

The Codiaeum Connection

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1

July 2011



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THE CROTON SOCIETY, INC.

After 12 years of holding several positions with the Croton Society, I am regretfully resigning as President. I have enjoyed the long tenure but I felt it is time for someone else to take over the leadership role. The Society is at a point where the membership can excel with new goals using fresh ideas. Our original goals of finding, identifying and distributing rare and unusual Crotons, has been met, so it's time to create new goals.

My future pursuits will be to research some of the older Croton Databases and catalogs which will help to alleviate some of the questions we have of the original names of certain Croton Varieties. I will continue to remain an active member and will be always available to brainstorm /answer questions, etc. I also plan to continue to propagate and provide Crotons for our Sales and Auctions.

Harold Lee, President

As secretary and treasurer/newsletter editor, I am also regretfully resigning my position. It's been an enjoyable learning experience for me. However, after 11 years it's time for someone else to use their expertise and carry on with the Society.

I will be available to answer all questions and help with learning any of the programs during the transition period. Please mail or email us the enclosed election form by August 15th.

Cornelia (Connie) Hoerstgen, Treasurer

Croton Society Inc. Financial Statement: Time Period 1/1/11 through present:

BALANCE SHEET:

Croton Society Checking Account:	\$6,822.73
Petty Cash:	\$ 91.83
Total Assets:	\$6,914.56
Less Liabilities:	\$ 0.00
Overall Total:	<u>\$6,914.56</u>

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Hawaii: Bermuda Red

DolinS

GARDEN CENTER

525-3434

*Helping Our Neighbors
With Their
Gardening Spirit!*

801 - 62nd Avenue N. • St. Petersburg

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Susan Cason—Tallahassee, FL
 Justin Dobbs—Ft. Myers, FL
 Arey Dunn—Jacksonville, FL
 Deborah & Mack Funk—Oak Harbor, WA
 Jacquelin E Gaudio—Miami, FL
 Mike Harris—Hollywood, FL
 Julio Morales—Homestead, FL
 Chris Mayhew—Miami Springs, FL
 John & Elise Ryan—Loxahatchee, FL
 Sheila Strunz—Orlando, FL
 William Wilson—Orange Park, FL
 Michael Woolery—Davie, FL

