



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 5

Editor: Reggie Whitehead May 2008

April in Review

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 by President Reggie Whitehead. He welcomed all members and guests. He announced the Show and Sale would be held on May 31 and June 1 at the auditorium at Fairchild Garden. Please prepare your plants. Jason Lopez will design the show, and Tom Moore will coordinate. The 2008 Membership Rosters were available at the meeting and members were asked to save the society a little postage by picking theirs up this evening. Remaining rosters would be mailed.

Thanks to Emaly Israel and Martha Bogaards for the beautiful refreshment table. Sheila & Michael O'Dea brought cheese and fruit. Craig Morell brought 2 deli platters, and Fern Hartnett brought a box of chocolates. Thanks to all.

Our speaker for the evening, David McLean, brought plants for the Raffle table. Peter and Clara Kouchalakos, were also responsible for the evening's Raffle Table — they supplied an exquisite collection of bromeliads. Richard Button, Cathy Scott and Marie Scherr contributed plants as well.

Treasurer Bob Benaim reported we have \$13,753.01 and the bills are paid.

David McLean spoke on "Bloodthirsty Plants". He brought many plants to demonstrate the variety of plants that are unfriendly to humans. He also brought a pink sheet with a list of interesting nurseries.

Here is a list of the plants David showed that are mean and blood thirsty, or as he says "Plants for Masochists":

Rosa palustris – Swamp Rose – Native.

Bougainvillea, thorny. David suggested we plant it at the base of a Sabal Palm, so that it might climb.

Aiphanes – Spiny Palm, aka "Coyure Palm".

Dieffenbachia 'Aurora' – really tough, easy to grow, has kaleidoscope green colors —

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Show and Sale 2008

Can you believe it, our Annual Show & Sale is almost here, May 31 and June 1.

All members are encouraged to participate in the show which will take place once again in the Garden House at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. There will be ribbons awarded in several major categories. This year's show will feature a landscaped setting, with our plants as the focal point.

There will be 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons, on not only ferns, but flowering plants as well. Larger rosettes will be awarded to **Best Native Plant, Best Flowering Plant, Best Fern, Most Unusual Plant** and **Best in Show**. We are awarding a special ribbon, **Sweepstakes**, for the most Blue Ribbons awarded to an individual.

Members may bring in plants on Thursday, May 29 beginning at 10 a.m. Your plants will need to have Plant Entry Cards and a Plant Entry Sheet. You may pick these up at the May meeting, or on May 29 when you bring your plants in.

All plants must be identified before they are entered for display. If you are unsure of the botanical name, someone will be there to help you on May 29. All members are encouraged to participate in the display.

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Next Meeting Monday, May 26

We welcome Mr. De Hull who will speak on **Growing Palms and Other Plants in Containers**. De Hull is an international palm expert who has been growing palms and other exotic plants in containers, for years and he has learned a thing or two about how to maximize growth while keeping plants happy in a container.

Nice to have De join us again. See you on May 26.

See you at 7:30 p.m.

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

Trinity Churchside Garden

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but has an irritating sap.

Euphorbia – Crown of Thorns.

Although *Euphorbia geraldia* has no spines. A spiny specimen was brought in by Marie Scherr – no identification was made.

Prickly ash – *Zanthoxylon*, a member of the **Rue** family, caustic sap causes a rash on cuts on skin.

Chinese Fisheye Jasmine – *Agalaia odorata*, nice hedge plant with tiny fragrant blooms.

Uncarina grandidieri tree – slimy – succulent tree, yellow flowers, “mousetrap plant” (seedpods have double-recurved spines).

Agave attenuata – spineless soft leaved Century Plant, gray/silver/green leaves and long yellow flower stems.

Agave lophantha – makes a nut of pups – variegated leaves on miniature plants.

Clerodendron splendens – twining vine with deep red flower clusters.

Vines – “Never Plant Vines !” says David.

Passiflora citrina- yellow passion vine, small fragrant yellow blooms, fairly well behaved (for a vine).

Coconuts – drops with lethal intent, substitute *Syagrus amara* a new queen palm species.

Pineapple – *Ananas comosus* most have thorny leaves, some are spineless, some are just pretty but inedible.

