



Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 7

Editor: Reggie Whitehead September 2009

June in Review

Our June Meeting was called to order by Reggie Whitehead. Reggie immediately thanked Emaly Israel and Martha Bogaards for their delicious and bountiful refreshment table. In addition to our refreshment table, Richard Button and Dolores Fugina brought in a tray of fresh Van Dyke mangoes. (Sadly, our friends outside of Miami can't appreciate the many tasty varieties of mangoes that we are privileged to sample during our mango season).

The Raffle Table was supplied by Glenda and Larry Weed and David McLean. We thank Skye Palmer for managing the Raffle Table for the evening.

David McLean gave us a brief description of the plants that were on the Raffle Table. He began by stating, "Your garden reflects your interests."

Our Raffle Table included a beautiful yellow-striped **Sansaveria** and a Whale-fin, large leafed **Sansaveria**.

Reggie asked new member Raymar Rodriguez to tell us how he grew his magnificent *Asplenium nidus*. He told us that he bought a small plant, approximately 27 years ago and has enjoyed watching it grow and grow. He attributes its enormous size to rain water, and occasional feedings. When Raymar entered the plant into our Show and Sale, its fronds reached 16 feet across. All of the literature he had run across, mention fronds of only 8 feet. After the Show and Sale, Raymar donated the specimen to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

David McLean has been a luminary speaker and instructor for more than 20 years. His quick wit and wide-ranging background as a landscape

designer / architect, herbalist, teacher, lecturer, writer, radio personality, and nurseryman has made him one of the most anticipated speakers in this area. His program dealt with medicinal plants, some common, some not so much. One of the things we can all expect from David is hearing the numerous ways in which plants can be used in healing, and as life-improving products. His lectures are often accompanied with a lot of laughs.

Here are some of his finds:

Allspice, or Pimento Tree- ***Pimenta dioica***- leaves are used for flavoring, and as a digestive aid. It makes a handsome and strong pest-free street tree, as well as a good dooryard specimen, growing much like a poplar (quite vertical). Berries are used to flavor many regional food dishes.

(Review continued on page 2)

Next Meeting, Monday, Sept. 28

For our September 28 meeting, we are pleased to present Dr. Gil Nelson.

Dr. Nelson is a naturalist and a botanist specializing in native plants. He is also the author of several books, including, ***The Ferns of Florida***, which will be available at this lecture. Please mark your calendars so that you will be able to attend.

Our hospitality committee is planning a full meal for the evening. See you there.

Annual Auction 2009

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 25, 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 Emaly Israel (305) 235-0886.

Ramble Changes

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden is gearing up for this year's Ramble. There are several big changes. The Ramble will be held on three days, November 20, 21 and 22. Also, the Garden will now be selling booth space to plant societies. If you are interested in participating, we need to hear from you. Please contact our Marie Nock (305) 232-2257.

We Welcome New Members

Georgia Tasker
and Sandy Schultz
4000 Kiaora Street
Miami, FL 33133
(305) 661-1039
gtasker@bellsouth.net

Paul and Sheryl Taylor
2230 N.W. 33rd Terrace
Lauderdale Lakes, FL 33311
(954) 801-9683
SDT0289@aol.com

Raffle Tables for 2009—2010

September 28 Philip Iloo
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: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip + 4:** _____ + _____

E-mail: _____

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

GM is Here

by John Banta

No, not General Motors, but rather Genetic Modification. We all know that DNA is the substance that makes living things the way they are. First, a few basics. If we could remove the nucleus from one of your cells and un-wind the DNA it would form a thread about as long as you are tall. This long strand of DNA is stored in the nucleus wound around a core of histones that form a spool like structure with a few molecular arms sticking out from the tightly wound DNA. It is these arms that determine the activity of the DNA. Most of the genes in any organism are turned off. You don't need the gene for blue eyes to be active in your knee cap. Nature turns off these un-

needed genes by adding a small molecular group called an acetyl group (C_2H_5) to the protruding arms. These silenced genes can become active by the use of a de-acetylating agent. Likewise by adding a methyl group (CH_3) to these arms a gene may be turned off. This process of gene activation and de-activation occurs occasionally in natural populations. It is the source of many variegated plants. The chloroplasts in green plants have their own genetic code within the chloroplasts and it may be addressed independently of the total genetic code of the plant. ***Next time GMO***

Next Meeting, The Ferns of Florida — Dr. Gil Nelson, Mon., September 28; 7:30 p.m

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

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