

ASSOCIATION of

S.G.A.P. Fern Study Group

Newsletter *Number* 81

ISSN 0811-5311

DATE — JUNE 1998

LEADER : Peter Hind, 41 Miller Street, Mount Druitt, 2770
SECRETARY : Moreen Woollett, 3 Currawang Place, Como West, 2226
TREASURER : Joan Moore, 2 Gannet Street, Gladesville, 2111
SPORE BANK: Barry White, 24 Ruby Street, West Essendon, 3040

SPORE BANK

Members are reminded that the viability of the Spore Bank is dependent upon us all playing a part by from time to time, collecting and sending spore to the Spore Bank Curator. When making donations of spore, please include information about the provenance of the fern, if known. If the provenance is unknown, and spore was collected from a garden or some other cultivated source, at least state those details. If there is any uncertainty about the identification of the fern from which the spore was collected, include a part of the fern frond when sending the spore to the Spore Bank.

Our recently appointed Spore Bank Curator, Barry White, has provided a list of the fern species for which spore is currently held. This list of available spore can be found on page 5, later in this Newsletter.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETING "THE BOOK"

Reputedly, if you want something done, give the task to a busy person. Well, after many years of us trying to complete a book on ferns, Calder Chaffey accepted the task. Certainly, Calder is a busy person. Well he must be, when he is at home! In April he was cruising along our east coast and found time to contribute an article on the ferns of one of the islands visited during that trip. (The article is on page 3). At the time of our Newsletter going to the printer, Calder is in the Kimberley area. Nevertheless, it is good news on the SGAP book of ferns "Growing Australian Native Ferns". Shortly before leaving for the Kimberley, Calder reported as follows.

"The book if finished, ready for the publisher, up to the end of ferns beginning with "C". This also includes the introductory chapters and all the general stuff on fern growing as well as the addition of frames to show the size and position of the photos (about 250). The only thing holding it up is getting the rest from Peter (Bostock). However he says he has some more finished and I am picking it up from him in Brisbane tomorrow."

AUSTRALIAN FERNS FOR SALE AT THESE LOCATIONS

The nurseries listed below are known to be selling Australian native ferns and are willing to supply members on a retail basis. We would like to add other outlets known to carry a reasonable range of Australian native ferns. So that a more comprehensive list may be published in a future Newsletter, would you please let the Secretary have the details of any other outlets of which you are aware. The following information should be supplied: name, address and phone / fax number of nursery, brief details of the range of ferns for sale, and any other pertinent matters, including whether ferns are supplied by mail order. Those members with nurseries are particularly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity of advertising ferns for sale.

QUEENSLAND

Rod Pattinson, P.O. Box 567, Rochedale South, 4123. Rod has a very large native fern collection and a small nursery selling native ferns. Many of the ferns are rare. Ferns sent by mail if required.

Ian Wood, P.O., Walkerston, 4751.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Kanerley Farm Exhibition & Nursery, 204 Hinton Road, Osterley, via Raymond Terrace, 2324. Phone (049) 87 2781. A large range including rarer ferns.

Native Fern Nursery, 6 Bardess Road, Farmborough Heights, 2526. Phone 0242 71 6565. Specialising in Stags, Elks & Tree Ferns.

Palm Land, 327 Mona Vale Road, Terrey Hills, 2084. Phone (02) 9450 1555. It is a large palm nursery but also contains a large area devoted to ferns, many Australian.

Sydney Wildflower Nursery, Veno Street, Heathcote, 2233. Phone (02) 9548 2818. A range of mainly local ferns.

VICTORIA

Bush-House Nursery. This is conducted by member, Lorraine Deppeler. It is situated at Cobden Road, Naringal, Victoria. (Postal Address: P.B. Allansford, 3277) Phone (03) 5566 2331. - The Secretary has a current list of ferns carried.