Vriesia – spineless bromeliad genus, have beautiful flowers some have attractive leaves .

Angel Trumpet – **Brugmansia** – narcotic – all are toxic, huge fragrant flowers.

Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis ex-*

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Judging will be on a fair scale affording both the novice and seasoned grower a chance to win awards.

This year we are privileged to have as our judges Martha Kent—Hort Department at Fairchild, Don Evans — formerly of Fairchild and Craig Morell— Horticulturist at Pinecrest Gardens, all superb plant people.

While there will no doubt be many ferns entered, there will be major awards given to non-fern plants as well.

The success of this show depends on the generous nature of our members, who by the way made the past shows so successful.

All you will need to bring are your plants, we handle them from that point on. You will need to come back on Sunday after the show to collect your ribbons and plants.

Remember, we will begin accepting plants at 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 29. You may bring plants in, up until 7 p.m. that evening. If you need help in getting a plant to the garden, please let Tom Moore know (305) 666-0219. We will try to accommodate all reasonable requests.

Grooming Plants

It is never too late to discuss some of the basics. Our show will have an easy judging standard, however, we still require that plants be as free as possible from glaring blemishes. This means, no pests and no leaves or fronds that are severely marred by pests. Plants will be judged on quality, appropriate number of leaves or

flowers, or (in the case of ferns) fronds on a specimen.

Small plants, or young plants certainly should be entered in the show, reasonable care should be made to show them off to their best advantage. This rule of thumb also applies to older, mature plants. Plants should be well-supported and established on their mountings or pots (if terrestrials).

When transporting plants to the show, particular care should be given so that important foliage is not damaged. Wrapping plants in newspaper and plastic helps reduce damage and breakage of award-winning specimens. If you are transporting a hanging basket of ferns where the rhizomes have covered the base of the basket, you might want to use a plastic crate to rest the bulk of the plant in so that you do not damage the rhizomes. Also, you could place cushions of wadded up newspaper underneath the plant to keep the fronds from being crushed.

Display Plants

If you have signed up as a vendor, your display plants also will need to be brought in on Thursday, May 29, beginning at 10 a.m. More information for vendors is covered in the vendor packets (being sent out very soon). Since our vendor's plants will be an essential part of the display, it is imperative that these plants be at the Garden in a timely manner so that they may be incorporated into the design. Your show designer, Jason Lopez, will be extremely grateful for your help in this matter.

Selling Plants — Member's Table

Members wishing to sell through the Member's Table will be able to bring their plants in on Friday, May 30 and Saturday morning, May 31 **before** 9 a.m. Members may bring in up to 30 plants per day.

Your plants **MUST** be double tagged. As plants are sold, one tag will stay with the cashier (please mark your tag with your initials) and one tag remains with the plant. The society collects 15% of your sales. Members participating on the Member's Table will be mailed a check from our Treasurer, shortly after the weekend sale.

Volunteers Needed

The society will need volunteers to help with the show and sale.

When you bring your plants in on Thursday, we will be setting up the show. If you can spare some free time, our show designers would welcome your help with arranging the exhibit. We will be arranging the display from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m.

We will need volunteers to sit at our Membership Table (passing out literature, greeting guests, etc.) and volunteers are needed to man the holding area. Volunteers are also needed to monitor the display and answer questions (to the best of your ability, no training required). This also serves to keep plants out of harms way.

We are hoping that you will be able to put in a little time in some capacity. We will not need you for the entire weekend, just an

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hour or two. There will be a sign-up sheet at the May meeting, or call Tom Moore (305) 666-0219 or e-mail: tommoore@aol.com.

Fairchild has also changed its policy for free entrance for society members. If you are a member of the Garden you are automatically admitted free. If you are a member of the society and are working for the show, you will be able to attend for free, if not you will be charged the general admission price for the Garden, \$20.00.

This show and sale, will be another great experience for us. Please participate in any way you can. We would love to have your plants in the display, or your time as a volunteer.

On Friday, May 30, volunteers, are of course invited to attend our Appreciation Luncheon. If you

would like to bring something for the Appreciation Luncheon, please contact either Emaly Israel (305) 235-0886 or Martha Bogaards (305) 661-2305.

