



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 7

Editor: Reggie Whitehead September 2008

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 hus-

band, 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.

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

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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

Ronnie & Cindy Leroux
161 N.W. 15 Court
Pompano Beach, FL 33060
(954) 784-8566
Srsparky652@aol.com

Shelley Dillard
Morris Arboretum
100 Northwestern Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19118
(215) 247-5777 x 118
rdillard@pobox.upenn.edu

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	Sid Gardino
.....	Steve Correale
October 27	Annual Auction
November 24.....	Peter Kouchalakos
December.....	Holiday Party
January 26.....	John Lucas
February 23.....	Tim Anderson
.....	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 be 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***