



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 8

Editor: Reggie Whitehead October 2009

September in Review

September 28, 2009 meeting called to order by Reggie Whitehead at 7:50 after a wonderful welcome back dinner hosted by Emalyl Israel, Martha Bogaards, Tricia Franks, Sal-lye Jude, Sherrin Smith, and Selma Skinner.

A super raffle table was provided by Philip Iloo and enthusiastically handled by Skye Palmer and Argeo 'Ralph' Hernandez.

The program was on *The Evolution and Diversity in Florida Ferns* by Dr. Gil Nelson, author of *The Ferns of Florida*. Dr. Nelson lectured on our native ferns and offered copies of his *Ferns of Florida* book for purchase. He brought with him an amusing and lighthearted approach to botany not usually found in his profession.

Dr. Nelson began his lecture by giving the following statistics:
9000 Ferns in the world
500 in North America
175 in Florida
125 are native

His definition of 'native' is if it came by bird or other natural vector, it is native.

There are 4 or 5 groups that represent extreme diversity.

He comically cautioned his audience, "Don't get interested in liverworts! I've lost several good associates that way!" His point was that Liverworts are vexing in their ID and taxonomy, and can lead to taxonomic madness.

Tracheophytes are vascular plants. There are 2 major lineages: -- *Lycophytes* which are fern allies,

and -- *Euphyllophytes* which have true leaves.

There are no seed plants in this group, therefore seed ferns are not between ferns and seed plants. Dr. Nelson lectured on the intricacies of the fern world using diagrams, drawings and charts from his book.

One of his favorite groups is the family **Thelypteridaceae**, involving the genus **Thelypteris** of which there are 825 species worldwide, 22 in North America and 17 in Florida. Among them are the Downey Maiden fern (*Thelypteris dentata*) which is common, but not native. There are several common **Thelypteris**. *Thelypteris kunthii* is a widespread maiden fern. Ovate marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) is almost without hairs and is dominant in the Panhandle. The marsh fern looks different from the others, primarily because of its 3-5 foot tall stature.

(Review continued on page 2)

Annual Auction 2009

October 26

It is almost time for our wonderful, Annual Plant Auction. Our auction will once again be held at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, on Monday, October 26, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

People all over South Florida look forward to our auction, and we don't want to disappoint them.

Members are asked to participate in our annual fund-raiser.

To add to our collection we are also asking our usual friends at nurseries and plant shops to participate. Their generosity in the past has been tremendous and it is only matched by our own members' generosity.

Your donations may be of any plant of your choosing. Whether it is a fern, bromeliad, heliconia, aroid, flowering tree, orchid, or any plant that you feel would be a nice addition to our line-up of special plants. Please have plants at the garden no later than 6:30 p.m. so that they may be arranged.

If you are not able to donate a plant to the auction, we still hope you will come out and support us with your presence. To make things easier for purchase, checks and credit cards will be accepted. Our hospitality committee has planned a wonderful repast for us. If you would like to bring something for the refreshment table, please contact Martha Bogaards or (305) 661-2305 or Emalyl Israel (305) 235-0886.

**Next Meeting,
Monday**

October 26

**ANNUAL PLANT
AUCTION**

**Come and support the
society.**

**7 p.m. - Preview
7:30 p.m. — Auction**

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
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	Emaly Israel	(305) 235-0886
Special Sales	Marie Nock	(305) 232-2257
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Raffle Table	Skye Palmer	(305) 595-9291
	Craig Reid	(305) 251-0143
Webmaster	Bob Benaim	(305) 793-9755

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

(Review continued from page 1)

Dr. Nelson explained how to tell these ferns apart and showed a diagram which is in the book. Other ferns that he talked about were the Hottentot fern (*Thelypteris interrupta*) which grows all over Florida, but more in the central and south. Free-Tip star-hair fern (*Thelypteris tetragona*) grows in central Florida near Pinola Grotto. It is not common.

Dr. Nelson talked about the genus **Asplenium** – (Spleenworts) which have a tendency to hybridize.

The Japanese false spleenwort (*Deparia petersonii*) grows in bottoms of ravines and walls. It is found in the Everglades, and is both an exotic and an invasive species.

His 5 favorite **Asplenium** species are hybrids and difficult to identify. They are all rare. Hemlock Spleenwort is 8 inches tall and grows on rocks. The Cutleaf spleenwort (*Asplenium abscissum*) grows on limestone in North and South Florida.