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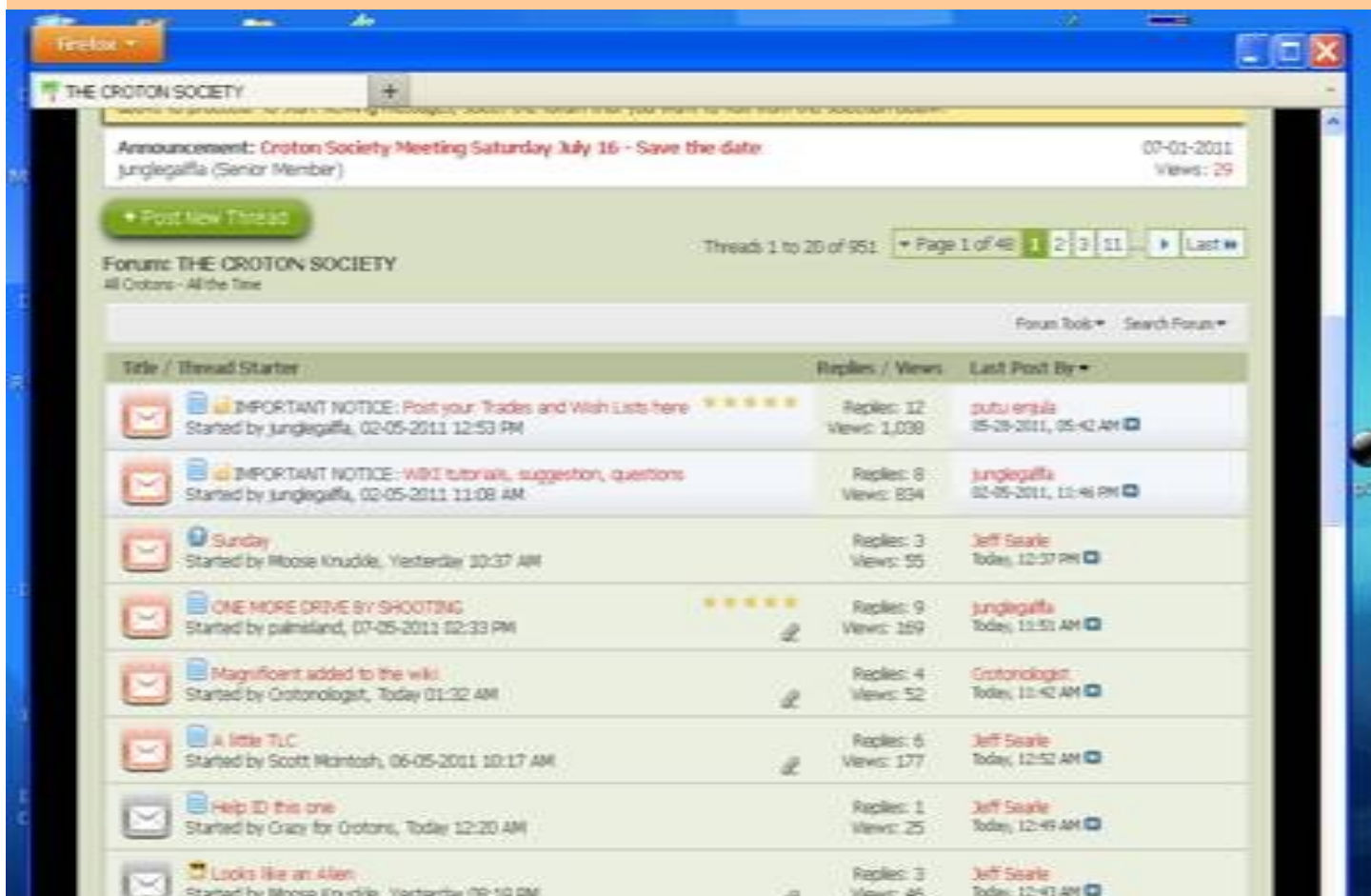
VICE-PRESIDENT

Ray Hernandez
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TREASURER / SECRETARY

Cornelia (Connie) Hoerstgen
 Email: choerstgen@tampabay.rr.com

More Society News



You are invited to join us on the Web. The Society has a online talk forum (http://www.palmpedia.net/wiki/index....CROTON_SOCIETY). You will have the ability to keep up with the latest Croton news at your fingertips. You will also find the Croton Encyclopedia featuring the largest high def Croton photos on the net along with many more features.

The USF Fall Sale will be held on Saturday, October 8th and Sunday, October 9th, 2011. In order for the Croton Society to participate in this event, we need plant donations as well as volunteers for both days to help with set-up, sales, and tear down. Without sufficient plant materials or volunteers we can not participate. Anyone interested in helping out and or donating plant material, please call Connie at 813-968-9689.

The Southwest Florida Yard and Garden Show will be October 29th and 30th, 2011 and will be hosted by the Collier County UF/IFAS Extension volunteer Master Gardeners and will be held on-site at the Extension office at 14700 Immokalee Road, Naples, Florida.

Details: Saturday, October 29th show hours are 9AM—4PM
Sunday, October 30th show hours are 9AM—3PM

Photos from Hawaii taken by: Steve Nocks



No ID



Bermuda Red



No ID



Bermuda Red



Baron Le Compte



Mackenzie



Mercer

Hawaii continued



Bermuda Red



No ID



Green / Yellow



Orange



Veitchii



Mona Lisa



Tiger Eye

December 11, 2010 meeting hosted by Judy & Jim Glock

The Croton Society would like to thank our hosts Judy and Jim Glock for hosting our holiday meeting on December 11th. Attendance by members and non members was well over 30 people. Their beautiful garden and home was just breath taking. The warm and sunny day in December was a perfect day for our get together. The plant auction was the highlight of the day, and everyone went home with at least one plant. Thank you again for your hospitality Judy and Jim!











