

Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 7

Wilma's Way by John Banta

The last hurricane of 2005 was named "Wilma". I believe that it was named for Wilma Magrew. The only other woman I met (briefly) who had the authority of an admiral was Mrs. Andrew Melon.

Wilma was a force to be reckoned with. Like all interesting people she was complex and many layered. The only layers I am familiar with are those related to food and plants. Lunch with Wilma was an event to be remembered. The wines and cheeses were matched only by the superb plants that embraced her patio. We all have specimen plants that we are especially proud of, well, that is all Wilma had! The huge baskets of rare ferns shaded the broad leaves of equally rare aroids. The green ambience of the garden delights any lover of plants.

These plants were not ordinary plants by any means. The only person I can remember growing the black *Aglaonema metalica* was George Bherens who specialized in that genus. Wilma maintained a plant of it for many years. That is an accomplishment very few growers can claim. Wilma's sense of what a plant needed was awesome. Fortunately Wilma's husband, Dale, was also devoted to the plants and translates many of Wilma's horticultural wishes into reality. Over the years many of Wilma's plants have been awarded for their outstanding qualities. And lucky for us some of her plants have been available at various plant sales. While our love for plants unites us, it is the accomplishments of people like Wilma that sustain our dreams.

If paradise is a garden, it is about to be improved because on June 26th Wilma Magrew was promoted to chief celestial grower. Our loss is heaven's gain. Good-bye dear grower.

Next Meeting Monday, September 22

Tonight we delve into the world of the strange and interesting world of *Phalloids* — the **Amorphophallus** group.

Mike Twyford will introduce us to this group of interesting, smelly plants, will awaken your senses about who and what they plants really are.

There will be live specimens for your perusal, but there probably won't be any in bloom — so you will be safe from the intoxicating aroma of the **Amorphophallus** plants.

See you at 7:30 p.m.

Editor: Reggie Whitehead September 2008

Summer in Review

Yes, we say goodbye to our old plant friend, Wilma Magrew.

Wilma's plants were meticulously cared for and exquisitely grown. She would never allow a plant to leave her property unless that plant was the most perfect specimen she could offer. Our Society was very often on the receiving end of the very generous Magrew household whether she was offering plants to sell for our plant sale, or donating plants for our annual auction.

The Magrew's generosity continues to benefit our society.

This past summer, in the name of Wilma, Dale Magrew graciously presented a \$5,000 check to the society. This generosity is greatly appreciated. We humbly thank Dale and Wilma for always thinking of us, and being such great supporters of the Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society.

After Wilma's death, Dale wanted to make sure that their extensive collection of plants was in the hands of the best growers. He asked us to arrange an auction for the plants. In early July, members of the Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society mailed out postcards and invited many of South Florida's enthusiastic plant people to an auction at the Magrew home on an early Saturday morning.

Our auctioneer, Tom Moore did a wonderful job of auctioning off over 200 plants — some very large and some small. Martha Bogaards and Emalyl Israel provided a wonderful breakfast for the early morning group.

Because of the large volume of plants in the Magrew collection, it was not possible to auction off everything

(Summer in Review continued on page 3)

Officers for 2008

Presiden	t
	-

1 resident	
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

Behind the Eleventh Street Annex Restaurant

Landscape Design, Consulting; Medicinal, Weird, and Native Plants DAVID MCLEAN

14 S.W. 11 StreetOpen Sat and Sun and by appointment(954) 768-0423Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315Just west of South Andrews Avenue
The first Saturday of each month is a special day!

Benches, Pots and Cement Blocks

Dale Magrew has several orchid benches for sale, along with clay and plastic pots and cement blocks that you might use in your garden. Please call him to make an appointment (305) 235-9265

SHERRIN A. SMITH PLANT, PET, AND HOUSE SITTING; Personal Assistance *Miami Native*

305 448-2598 Phone 305 668-4622 Fax E-mail: sas56chevy@bellsouth.net

Sporotrichosis

At our June meeting, featuring Dr. Bruce McAlpin, we learned about a fungal disease that all plant people need to be aware of — *Sporotrichosis*.

Bruce cautioned us about working with sphagnum moss without the precaution of plastic gloves. Handling wet sphagnum moss can sometimes be hazardous to your health, he warned.

