



EQUALITY PARK GARDEN CLUB

April 2016 Newsletter

Notes from Dot

The Sometimes

April things are coming up, but not before we think a bit about our March meeting. Jason Lopez gave us a great program. We were fortunate to have a 'real' scientist tell us about his adventures in getting DNA from that rare *Coccothrinax* back to Fairchild. Scott Abrahamson, Jane DePadro, and Bob Henley furnished the food and Mary Lang and the Crepages the drinks. The raffle table was amazing and moved faster with our names on raffle tickets. (Bring a pen in the future.)

I was the last one out of the Pride Center and a man stopped me to ask me to thank the Garden Club for the garden rehab. He told me that he meditates there daily, and that we had brought him added joy. Now moving on to our April meeting.

It is **OUR SIXTH ANNIVERSARY MEETING** and the neat thing is that our speaker will be the same talented soul who spoke at our first meeting. That's right, it will be Jesse Durko! April birthday refreshments will include Gary Petonke's rum cake, Randy Fisher's cookies, and drinks from Bud Arden and again Mary Lang and Chris Crepage.

The April 30th Bus Ramble

There are already about 30 people on the list and they are all fun-to-be-around people. There are a few things to remember: 1/ We leave the Pride Center back parking lot at 8:30 not 8:00, and we will get back to our cars about 5:30. Plan B. is we leave the Cardinal Gibbons student parking lot which is a block off Bayview on 47th Street. 2/ You need to bring a bagged lunch, beverages, and a way to quickly identify your plants when we unload them from the bus. 3/ a towel and a dollar store poncho are good insurance against rain, and, if it does rain you will be prepared to keep on finding the plants you didn't know you needed.

Our first stop will be Quest Orchids in Miami. They are famous for red blooming catts that do bloom here. Segundo has kept the cold growing red parents 5-7 generations back and got later generations to be warm tolerant. We can now bloom red. You will like this stop.

The second stop will be Redland's Nursery which will have things for you no matter what you want in their seven plus acres. You will find things for your window or balcony, or trees and updated outdoor growers for your yard.

Stelmar Gardens will be next. We missed Stelmar on the last two rambles, but it is one of our very favorite stops. If it thrives in the shade, you will find it here. The varieties are almost endless.

OFE International will be the last official stop. This is the place for plant chemicals, pots or baskets, growing media, and the list goes on. I'm going to their website and pre-order what I know we need, so it will save time since examples are in the office, but what we buy has to be brought from the warehouse in back.

IF there is time we will make one last stop on the way home. The four great stops may take so long that a 5th has not been written in stone.

Wonderful "Tail Flowers"

The word ANTHERIUM means tail flowers, and your plant collection probably contains some of them. There are about 1,000 species of these mostly new world tropicals. This is the most numerous species in the *Andrascola* genus. They also fall under Aroid and the Arum family. The diversity of foliage is unmatched in the plant kingdom. The plant form may be pendant, vining, creeping, or rosulate. Many have heart shaped leaves. Most are grown for the leaves rather than the flowers.

Commonly found Antheriums do have colorful spaths around a tail-like sticky spadix. Colors range from green and white to all shades of red, pink, purple, and yellow.

Spring is the season to make cuttings for rooting and for the flowers to appear. If you collect seeds, expect them to take months to germinate. In nature the seeds are sticky and adhere to bird beaks. When the birds try to dislodge them from the outside of their beaks, they disperse them. Pollination is often done by insects or by hummingbirds. While ants are often found on floral parts they are not thought to be the pollinators. Ants feed on nectars and protect the plants from insect

herbivores, but the ants secrete myrmecic acid. This substance protects the ants and the Antheriums from bacterial and fungal diseases. Ants do find the roots of bird's nest type Antheriums to be a good place to nest.

As a plant person you might want to look at the roots of climbers and epiphytes. They have aerial roots of two types. One dips to the ground and absorbs atmospheric moisture on the way down to soil. Once on the ground the roots dig in, branch and absorb nutrients. Other roots have suckers on root hairs which help the climbing roots adhere and climb.

Antherium uleanum has been used as a contraceptive in Peru and is used on dogs' skin to cure tape worms. In Ecuador some tribes use dried leaves of *A. oxycarpum* for a hallucinogenic drink. Supposedly, one in six plants has medicinal values either in the past or in the future. Aroids in general contain toxins, some more than others, so it is well to wash juices off your hands and just enjoy the leaves.

Antheriums are all tropical, all shade-loving, and in need of high humidity.

(Next month look for another Aroid, and see pictures at the end of this. Also go on line for pictures.)



2,000. Brown. D. Aroids, Plants of the Arum Family Timber Press, Portland.

Hopefully Helpful Tid-bits

1. HGTV's 5 top gardening mistakes are:
 - a. Selecting the wrong plant for the space
 - b. Trying to grow plants from another climate zone
 - c. Over pruning
 - d. Scattering colors

- e. Doing a job with the wrong tools
2. Rubbing alcohol will kill slugs. It won't hurt your plants or you. Keep it in a spray bottle and use it on mealy bugs and other pests as well. Neem also kills slugs and snails, but a new solution would need to be made daily.
3. Put a marble or a golf ball in your sprayer. It will keep a suspension mixed. The size of the sprayer determines which to use.
4. One more time- put the top of your hose end sprayer in the dishwasher and let the hot water and detergent clean it. Let it stay for about 6 dish washings.
5. While spring is a time to tie or glue orchids and other epiphytes to trees, it is also the time to water them daily until roots attach firmly to the tree.
6. "Together we stand, divided we fall" may just apply to that large plant you've been thinking about splitting. If your big plant is beginning to rot in the center, then by all means divide. Often the best plan is to move the big plant into a larger pot.
7. If you are planning to buy bare-root wilted plants from South America, plan to soak them for 4-8 hours in this solution:
 - 7 parts tap water
 - 1 part drinking alcohol- any kind
 - 2 parts sugar, brown is best
 - 1 drop dish detergent
 - 1 drop Superthrive or K-L-N rooting hormone if you have either of these. Even so the other things will help. Rinse the solution off the plant after the soaking.

Some Trees Communicate

Many kinds of trees produce toxins in their adult leaves. The toxins keep insects from eating the leaves. African acacia trees and American beach trees are two trees that do not waste energy making toxic leaves unless attacked by insects. When an attack occurs they not only produce the toxins but produce and release ethylene to warn similar species trees down -wind to make toxins, since the insects are attacking.