FERTILIZER 101



By Perry Edge

Spring has arrived, and it signals the beginning of a long growing season for our Crotons. As they begin to produce new growth, Crotons are starved for nutrition, so it's time to feed them so that they get off to the right start. This article will provide a guide for fertilizing so that you get optimum growth and color, and you're going to be provided with a lot of choices.

To begin, a few basics about soil need to be discussed. Crotons are an acid-loving plant, but the typical Florida soil is sandy and often lacks the proper acidity. Before applying fertilizer, it's a good idea to have your soil tested so that you know exactly what you're dealing with. You can purchase PH testing kits and do it yourself, but I was able to locate a garden center in my area which performs a PH test for free. So what do the numbers mean on a PH scale? **Seven** is neutral; anything lower is acidic, anything higher is alkaline. Azaleas, which are another acid-loving plant, do best with a soil in the 4.5-5.5 range; so expect similar results with Crotons. If your soil is deficient, there are ways to get it into the proper range, but depending upon how severe the deficiency is, such methods may have a temporary effect and may need to be repeated. Checking your soil's PH periodically is the only way to know for sure.

Apart from fertilizer, you can make the soil more acidic by applying sulfur, peat moss and wood chip mulch, or better yet, a mulch of oak leaves. This combination will give you a long-lasting acid release. Sulfur can be purchased at nurseries; to apply, follow the directions on the package. You can also make oak "tea" by filling a five gallon bucket 1/3 full of fallen oak leaves, adding water to near the top and let it steep in a sunny location for about a week, or until the water is the color of tea, which signals that the decomposing leaves have released tannic acid. Keep in mind that any of these methods probably won't provide complete nutrition to the plant; rather they are means of adding acid to a deficient soil.

Fertilizer is the only other choice for complete nutrition, but if you want to skip the above methods for acidifying your soil, you must choose a fertilizer which is specially made for acid-loving plants such as azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons, etc. All fertilizers contain three basic ingredients which plants need: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, and the three numbers on the package give the percentage, by weight, of those ingredients in that order. A good fertilizer also provides essential micro-nutrients. Of the acid-loving fertilizers, you have two types: liquid and dry (granular).

Liquid fertilizers are a water-soluble type which can be added to water and applied in two ways, as a soil drench or foliar spray. Either way is effective, but in my experience you get the quickest result when you spray it on the Croton's leaves. You will need a 2 gallon sprayer, which can be found at any nursery, hardware or home improvement store. For maximum feeding, you can use liquid fertilizer both as a spray and soil drench. Miracle-Gro®, Ace Hardware and others make an azalea formula liquid fertilizer, but if you want to fertilize your Crotons the cheapest possible way, you can use an effervescent cold tablet (one per gallon of water) as a foliar spray. The aspirin in the cold tablet provides the needed acid, and it really does promote new growth. If you like to experiment, try a home-made fertilizer recipe which uses liquid fish fertilizer at half-strength in a gallon of water, plus one cup of beer and 2 tablespoons of molasses.

Dry fertilizers are made with either natural (organic) or non-natural ingredients. Each has advantages and disadvantages, but you may not have a choice when shopping for a fertilizer with an acid-releasing formula.

