



# 2009 plant of the year

By Marilyn Griffiths, Plant Records

**PLANT OF THE YEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Marilyn Griffiths, Mary Collins, Harvey Bernstein, Jason Lopez, Martha Kent and Ken Neugent.

A single plant stood out during the Plant of the Year Committee discussions. A tree admirably suited to most South Florida gardens, that doesn't grow too large or require much care once established, *Stemmadenia litoralis* was chosen as the 2009 Plant of the Year. Fragrant white blooms cover the tree during a long flowering period. The Fairchild specimen is in Plot 47, just northwest of the Tram Plaza. In the Fairchild tradition of making new plants available to the South Florida gardening community, this plant will be offered at our plant sales.

***Stemmadenia litoralis***

**Botanical name:** *Stemmadenia litoralis*

**Family:** Apocynaceae

**Common name:** Milky-way tree, lecheso

**Native to:** Mexico to northwestern Colombia coastal plains

**Habit:** Small tree to 20'

**Flower:** White with pale yellow throat, salverform\*, fragrant

**Fruit:** Twin yellow, ovoid

**Growing conditions:** Relatively dry, shaded or partially shaded area

**Propagation:** Seed

**Comments:** Requires little irrigation. Salt-tolerant. Flowers in full shade. Milky-way tree is a perfect small tree for Florida landscapes. Not fussy about water or sun, it can be grown in filtered sun or full shade and needs no irrigation once established. Left to branch naturally, it will create a pleasing shape and produce flowers on every branch. The finely textured, light colored bark is an attractive contrast to the deep green leaves. The fragrant flowers begin to appear in late winter or early spring and continue through the summer into the fall. Each linen-white flower has five petals formed in a pinwheel fashion, overlapping in a counter-clockwise direction. The pale yellow throat draws the eye to the heart of this whirl where a star is formed by the joining of the petals. A delicate fragrance surrounds the area near the tree, evoking early-morning freshness.

\*Salverform: Of a corolla with a long, slim tube and an abruptly expanded flattened top. From the noun "salver," meaning "tray."

## WISH LIST Fairchild WISH LIST Fairchild WISH LIST

**WISH GRANTED:** Laptop computer and LCD projector for Lifelong Learning Program and lightweight notebook computer new with 1 GB for volunteer department

Wish list dream maker: Geri Wegner Fairchild Volunteer Geri Wegner has been driving the shuttle for more than one year. Maybe you have been lucky enough to join Geri on one of her tours through Fairchild. Not only does Geri support Fairchild through giving her time, she has also helped Fairchild acquire numerous wish list items. Last year, Geri made a generous donation to Fairchild toward a new shuttle cart. Fairchild is delighted to announce that the new cart will arrive soon and is solar powered! Geri amazed us again this year by granting the Lifelong Learning Program and Volunteer Departments' wishes: two high-powered laptop computers and an LCD projector. Thank you, Geri, for your valuable and continued support of Fairchild!

**WISH LIST**

**For Living Collections and Garden Landscapes**

- Cargo van: \$23,000
- Walk-behind aerator: \$1,500
- Soil mixer for nursery: \$6,000
- Notebook and portable LCD projector: \$5,000
- Antique coontie grinder: priceless

**For the Center for Tropical Plant Conservation**

- New Pentax Optio W30 camera with standard accessories: \$300
- HP DesignJet 500 42-inch roll printer (C7770B), including accessories: \$3,820
- Seed germination chamber: \$8,500
- Cannon Digital Rebel 10.1 megapixel SLR camera, lenses and memory cards: \$1,000
- Techniques for the Study of *Mycorrhiza*, Volume 23 (Methods in Microbiology) by J. R. Norris: \$230
- Lightweight notebook computer with minimum of 80GB hard drive, 1GB RAM and a DVD read/write drive: \$2,000
- Mid-size pick-up truck with king cab and 2-3" gasoline-powered pump: \$26,400
- Ultra-cold freezer for the Tropical Plant DNA Bank: \$6,000

**For the First Virtual Herbarium**

- One or more new computers with at least 1 GB memory, 250 GB hard drive, DVD-RW/CD-RW, for scanning and data entry: \$400 each

**For the Research Library**

- Books from Kew, including the Flora of Somalia (4 vol.), the World Checklist & Bibliography of *Euphorbiaceae* (and *Pandaceae*), and other monographs on tropical plant families: \$1,000

**For the Fairchild Tribute Program**

- Digital SLR camera with memory card, spare battery pack: \$1,500

**For the Development Department**

- Notebook computer, new, small, lightweight and wireless: \$2,000
- Portable LCD projector: \$2,000

**For the Special Events & Marketing Departments**

- Four-passenger golf cart: \$4,000
- Permanently installed audio visual system for Visitor Center Ballroom: \$3,000
- Fully equipped commercial kitchen for Visitor Center, including stove, dishwasher, refrigerator, freezer, sinks, garbage disposals, cabinets and countertops, flexible work areas and professional installation: priceless

**For the Membership Department**

- Adobe Creative Suite 4 software, two copies: \$2,500
- 1 digital SLR camera, with memory card, battery pack and case: \$1,800

**For the Education Department**

- Panasonic AG-DVC7 camcorder with case: \$1,000

To fully fund a wish, donate a portion of the cost or donate the actual item, please contact Jeremy Davit at 305.667.1651, ext. 3377 or [jdavit@fairchildgarden.org](mailto:jdavit@fairchildgarden.org).