

Equality Garden Club

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Save the Date for May's Meeting!

"In Search of the Blue Amaryllis"



Dr. Alan Meerow,
May's Speaker

Date: Wednesday,
May 16, 2018

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Hagen Park
2020 Wilton Drive
Wilton Manors, FL 33305

At our May 16th meeting, Dr. Alan Meerow will be giving a presentation on one of his collecting trips. "In Search of the Blue Amaryllis". He has quite an impressive Bio. Dr. Alan W. Meerow, is a Senior Research Geneticist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service at the National Germplasm Repository in Miami, Florida, and an honorary member of the Montgomery Botanical Center. He was formerly Professor of Environmental Horticulture at the University of Florida's Fort Lauderdale Research & Education Center. He received a B.S. degree in botany and environmental horticulture from the University of California at Davis and his M.S. and Ph. D from the University of Florida in horticultural science and botany. He has published over 200 scientific peer-reviewed journal articles, 4 books, numerous book chapters, and over 100 extension and trade magazine articles. He has been recognized by the Florida

Nurserymen and Growers Association as Horticultural Writer of the Year in 1990, and Educator of the Year in 1991. He was named 1998 recipient of the International Bulb Society's William Herbert Medal in recognition of his work on Amaryllidaceae. In 2005 he received the Peter H. Raven Award of the American Society of Plant Taxonomists in recognition of his scientific outreach to the public, and the David Fairchild Medal for Plant Exploration in 2017 from the National Tropical Botanical Garden. He is the author of "Betrock's Guide to Landscape Palms," "Betrock's Cold Hardy Palms," "Betrock's Landscape Palms," and, with Timothy K. Broschat, "Betrock's Reference Guide to Florida Landscape Plants" and "Ornamental Palm Horticulture" (University Press of Florida). Dr. Meerow works on the genetics and systematics of tropical ornamentals and has introduced numerous tropical ornamentals from around the world for possible introduction to the trade. Dr. Meerow is an internationally recognized authority on the amaryllis family and has published numerous scientific papers on the taxonomy and phylogeny of that group. Meerow is widely recognized for his expertise in the horticulture of ornamental palms, and has authored or co-authored books and book chapters, refereed journal articles, and cooperative extension bulletins on this subject. He is also internationally recognized as a leader in the population genetic study of cycads, and molecular systematics of palms.



Presidents Letter

What beautiful weather we're having. I see posts every day of people doing the spring cleaning in their gardens, and preparing for a hopefully good rainy season.

We're pleased to announce the Chris Williams is going to be the new EGC 1st Vice President, and Nelson Johnson is going to be the new EGC Treasurer. We are grateful to them for stepping up to the plate and wish them well in their new positions. We still need help with getting out this monthly newsletter and making updates to our

website. Please talk to me if you would be able to help us out with this.

The Bus Ramble to the south part of Miami planned for the first weekend in June. Our Rambles to Miami growers are very popular and ALWAYS sell out. Get with Dot now if you would like to secure your spot on the bus.

The A Tropical Plant Fair and the Rare and the Unusual Plant Auction were huge successes. We are grateful to Chip Jones for all the hard work he put into both. Once again, thanks to each of you who helped turn the plant fair into something we can all be proud of. Special kudos go to Chuck Ross and Nelson Johnson for the many hours

they both put into the Plant Fair Silent Auction, to Mary Lang for heading up the food and refreshments, and Dot Henley who did an great job of organizing the volunteers.

The Member Appreciation Picnic is from 11 to 2 on Saturday May 5th. Come out and join us at the pavilion at Richardson Park for the barbeque and picnic. The club will cover the burgers, hot dogs, buns, paper products, cutlery, condiments and some bottled water and sodas. You might want to bring whatever you would like to drink. If you would like to bring a potluck item to

share, please do so. If you have any input on the Fair or the Auction that you haven't shared with me through email or in person please feel free to catch me during the picnic to let me know. We need and welcome everyone's input. This fun annual picnic is a great time to get to know eachother better and socialize. Love to hear all your garden stories, as well.

The speaker at our May 16th Meeting is Alan Meerow. Can't wait to hear his presentation on "In Search of the Blue Amaryllis".



Dot's Dashes

Looking back and forth

Our Plant Fair made March a record breaking month, but April was about as wonderful for us. About 140 people attended our plant auction and we made an amazing profit. Chip did a super job securing the plants, and Peter's ability to auction was above perfect. Our membership continued to rise as well. Last year we had 72 residences where members lived and this year we have 139 such residences totaling 197 individuals. (For those in the drawing for the Golden Plume plant, know that Tim Taylor and Jason Blacklock won the plant.) The year is not half over, and we have great things to come. The May picnic at Richardson will be

a winner, part of the auction profit was designated to fund it and there will be an anniversary cake. The bus ramble in June will also be another good event.

June 2nd bus to Dade

Much is the same. The cost per seat is \$30. The bus will leave the Cardinal Gibbons student parking lot which is back of the school. Turn west on Bayview Drive by the school sign and drive the short block to the lot. Upon entering the lot turn to the west side of the parking area toward the tennis courts. You will need a bagged lunch, some cash because some may not take credit cards, and it is well to have some sort of colorful ribbon or name tag markers on your plants to help you find them when we unload the bus back at the lot at 5 PM.