His favorite is the Modest spleenwort (*Asplenium verecundum*). It grows on limestone in north and south Florida. Others that were mentioned are Curtiss spleenwort, Eared Spleenwort which grows in the Fakahatchee Strand, Ebony Spleenwort which is terrestrial in north and central and small parts of south Florida. The Bicolored and varicolored spleenworts are very rare. The Black stemmed spleenwort is rarest. The single-sorus spleenwort which grows in Florida caverns is disappearing. The wild Birdsnest fern (*Asplenium serratum*) grows in the south and is rarely encountered.

Hymenophylloceae – This is a group of ferns that grow with and resemble liverworts. The Entire-winged Bristle fern (*Trichomanes holopterum*) grows in Big Cypress and is very rare. It grows on the base of cypress trees, and is fingernail-sized.

(Continued on page 3)

REE GARDENS PLANT SALE

7860 SW 124 ST.

MIAMI, FL

305 232-2257 snock1@earthlink.net 9:00 – 5:00

Oct. 24-25

Our best selection of rare and unusual plants ever including: Bromeliads; Heliconias; *Medinilla magnifica*, *miniata*, *myriantha*, *scortechinii* and *Mt. Kinabalu*; *Cochlostemas*; collector Anthuriums and Philodendrons; *Osmoxylons*; over 300 varieties of *Crotons*; *Tabernaemontanas*; *Clusia orthoneura* and *lanceolata*; *Coccoloba rugosum*; *Saracas*; understory Palms and 5' Red Sealing Wax; *Amherstia nobilis*, Breadfruit, Flame trees, *Hoffmanias*, *Pipers* and many other interesting species.

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(Continued from page 2)

The last group that Dr. Nelson talked about were the “Little People” – **Ophioglossaceae**. Dr. Nelson’s term for these curious ferns brought a lot of laughter with it. He described his unusual tactics for finding these ferns, including several stories of how passersby and security guards reacted to his hunt for “little people”. To find them you lie down in the grass and look sideways. The plants are just taller than the grass. Dr. Nelson said the The Bulbous – Adders tongue is religious, probably Baptist as it grows in Baptists church cemeteries. The Little People are scattered around Florida. Some mentioned are the Slender adder’s tongue fern (*Ophioglossum nudicaule*), the Stalked adder’s tongue (*Ophioglossum reticulatum*) which is a garden weed all over Florida, the Hand fern (*Cheiroglossa palmata* or *Ophioglossum palmatum* grows in S. Florida and is extremely rare. Dr. Nelson also mentioned that the Southeast Asian Ribbon fern, *Ophioglossum pendulum*, has been spotted growing on oil palms along US1 in Miami.

Another member of the “little people” club is the genus **Botrychium** — these are also very small ferns, and are known as “grape ferns” because their “sori” are clustered, and resemble a bunch of grapes. These are represented by the Southern Grape fern which grows all over south Florida, the Alabama Grape fern, the Rattlesnake Fern in north Florida and the winter grape fern which grows in graveyards 2-3 inches above the grass. Dr. Nelson’s lecture was both informative and charming.

— Respectfully submitted by Karen Mashburn (and Craig Morrell)

Raffle Tables for 2009—2010

October 26	Annual Auction
November 23	Peter Kouchalakos
December.....	Holiday Party
January 25.....	John Lucas
February 22.....	Tim Anderson
March 22.....	Richard Button
April 26.....	
May 24.....	Ree Garden and Rebecca Tannenbaum

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.

Member’s Name: _____

Name of additional member: _____

Street Address: _____

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E-mail: _____

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

A Reading Assignment

by John Banta

The limited space allotted for this article forces me to advise you to read an article of utmost importance if you hope to live another 20 or 25 years. We are at the brink of a revolution as significant as the invention of the steam engine. I urge you to read Michael Specter's "A Life of Its Own" on page 56 of the September 28th issue of *The New Yorker* magazine. The future looks very interesting and brighter than many sup-



posed. I think that it was Yogi Berra who said, "it is hard to make predictions, especially about the future."

I hope that you will find Specter's article as fascinating as I did.

Next Meeting, Annual Plant Auction, Monday, October 26; 7:00 p.m

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

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South Miami, FL 33143***

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Auction
October 26***