Steve Pearson
14525 S. W. 92nd Court
Miami, FL 33176
(305) 259-8006
wadadasaw@aol.com

John Story and Diana K. Wiener
1633 Washington Lane
Meadowbrook, PA 19046
(215) 887-5900
jwstory@meadowbrookfarm.org

Raffle Tables for 2009

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: \$** _____

Vegetable Games

by John Banta

My vegetable garden has opened new vistas in my view of foods. While our supermarkets do a remarkably fine job offering a wide range of produce, I'm impressed by the limited choice of vegetables generally offered. A new item is often viewed with suspicion. When it comes to food, humans are very conservative in selecting new items. I guess that's a good survival trait but it sure leaves big gaps in our dietary scope.

I will use radishes as an example. The most common radish available is the red Cherry Belle. One of the joys of writing this short article for the TFEP Society newsletter is it causes me to learn all sorts of neat plant information. For example, the United States produces over 2 million pounds of radish seeds per year, with over 3000 seeds per ounce that means lots of radishes are being grown. Some are grown for their seed oils used in biofu-

els. Radish comes from the Latin word *radix* meaning root. The genus name **Raphanus** comes from Latin "rapere" meaning *impetuous speed*, that is so appropriate for radishes germinate in 1 or 2 days and are ready to harvest in as little as 20 days. The white "daikon" and the yellow radish enliven any salad with extra crunch and a bit of heat. The vegetable games of the title, refer to my goal of growing as many varieties of somewhat neglected vegetables as I can obtain seeds of. I can see that the old Florida summer garden standbys, black eyed peas and okra are going to have to yield to the many interesting Asiatic vegetables. Radishes are so very rewarding and quick to gratify I urge you to plant a few to experience the fun of eating your garden. Next time, ***The Wretched Unseen Worms.***

Next Meeting, The Romance of Fragrance — Dolores Fugina, Mon., March 23; 7:30 p.m

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