Sporothrix schenckii is apparently the culprit. The spores of *S. schenckii* live in the sphagnum bogs of Wisconsin and Peru, and often come in contact with human beings through careless handling. Generally, there is no obvious way of detecting if the fungus is present in the moss.

S. schenckii is the causative agent of *sporotrichosis*, a fungal infection that usually affects people in the horticultural world.

This bothersome disease, while having the propensity to become fatal, rarely is.

Entry into the body is usually through a cut in the skin. Once the fungus enters the blood stream it can manifest itself through an ulcerating lesion.

Diagnosing the symptoms used to be difficult, but by securing a swab culture, it is easier to diagnose and subsequently prescribe a remedy.

Misdiagnosing usually prolongs the disease which affects the lymphatic route that travels the limbs.

Currently, sporotrichosis is effectively treated by potassium iodide pills. An earlier remedy involved ingesting liquid iodine in a drink (preferably a juice of some sort), via several drops throughout the course of the treatment.

Today, there is plenty of up-todate information regarding sporotrichosis. Bruce cautioned again that wearing plastic gloves is the best way of avoiding this horticultural nuisance. (Summer in Review continued from page 1) at that time. Later, Dale, was very generous and allowed members and guests to help themselves to some of the plants for free.

The Naples Botanic Garden was invited to come and view the remainder of the still, large collection, and they subsequently bought the rest of the Magrew collection which will be used and memorialized in a future garden at the Naples Botanical Garden.

While Dale reluctantly let go of their collection of ferns, aroids, palms, and various adeniums, he was very pleased that the plants found excellent homes, as he is no longer able to care for the garden that he and Wilma had devoted so much of their lives to for the past 40 years.

New Members

Steve Correale 262 S. W. 31 Court Miami, FL 33135 (305) 649-8633

Shelley Dillard Morris Arboretum 100 Northwestern Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19118 (215) 247-5777 x 118 rdillard@pobox.upenn.edu Ronnie & Cindy Leroux 161 N.W. 15 Court Pompano Beach, FL 33060 (954) 784-8566 Srsparky652@aol.com

Jennifer Possley 11935 Old Cutler Road Miami, FL 33156 (305) 297-4617 jpossley@fairchildgarden.org

TFEPS Annual Plant Auction Coming Soon to a Botanic Garden Near You Monday, October 27

Raffle Tables for 2008 - 2009

September 22	
October 27	Annual Auction
November 24	
December	Holiday Party
January 26 February 23	John Lucas
February 23	
	Craig Reid
March 23	Richard Button
April 27.	David McLean
*	Home Chaovanich and John Banta
May 25	Ree Garden

Please make check payable to:

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

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: \$

For Crying Out Loud by John Banta

Not too long ago a famous political figure was accused of faking tears. I was curious about how easy it would be to fake crying. It turns out to be a difficult chore. Old time movie actresses used various techniques, a little Vick's vapor rub on the lower eyelid applied just before the weeping scene or something called a tear stick. Most often onions were suggested to induce a copious flow of tears. Why do onions do that? Other closely related plants such as garlic, chives and green onions don't have that effect. It seems that onions contain a substance, high in sulfur compounds, that goes through a series of changes in the air that result in a highly irritating vapor which causes the eye to water to wash away the irritating substance. I am surprised that so few people keep a pot of green onions near the kitchen. They are so easy to grow and they have so many culinary uses. Americans eat

about 20 pounds of onions a year. Storage onions are different from the fresh Spring and Summer onions. Books have been written just about the onion, Allium *cepa*. It is one of the oldest foods, having originated in Western Asia and used over 5000 years ago. It's ability to be stored for long periods without special attention made it a most useful food. The largest onion grown was an almost 11 pound bulb in England. Its roundness and ring structure caused it to regarded as sacred in ancient Egypt. I have a special fondness for onions. I shall always remember a wonderful meal that started with onion tarts. I enjoyed those tarts so much that I will share their recipe with anyone interested in them. By the way the root base of the onion contains the most of the tear producing compound if you cut it out under running water you will have fewer tears. Bon appetite.

Next Meeting, The Amorphophallus; Mike Twyford, Monday, September 22; 7:30 p.m.

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