This is a luncheon that is set up amidst the backdrop of the display, “food among the plants,” so to speak. Our luncheon will begin at 1 p.m., prior to judging of the show.

Our Show and Sale has become extremely important to us, and being the only plant show in South Florida that brings in so many tropical plants in one giant display, we will work hard once again to put our best face forward.

Last year’s sale brought in many new species of plants that were not in cultivation. Our Show and Sale is the perfect venue for getting new plant material. We will still have the plants you’ve always loved, and the plants that have

eluded you in the past. The bottom line is, please come, and tell your neighbors and friends. And, while at the Garden, take the time to look around and enjoy Fairchild. There is a dedicated shuttle that runs between the new Visitor’s Center and the Garden House, this will also help you get your plants back to your vehicle. There will also be porters who will be standing by to help you as well.

Please arrange your schedules so that you are able to participate during the show weekend. Even if you are unable to enter a plant, or volunteer some time, please drop by to support the society, your presence will mean a lot to us. See you in just a few weeks.

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altd ‘Bostoniensis’ – substitute mini dwarf Boston or native maidenhair fern.

Impatiens – weeds in some cases, but pretty weeds.

Cycads – *Dioon spinulosum* or *Lepidozamia hopei*.

Live Oaks – not good in storms – good substitute S.F. water oak – only grows here.

Jewel Orchid- *Haemaria discolor*, great in protected humid gardens or terrariums.

Gardenias-need a little TLC, but the flowers are worth the effort. David mentioned a useful tip to acidify soil for Gardenias and

other plants that like to have an acidic soil. Use coffee grounds to help acidify soil.

Areca cabadae – substitute for *Areca Palms*, much better behaved and a lot cleaner.

David said that pine bark soil conditioner is an excellent soil additive to improve soil acidity, but is only available from Universal Enterprises in Pompano Beach.

Trying to keep a well-guarded secret, *secret*, David reluctantly gave us his *Secret Plant Tonic*: really weak coffee, honey, pinch of soluble fertilizer & Superthrive. He also added that if you really wanted to know the rates, you may call him.

He also mentioned that a 7-4-5 Acid Fertilizer is also good, improves acidity in the soil, and doesn’t overfeed the plants.

At the conclusion of his wonderful talk, David answered questions from the audience. We were fortunate that the evening was also David’s night for his Raffle Table. He gave lots of information about the plants that were in his talk and were now available for the raffle.

We are always honored to have David speak to our group. We thank him for his generosity of plants and knowledge.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Mashburn

Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Show and Sale

May 31 and June 1

Now is the time to prepare those beautiful plants for our Annual Show and Sale. You may bring them in on Thursday, May 29, beginning at 10 a.m.

Remember that this is YOUR society — We hope to see you during the Weekend!

Raffle Table for 2007-2008

May 26..... Steve Nock
..... Craig Reid

Please make check payable to:

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

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A Pinch of Salt

by John Banta

The other day I was driving through a local neighborhood and I noticed some palm trees (*Syagrus romanzoffianum*) commonly known as *Cocos plumosa* being cut down because of a misdiagnosis.

They did have frizzle-top, that is a mineral deficiency and not a virus as they were told. It was too late to tell the workers that for less than a dollar, their palms could have been restored to good health as several were already cut down. The lack of magnesium and manganese is all too common in Florida because our heavy summer rains leach these very soluble salts rapidly beyond the root zone. To avoid this problem I find that having a plastic shaker bottle (as for grated cheese) filled with a mixture of Epson salts (magnesium sulfate) 3 parts to one part of man-

ganese sulfate allows me to frequently apply small amounts during the rainy season to most of the plants in the yard.

Flash light batteries which contain a fair amount of manganese when buried near the palms will also remedy some of the deficiency. Just an application of Epson salts won't do the trick as the plant needs an enzyme system that depends upon manganese to move the magnesium into the chlorophyll molecule where it is needed. Another problem that often shows up in plants is the result of using certain time release fertilizers. But that's another story. **Next time, *Sweet and Sour*.**

Next Meeting, Growing Palms and other Plants in Containers; De Hull, May 26

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