Ferntastic Ferns, 272 Humffrey Street, Ballarat. Phone (03) 5332 1275. Member, Michael Healy, runs this small fern nursery as a hobby business. A variety of native ferns always available. But for this winter only, Michael will be absent, re-opening on 1 September 1998. People visiting the area are more than welcome to call but please phone in advance.

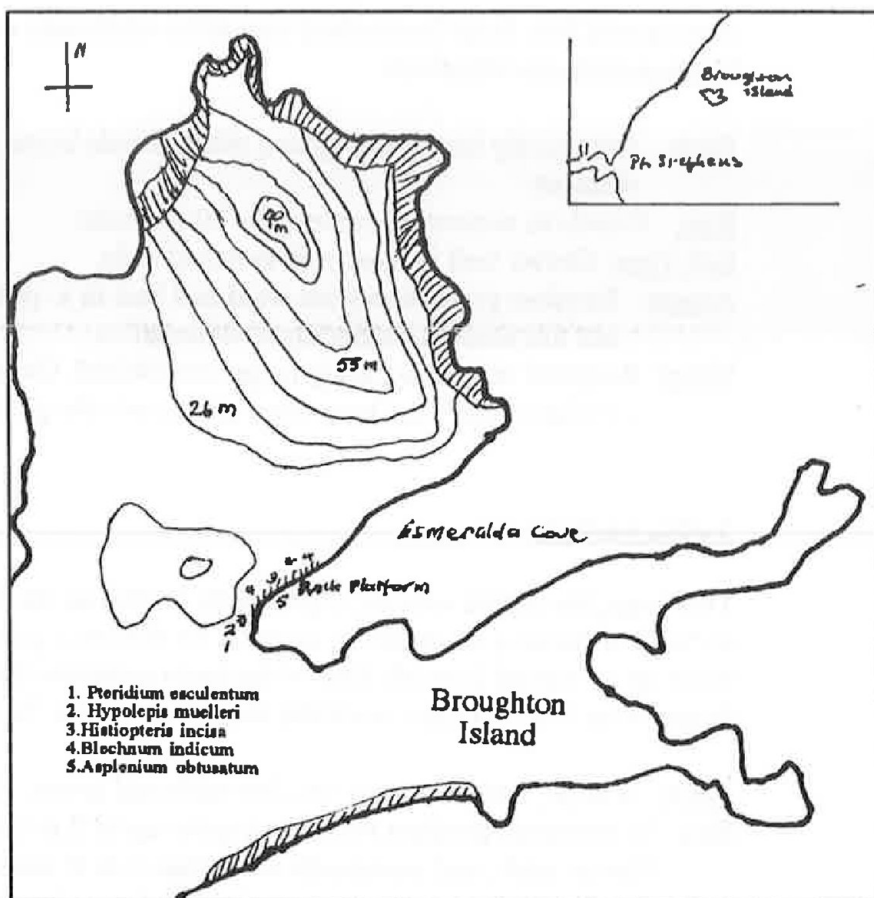
The Refernery, Amey's Terrace, Foster North, 3960. Phone (056) 89 1309. Range includes some cultivars. Most supplied in either tube, 4" and 6" sizes, or trays. The Secretary has a current list of ferns carried

The Ferns of Broughton Island

by Calder Chaffey

Broughton Island is a volcanic island eight nautical miles north of Port Stephens, NSW., and about two nautical miles off shore. It is included in the Myall Lakes National Park which is north of Port Stephens and includes country east of Bulahdelah to the shore and several off-shore islands.

The highest part of Broughton Island is a hill on the north east end which drops away steeply to cliffs on the easterly aspect. To the west it slopes gently to a grassy plateau which recurves south to end in two rugged hills. There is a beach on the north west aspect and cliffs on the southern and south western edges of the plateau. There is a deep inlet between the northern hill and the recurved plateau named Esmeralda Cove. The cove is deep enough to provide an anchorage provided the swell is not from the east or south east. It is surrounded by rocky shoals but there is a good channel of deep water almost to a beach at the head of the cove.