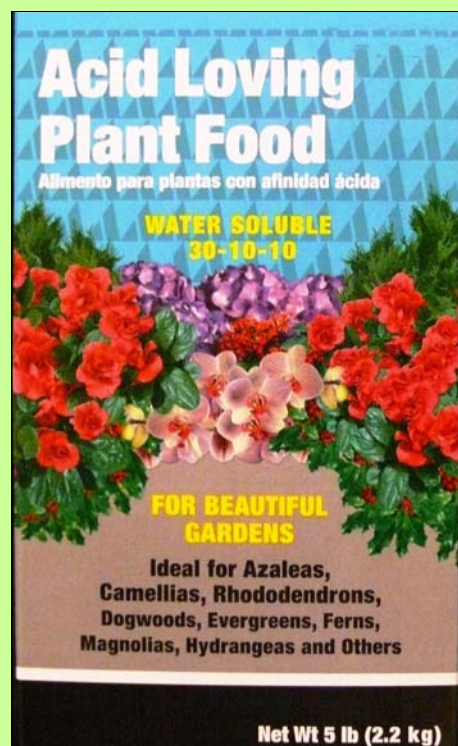
The best dry fertilizers are slow-release, preferably lasting 4-6 months. These may be more expensive, but they reduce the frequency of re-applying during the growing season. Osmocote© Azalea, Camellia, Rhododendron Smart Release© Plant Food is considered one of the best on the market.

If the cost of fertilizer is an issue, there is one organic, absolutely free food source for your Crotons: used coffee grounds. Coffee grounds not only are full of nutrition, but provide the ever-important acid as well. Apply the grounds around the plant just like dry fertilizer and water in well. You can also make “cold coffee” by mixing several trowel scoops of grounds in a five gallon bucket of water, then drenching the soil around the plant. I prefer this method because over time, repeated applications of dry grounds can form a water-repellant crust around the plant. Starbucks® will gladly give away coffee grounds free for the asking.

Next, what is the best way to apply dry fertilizer? Since Crotons have shallow feeder roots, it is not a good idea to scratch the fertilizer into the soil; instead, remove any mulch, spread the fertilizer out to the drip line (the outside edge of the foliage), water well, and cover with mulch. Continuing to keep your Crotons well-watered is essential during the growing season.

How often should you fertilize your Crotons? This depends upon which type of fertilizer you use, as well as how much you want to “push” your plant’s growth. A slow-release fertilizer should last up to the number of months specified on the instructions. Standard dry fertilizer can be applied up to three times during the growing season. Liquid fertilizer is short-acting and can be applied as a foliar spray every 3-6 weeks. One caveat about over-fertilizing; it can not only “burn” the plant, it can also produce long shoots on new growth which can lead to a “leggy” appearance to your Crotons, rather than the bushy shape which is considered desirable by aficionados.

Another caution: don’t fertilize too near the end of the growing season, as new growth is vulnerable to cold damage during the winter. And speaking of winter, it is a common misconception that Crotons don’t need fertilizer at all during the winter, since the cold weather makes them “dormant.” While it is true these tropical plants don’t produce new growth during cold weather, there still may be growth going on beneath the surface with the roots. So winter fertilization should be considered, but only if you switch to a **low nitrogen** formula. It’s also a good idea to use a fertilizer with a higher potassium level because the potassium helps protect plant cells from freeze injuries.



Spring has sprung; you are now an authority on fertilizing Crotons, so get busy, people! 🌿



A story about Henry Coppinger, my uncle.