We will be able to buy almost anything we collect. We will return to the two places where we have bought the most in the past. They are Stelmar (shade plants) and Redlands (acres of plants for yards and a big shade house for those who need to avoid yard plants). Isaacs Farm will have orchids, succulents, hoyas, and a variety of plants we've not been able to buy in the past. The other stop or two has not been confirmed, but ramblers will be pleased.

An unusual thing about the ramble is that the bus will be full. It will take us longer to move in and out of the bus and pay for our selections. If you have something in mind, why not go the website of a ramble grower and see if they have it. I always do this, and the grower has it ready for me. Even when we have rambled with 30 people on the bus, the growers can't have time to give any individual much individual time. These places have mega numbers of plants and of course they are not priced. A couple of our stops are never open to the public but will let us come because 'we're nice'. To absolutely hold the seat, you say you want please send me a check made out to EPGC. (Dot Henley, 4508 NE 21 Lane, Ft. Lauderdale, 33308)

May to-do list

1. Do your rain-dance so the rainy season will come early.
2. Fertilize any yard or house plants that you have ignored all spring. Move some plants into less light or they may burn from the increased light of the season.
3. Finish pulling weeds and getting a heavy layer of mulch down before it gets too hot to work outside for long.

4. Continue to monitor plants for insect pests and do your best to control the beasts before they spread. Look for 'bumpy' stems, the bumps may be scale or maybe aphids, and look for white fuzz which may be mealy bugs or male scale. Spider mites which will increase their attack as summer progresses make leaves look rusty or black.
5. Any plant that is not putting on its spring growth spurt, is problem being robbed of fluids by hungry pests. Maybe it needs to be repotted, fertilized, moved, or it needs you to look more carefully for pests. Maybe it needs to be sent off to plant heaven and replaced by a native plant which will be more likely to thrive here.

Not that plant, it's too common

After decades of saying that, I've come around to thinking common is good. If you see it growing everywhere, it is probably well fitted for our climate, alkaline soil, and seasons. Many of my uncommon plants of the past have required more acid than is in our soil and tap water, they have been more susceptible to pests both microbial and animal. These uncommon plants have usually cost more than the common plants, they have often grown less thrifty over time and have had to be removed.

For the 100th time, native plants, or plants that evolved in habitats like ours may turn out to be our best buy and the most pleasing.

Ants, ants, ants!

Not in your pants or in your plants for the moment. Ants and termites have been said to have a biomass greater than the biomass of all the people living on earth. Adding to that bit of trivia, some ants became farmers long before man. A forager leaf cutter ant cuts off a piece of leaf and takes it back to the colony. (The bit of leaf for the ant is equal to our sending out a scout who carried 750 pounds back to us.) Worker ants follow the forager's scent and begin carrying bits of leaf back at a speed equal to our running 15 miles an hour. As they travel along to collect leaves workers touch antennae and an electrical response lets them know that they belong in the same colony. Woe to a foreign ant!

Meanwhile back in the colony worker ants tend to small fungal strands near the surface of the soil and form an assembly line to take strands of the fungus deep into the nest the fungus turns the leaf bits into an edible food for larval ants and the 2-4 million in the colony. Workers at this level uses bits of feces to fertilize the farm. In Brazil leaf cutter ants have removed every leaf from a mature orange tree in a single night.

Ants fertilize and aerate soil which is a good thing. Being bitten by a soldier ant of any species is not a good thing.

(Leaf cutter ant information came from:

Wilson, E. 1984. Biophilia. Harvard Univ. Press. Pp.28-39)

Easier plant parenting?

1. Fill a white bucket with water and it will attract and drown beetle type insect pests.
2. After you use a hose-end sprayer, remove the siphon hose and put the top in the dishwasher. Leave it there for several days. This will work better than soaking the top in vinegar to clear the passageways.
3. Round-up contains a human carcinogen and many weeds have evolved to live despite being sprayed with it. A propane torch wand burns weeds to death and does not harm you or the environment. (Amazon will have these for about \$40.) Weeds between pavers can be killed when covered with dry table salt and sometimes vinegar will work. You may have to treat twice with vinegar.
4. A dryer sheet from your laundry area will keep mosquitos away if you put it in your pocket when you are working outside early or late in the day.

How to kill plants

1. When you repot be sure to put the plant in a BIG pot with poor drainage. The too wet plant will die.
2. Turn every potted plant a quarter turn each day. Its light seeking hormones will become so disoriented that the plant will fail.
3. Never clean your plant growing hardware, such as knives, shears, or saws. That way you can transfer diseases from one plant to the next.

4. When you notice a plant covered with insect pests, don't isolate it. Let the pests move on to neighboring plants.
5. When you see round patches of dead grass in your yard, leave the patch alone. If you put insecticide around the margins of the dead patch you will soon have less grass to mow.

A good motto

The late Barbara Bush said that there were three important things in life. They were faith, family, and friends.

Faith is a private thing, but if you are a nature watcher you probably have beliefs. Your family may be a spouse and two children, or it may be a partner, or it may be just a faithful dog. It is your family, appreciate it. Appreciate and cherish your friends, some of the best are garden club members.

Dot Henley
Equality Park Garden Club 2nd Vice President

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