

New England Botanical Club - Minutes of the 1003rd Meeting

14 January 2005

Jennifer Forman Orth, Recording Secretary

The 776th meeting of the New England Botanical Club, being the 1003rd since its original organization, was held on Friday, January 14, 2005, in the Lecture Room of the Fairchild Biochemistry Building, Divinity Avenue, Cambridge MA. There were 22 members and guests in attendance.

This being the club's "Fifth Foray into Food and Flowers," members and guests gathered before the meeting for a botanically-themed potluck dinner, featuring such delicacies as Cream of Stinging Nettle Soup and Sunflower Seed Pancakes. Following the announcements of winners in the botanical literature raffle, attendees moved to the auditorium for "Show and Tell."

As has been the case for several years past, the night began with a presentation from fern expert Don Lubin. Don talked about Governor Laffan's Fern (*Diplazium laffanianum*), which is endemic to the island of Bermuda. The species suffered a setback when Hurricane Fabian passed over the island in 2003, but three of the five remaining specimens survived. Don invited everyone to visit <http://NEFern.info> to get more information.

Council member Kanchi Gandhi was next, and spoke to the club about Pongal, a four-day celebration similar to American Thanksgiving that was currently underway in India. Plants traditionally associated with Pongal include newly harvested sugarcane, rice, ginger, banana and pumpkin. As he spoke, images were displayed on the screen, including a parade of decorated cattle and examples of colorful rangoli patterns drawn on the ground using such ingredients as turmeric and rice powder. Next, Keith Williams showed photos of his "Hawaiian Adventure" with wife Sally Breen. Keith photographed many endangered species of *Hibiscus* while visiting the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. Bryan Hamlin then presented "My 2004 Ten," which was a selection of Ericads from the NEBC trip with the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society, followed by several orchid species, every one of which George Newman easily identified from his seat in the audience.

Nancy Eyster-Smith was next with only one photo from her trip to the Pacific Northwest "as Captain Lewis," as enticement for the May program with Janet Sullivan. She also had some excellent lichen photos, and several candid shots of club members from that NEBC trip, led by Elizabeth Kneiper, as well as seaweed pictures from the NEBC trip to New Hampshire with Dr. Christopher Neefus. Jenn Forman Orth then presented a series of photos from her summer trip to Costa Rica, where she surveyed weeds in abandoned pasture land. George Newman followed with photos of a big population of *Darlingtonia californica* from a bog in Southern Oregon, the only pitcher plant species found in that state. He also included images of the spectacular orchid and lily species that are associated with *Darlingtonia* bogs.

Up next were Alice Schori and her son Eric Schori. Alice presented a beautiful set of photos she took in her backyard in Canaan, NH, on an early October morning when a hoar frost covered everything with a glaze of ice. Eric had a series of photos from the Arcata (CA) Community Forest and also captured a rare event: the Mojave Desert after a snowstorm. Marsha Salett then spoke about her trip to the Amazon, where she traveled down tributaries of the Amazon River, photographing species including the gigantic water lily (*Victoria amazonica*), the weedy water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and even a pink dolphin.

The final two presenters of the evening were Russ Cohen and Lisa Standley. Russ displayed a series of photos of weedy plants, describing (as he does in his book) how every one of them can be prepared and eaten. Lisa showed photos from her trip to Ecuador, including odd-looking ceiba trees with their swollen, water-filled trunks. She ended the night with a few photos from Madagascar, including long-spurred *Angraecum* orchids and the succulent-trunked Baobab trees, a tantalizing preview of her upcoming NEBC talk.