

## 2000 Elections

The Nominating Committee has been charged with establishing a slate of officers to lead The Croton Society into the new millennium. This is no easy task and so the committee is reaching out for your assistance.

Each member was sent a nomination form, to either volunteer their time and talents or to nominate another willing member. Each office will be, collectively and independently, important to the success of the Society. This coming year will be full of growth and new opportunities as our membership base grows.



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## Secretary's Report

By: Bill Carr, Secretary

Following is a synopsis of the minutes of the October 23, 1999 meeting of The Croton Society held at the USF Botanical Gardens:

President Ron Parlett called the meeting to order with fifteen members present. In total, membership now exceeds 50. He expressed thanks to the following: all those who helped make the Fiesta a success; Harold Lee and Phil Stager for their work on the T-shirt project; Julie Blauman for The Codiaeum Connection; Gus Jimenez for the Fiesta displays and signs; Paul Lang for his work on the website; and Tom Hutchinson for his efforts on obtaining the Society's incorporation and tax exempt status.

There was much discussion surrounding the Fiesta, including suggestions for improvement, comments on this year's event and appreciation for the tireless efforts of all members for the show's success. Discussion ensued regarding relocating the Fiesta. Julie Blauman suggested having the Fiesta in conjunction with the University's Fall Plant Sale. Advantages to this would be: the show would be later in the fall and the

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## Cold Hardy Crotons

South and East sides of a building, under evergreen trees and palms, or someplace shielded from the brutal Northwest winds that blow down from Canada. Privacy fences are also good wind blocks, as are clumps of Australian pines. Wind chills can push tropical plants over the edge, even when the air temperatures aren't necessarily low enough to kill them. An overhead canopy will help retain heat radiating from the ground, and reduce the chance of frost settling on the leaves. If you have a combination of all of these protections, your plants will have a fighting chance, even without being covered. It's best not to gamble with hard-to-replace varieties. Even if you don't have enough Crotons to fill these protected spots yet, save them for later. With a little patience and persistence, you will have some gems.

The hardier varieties, and those that are common and easily replaced (such as Petra and Mamey), are best reserved for those sections affording less protection. They are ideal subjects for open front yards. Even though they are rather plain to the initiated, they still can give dramatic color and interest to an otherwise green yard. A group planting of a dozen varieties of these can transform an otherwise bland area into a sea of color & leaf shapes. These expendable plantings are an "advertisement" that can generate interest in Crotons for passers-by. In the event that any perish after a cold snap, a quick trip any one of hundreds of major retail outlets will soon produce an identical replacement. This is a justifiable risk.

After a hard freeze, expect uncovered plants to defoliate. Stems may be damaged, even to the ground. Clear, cloudless nights are the most destructive. With any luck, the plants will send out new growth from the roots. A freeze dries the soil, so it is imperative to water plants thoroughly afterwards. Cool weather prior to a freeze will allow plants to harden off, lessening damage.

## Share the Wealth

Those collectors living in Central Florida have a vested interest in propagating Crotons that have survived freezes. This is the northern edge of Croton's range, and many people would like to grow a few varieties that can be left on their

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Your Comments are welcome...  
Please share your comments, experiences, etc.  
with fellow Croton enthusiasts!