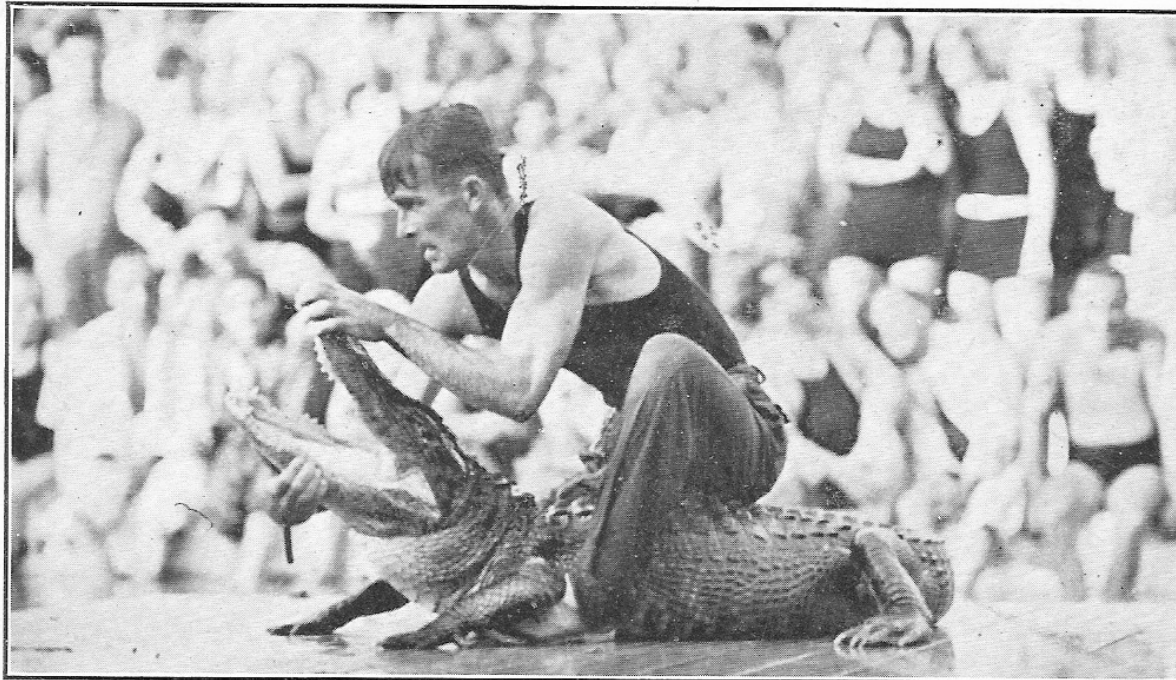
Henry Coppinger did not just hybridize crotons; he was a nursery man and in his youth an alligator wrestler. He grew up on the Miami River, where his father had established the first Miami botanical garden in 1890. It was located on the river at about 17th ave. It was a tourist attraction with Seminole Indians and riverboat rides to the falls on the Miami River located about NW 21st Street and S River Drive. The falls are no longer there; the Okeechobee canal took care of that.

Henry was born in 1898 and one of his claims to fame was he was the "second white man born in the city of Miami". As a kid I guess it was just natural, being the only kid in town, to play with the baby alligators, laying them on their backs and rubbing their stomachs, putting them to sleep. He would capture baby alligators and sell them to tourists at his fathers' tourist attraction. Later he developed the art of alligator wrestling, not the caged alligator in a pen type of wrestling but the dive in the water out of a dugout canoe, poled by an Indian, swim under the gator, come up and grab him by his mouth and wrestle him to shore kind of alligator wrestling. Henry was only 5'4" and 125 pounds. The biggest alligator he would wrestle was an eight footer that weighed about 250 lbs. He soon was traveling around the United States and Canada with a pool of water so he could perform this act for his crowds. He so popularized Miami that once when he was bitten, the City Council sent a telegram lamenting his injuries and wishing a speedy recovery. Henry had posted no feeding the alligator signs but someone threw the gator some fatty meat. Henry's hand slipped off the gator's jaw and he was bitten, luckily not seriously.

Some are under the impression the Indians were the first alligator wrestlers. Quite the contrary is true; it was Henry who taught the Indians the art of alligator wrestling. As a kid, I got to watch the Indians wrestle alligators at one of Henry's Indian Villages along the Miami River. By that time Henry was mainly tending his nursery business selling sansverias, to northern markets, which were his bread and butter. Among other plants he grew were palms and cycads; one of the largest collections around. Also, at that time many rare and unusual plants, as well as variegated aralias, anthuriums, ferns, flowering trees and of course crotons were everywhere.

After he died in 1976, I took care of his nursery for at least a year for my aunt Helen. The needs of my family prevailed so I could no longer tend it. I was able to get my croton collection started from that period but I can only lament that I didn't get more. Someday I plan on going by his last residence/nursery to see if I might talk someone out of some hidden treasure.

By: Chris Mayhew



Henry Coppinger Wrestling Alligator at Canadian National Exhibition



Both Ready For Action Soon To Begin; Neither Seems To Fear The Other.



