

## Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 12, Issue 7

Editor: Reggie Whitehead

September 2010

#### June in Review

Date—June 26

Speaker John Banta

Topic- The Realm of the Peacocks

Treasurer's report balance-\$14,385.31

President Mike Twyford called the meeting to order at—7:50

Hospitality-Emalyl Israel, Martha Bogaard, Marie Nock

Raffle provided by—Larry and Glenda Weed, Anne-Marie Scherr, Bob Benaim

Meeting ended at—9:20

John Banta has been growing and collecting gingers, aroids, and a dazzling array of odd and unusual plants for nearly 50 years. His expertise seems limitless, and tonight he spoke primarily on the Kaempferias and allied genera of Thailand. With the help of dueling slide projectors, 2 carousels of slides, and an extensive handout, John did service to a large group of plants that deserve more attention in the horticulture trades. Some of the many dozens of species have kaleidoscope foliage, while some allied genera such as Siphonochilus have large richly colored flowers.

Some of the slides John had showed us were plants in their native habitat, one species had leaves as large as a platter! John mentioned that discovering this plant was one of the greater moments in his life. There are myriad subtle differences in these genera, and that in many instances they represent a spectrum of differences which may be highly related, in that every valley and mountain range has subtle (sometimes rather bold) differences in a given species. This can be expanded to say that even very distinctly different species may be anciently related, with only cosmetic differences showing up overtly.

John has produced, collected, and hybridized dozens of plants for modern horticulture, ranging from **Impatiens** through gingers and aroids. One of his better **Kaempferia** creations is called "Raven', and has striking dark feather patterns on upright silver-green foliage. Although many species in this genus go dormant briefly, the foliage and

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## Next Meeting, *Monday, September 27*

The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society presents **Tom Moore** who will speak on the morphology or shapes of ferns. Tom is one of the founders of our plant society as well as its treasurer.

Tom will bring in plants to illustrate the diversity of ferns that he has in his own collection.

This month's Raffle Table is supplied by **Richard Button** and **Dolores Fugina**. See you there — 7:30 p.m.

#### Tricia Frank



Photo by Ron Weeks

Sadly, on June 25, we lost a beloved and important member of our horticultural community. Tricia Frank, mentored and encouraged many of us in the plant world.

We all learned much from this remarkable and beautiful woman. When I first began coming to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, I would see Tricia everywhere, at any time, always busy with the Garden's business. She volunteered at Fairchild in almost every capacity. Later in her life she became a devoted employee of the Garden.

Tricia was also very active in many plant societies, including our own. One year she and her husband Chayo hosted our Annual Holiday Party at their architecturally stunning home. Tricia, we will greatly miss you — Reggie Whitehead

### The Tropical Fern & Exotic Plant Society, Inc. Officers for 2010

President

Mike Twyford (305) 444-6332

Vice President

Marie Nock (305) 232-2257

Secretary

Craig Morell (305) 667-1173

Treasurer

Tom Moore (305) 666-0219

**Hospitality** 

Martha Bogaards (305) 661-2305 Emalyl Israel (305) 235-0886

**Special Sales** 

Marie Nock (305) 232-2257

Librarian

Juan Espinosa-Almodovar (305) 444-3103

Raffle Table

Skye Palmer (305) 595-9291

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

 Reggie Whitehead
 (305) 613-5944

#### **Trinity Churchside Garden**

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#### DAVID MCLEAN

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The first Saturday of each month is a special day!

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flowers often make up for the lack of leaves. Many of John's trademarked plants are available through the Agri-Starts group of tissue culture companies. His private collection in Alva is a wonder of different plants, and John knows more about each one of them than most people know about their family histories. Secretary's note: John is also a walking encyclopedia of all things natural, chemical, mechanical, and genetic. His interests range from giant insects, biological defense mechanisms, shells, variegated plants, and plant history. He is a bibliophile par excellence, with one of the better private libraries of anyone

John's program ended with a plea to allow plants to breed, since we keep them cooped up in captivity without letting them have any fun. He makes a good point, since there are far more restrictions on plant collecting than in decades past, so that any "new" variations will likely come from plants in cul-

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#### In Memoriam

Our member Dr. Dave Anderson passed away on Tuesday, August 10. Approximately 1 week prior, Dave had fallen and suffered massive head trauma. Dave was one of the charter members of our plant club. Dave was quite generous to our society in the past, especially during our auction.

With his passing, his generosity has increased our library, with the addition of many of his plant books, including the *Encyclopaedia of Ferns* (David L. Jones), *Chamaedorea Palms* (Donald R. Hodel), *Field Guide to the Palms of the Americas* ( Henderson, Galeano and Bernal), *Genera Palmarum* (Uhl and Dransfield).

Dave was 89 years old. — Reggie Whitehead tivation. John's programs are always educational and entertaining, and the standing-room only crowd was a testament to his reputation as a great speaker. John brought interesting plants for sale, which sold rather quickly, especially the 'Raven' now residing on my doorstep.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Morell,

Annual Plant Auction Monday, October 25 7 p.m. Get those plants ready!

#### New Lifetime Member

Nick Marchand 4551 N. W. 15th Avenue Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

#### New Members

Ron & Jackie Arrick 5100 60th Street, East Lot D-17 Bradenton, FL 34203 (941) 727-3293 rlarrick@hotmail.com Eugene Tannenbaum & Gloria Lee 6230 S. W. 83rd Avenue Miami, FL 33143 (305) 271-1722 Gloleek@comcast.net

Theresa Chormanski 1655 S. W. 10th Street Miami, FL 33135 (305) 804-2677 theresameis@yahoo.com

Raffle Tables for 2010 — 2011

# September 27Richard Button and Dolores FuginaOctober 25Annual AuctionNovember 22, 2010Peter KouchalakosDecember 2010Holiday PartyJanuary 24, 2011Sid GardinoFebruary 28, 2011Tim Anderson/Redland NurseryMarch 28, 2011Steve Nock/Philip IlooApril 25, 2011David McLean/Craig Reid

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: \$\_\_\_\_

#### The Shadow Knows

by John Banta

When I was a kid I used to listen to a radio program called "The Shadow". My memory of it was jogged while I was talking to an old timer about growing greenhouse plants. I asked his opinion about fertilizers: "is urea as good a source for nitrogen as nitrates or ammonia?" He responded as follows, "Son, there are so many different fertilizers on the market today to respond to the multitude of growing conditions and various plants that you have to have a PhD to make a wise choice. But I'll give you some good advice that I got years ago when I asked "what is the best fertilizer?"

The best fertilizer is the grower's shadow. The dumb look on my face let him know that I had no idea what he was talking about. He was a good teacher as well as a good grower so he explained that plants cannot communicate with us so it is incumbent on the grower to observe and detect problems while they are minor. Look for mites before you see their silken strands, knock a plant out of its pot and check the roots and move plants that show signs of water or light stress. The grower is far more important than the blend of fertilizer.

Next Meeting, Monday, September 27, Tom Moore on the Morphology of Ferns, 7:30 p.m.

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

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

Annual Plant Annua