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demonstrations on air-layering and husbandry. A separate section held a large selection of plants for sale.

Fiesta Wrap Up

Two of the society's honorary members, John Bender & Bob Alonzo, were in attendance, lending their growing advice and identification expertise to eager collectors. Mr. Bender graciously donated air-layered plants to those volunteers who helped at the Fiesta.

Our Gratitude

We appreciate Gus Jimenez, Rick Jimenez, J.R. and Nita Renfro, Ron Parlett, Harold Lee, Wayne Highsmith, Simon and Mary Zopfi and Keith Hanks who hauled in truck-loads of display plants. We also are appreciative of the members who generously donated plants for the society to sell. Our total "take" for the weekend's sales was close to \$900.

We'd also like to thank all those members who donated their time & efforts to help make the Fiesta a success. It was a long weekend, but members J. R. and Nita Renfro, Keith Hanks, Gus Jimenez, Harold Lee, Rick Jimenez, Rick and Julie Blauman, Ron Parlett (who even gave up his season seats at a Bucs game...) and Phil Stager worked the majority of the two days. Members Mary and Simon Zopfi, Connie Hoerstgen, Tom Hutchinson, Wayne Highsmith, Bill Carr and Paul Lang also gave up precious weekend hours to facilitate the Fiesta.

And last but not least, thanks to the hundreds of people who came out to see the fruits of our labors. Eleven of you joined our society as a result!

2000 Fiesta

Plans are already underway for the 2000 Fiesta. At this time, the location for the Fiesta is undetermined. Suggestions have been made to incorporate it with the University of South Florida Fall Plant Sale in October. See related information in the minutes.

Let Us Hear From You...

The Codiaeum Connection is written by volunteer Society Members, published quarterly. If you have any articles or ideas for future articles to contribute, please forward them to:

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Cold Hardy Crotons

By: Rick Blauman

Having originated in equatorial Indonesia, one can't expect much in the way of cold hardiness from Crotons. But there are certain varieties that fare better than others in Central Florida. These have also been used in creating new hybrids and may have passed on a certain degree of the parent's hardiness. In addition, Crotons tend to sport (produce branches that differ in leaf size, shape, and color) and these could also vary in their tolerance of cold. This species is always full of surprises.

Hardy Crotons can be a valuable part of any botanical collection, and can serve a different function than the other varieties. Consider that few other shrubs, tropical or temperate, can compete with Crotons for color and leaf shape. Most shrubs that offer more than just shades of green, typically do so with flowers, but these are limited to a certain time of year. By way of their leaves, Crotons display an endless palette of bold colors year round, making them a key part of any landscape bed. What better sight is there than to drive by yard after yard of luxuriant tropical plantings, each featuring an assortment of Crotons. Because of this, collectors should propagate the hardier varieties to distribute to friends, relatives and the general public to extend both the range and density of Crotons in Central Florida. Casual gardeners tend to prefer plants that are self-sufficient, even during the winter. There are numerous attractive Crotons to fit this niche.

Helping Your Crotons Survive

There are some things that a gardener can do to assist nature, such as planting Crotons in the best location possible and fertilizing regularly. The addition of Potassium late in the year will improve cold hardiness. Minimize the use of Nitrogen then, as the new growth it promotes is easily damaged by cold. A thick layer of mulch over weed cloth will help protect the roots.

Location

If planting in the ground, it is recommended that collectors plant their best Crotons in the most protected parts of their yard. This is going to be the

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