Nearing Shore With 'Gator.



Landing Alligator In Canoe Is Difficult.



Real Action, the Alligator's Tail Is a Formidable Weapon of Offense or Defense Which He Can Swing With The Lash of a Whip

A Thrilling Exhibition of Nerve and Skill

DIVING and CAPTURING
LARGE, LIVE and
DANGEROUS

Alligators Underwater



Presenting

Henry Coppinger, Jr.

of MIAMI, FLORIDA

Better Known as the Original

"Alligator Boy"



Unusual Picture; Coppinger Diving For Alligator.

Introducing Henry Coppinger, Jr., of Miami, Florida, better known back in the Everglades and throughout the entire State as the "Alligator Boy."

He is the most daring and skillful hunter and handler of these reptiles in America. He became famous as his methods of hunting alligators differed from others in that he uses only his bare hands, capturing alligators alive.

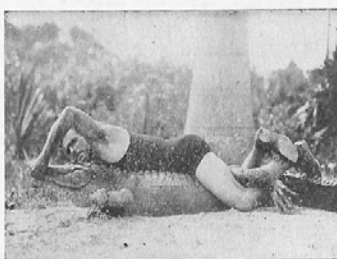
He began as a small boy catching baby alligators a few inches long; selling them to souvenir dealers for a few cents each. As he grew he gradually caught larger and larger specimens, alive for Parks and Zoos. He later began taking parties of tourists and visitors on his hunts, to see him capture the reptiles alive. To eliminate the difficulties of visitors having to travel through the swamps who wished to see him dive up alligators, he established an Alligator Farm in Miami and stocked it with hundreds of specimens, where he gave daily exhibitions showing how he captured alligators in the Everglades.

He later gave these thrilling exhibitions at the larger swimming pools in the Miami area.

Attendance records were broken at the Hotel Royal Palm Casino, Miami, the Venetian Casino at Coral Gables; and at the Roman Pools of the Roney Plaza Casino, attendance records were broken twice in 1928.

No one has ever been able to successfully duplicate this thrilling feat of Henry Coppinger's diving into deep water and capturing a large live alligator, with only his bare hands. He will handle any alligator up to 9 feet long at any time; dive him up out of any swimming pool in America. Coppinger has become nationally known, in that pictures of his daring feats with the alligators have been shown in all the leading papers of the United States often in the past seven years. Interesting stories of his works were published by such publications as the Literary Digest, American Magazine, National Magazine, Everybody's and many others.

You will perhaps recall having seen Movies of Coppinger, and may have said it can't be done. He has been featured by Fox, Pathe, International, Ford Education, and many others only recently; in February, he was filmed by the New Movietone.



Three Effective Holds Combined; Jaw Hold, Foot Hold, Foot Scissors.



Partial View; Record-Breaking Throng Watching Coppinger Capture 'Gator, Roman Pools, Miami Beach

This thrilling exhibition is a replica of how Coppinger dives into the water in the Everglades capturing a large live and dangerous Alligator with his bare hands, battling with him in and under the deep water until he subdues the 'gator.

When the alligator is landed on the boat, shore or raft, another thrilling battle begins with the 'gator out of the water, sometimes called the wrestle. During all this time Coppinger keeps a vice-like grip on the 'gator's jaws with his right hand. He skillfully guards himself against the blows from the 'gator's tail, and by holds he has developed, finally throws the fighting 'gator on his back, and while holding the 'gator on his back he will by a method of stroking him, which he was the discoverer of, cause this 'gator to lay in a semi-comatose condition, as if dead, until he again awakens him with an imitation 'gator call.

Henry Coppinger is the original user of the professional name "Alligator Boy"; being so known for 12 years. Any one else using his pictures and name are fraudulently impersonating. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made by unscrupulous, so-called promoters, and principals to willfully mislead and offer to the unwary public an imitation, by using pictures of Henry Coppinger, Jr., expecting to survive and promote on the national publicity and reputation of Henry Coppinger, Jr.