On passing several times in the last five years ferns were noticed growing beyond the beach at the head of Esmeralda cove. It had always been too rough to land. On 12 th. April, 1998 the sea was calm enough to make a landing possible for the investigation of the ferns. Ferns were found to be growing on the northern corner behind the beach and along the edge of the rock platform to the east for about 50 metres. Commencing in the north east corner the land formed a steep slope which gave way to rocky cliffs about 5 m in height behind the rock platform. Beyond this the ground rose to a grassed valley behind the high eastern hill. This acted as a water catchment and drained towards the beach. Although there had been a long spell of dry weather water was dripping out of the grass over the cliffs to the rock platform. The steep hill in the north east corner had a trickle of water running to the beach and the ground was very boggy.

Immediately behind the beach, growing in sand, was *Pteridium esculentum*. As the ground became boggy there was a band of *Hypolepis muelleri* and then *Histiopteris incisa*. This fern grew very thickly in all the wet area and over the steep hill up to the grass above. It also grew along the top of the cliffs above the rock platform for about 50 m wherever water oozed out. Above and to the east, where the *Histiopteris* gave way the grass, there was a narrow band of *Blechnum indicum*. Small plants of *Asplenium obtusatum* grew in cracks and clefts in the cliffs exposed to the south. A search of the rest of the island failed to reveal any other occurrences of ferns but a further search after reasonable rain may yield success. One wonders about the possible occurrence of *Cheilanthes* species in the plateau area. There is a case for geological, biological and weather investigation to see how and when these ferns moved onto the island.

FERNS IN GARDEN DESIGN

Further to the what has been published about this series in recent Newsletters, the following are other ferns considered of value in garden design.

Tectaria muelleri

A terrestrial fern from Queensland mountain rainforests and gullies and along streams in less mountainous situations.

Form: Attractively lobed, mid-green, erect, fronds borne on short creeping rhizome.

Size: Fronds to around 90 cm long by 30 cm wide..

Soil Type: Grows well in most well mulched soils.

Aspect: Requires protection from wind and best in a position where it receives part, but not full shade. It is slightly frost sensitive.

Water: Requires regular watering to get established. Once settled in, it is tolerant of dry conditions but does best when given periodic good soaking.

Todea barbara

This large, handsome species, is popularly known as the King Fern, probably because of its habit of forming a number of crowns. As the plant grows the crowns form into a thick trunk up to around 2 m tall. One of the more primitive ferns, it is found in all Australian States other than Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Form: A large, trunk forming tree fern with mid green, glossy fronds.

Size: In protected position fronds can grow up to 2 m long and on older plants, trunks are fibrous, dark, and commonly more than 1 m in diameter.

Soil Type: Hardy in most well drained soils given adequate moisture..

Aspect: Best in a position sheltered from wind and away from other than the early morning and late afternoon sun.

Water: Although hardy in drier ground, this fern can take plenty of water. It should be watered regularly especially in the summer months.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE - 1998 YEAR

Payment of the 1998 subscription of \$5 to the Fern Study Group is now overdue.

If a red "X" appears opposite, our records indicate that your subscription has not been received. Please remit if not already paid, or

let us know if our records are in error, or if you do not wish to receive further

Newsletters. All payments should be made to the Treasurer, Joan Moore, the address is 2 Gannet Street, Gladesville, 2111.

SPORE HELD IN SPORE BANK

Barry White has provided the following spore list. After each species, the month and year of collection is shown. "B" indicates collection from the bush. Requests for spore should be accompanied by a stamped addressed business-size envelope.

Acrostichum aureum 08/96 B, Asplenium aethiopicum 5/97, A. australasicum 5/97, A. milnei 9/97 B, Blechnum camfieldii 10/97, B. cartilagineum 5/96, B. chambersii 5/97 B, B. fluviatile 5/97 B, B. howeanum 9/97 B, B. minus 5/97 B, B. patersonii 11/96 B, B. wattsii 5/97 B, Calochlaena dubia 5/97 B, Cyathea australis 5/97 B, C. cooperi 'Cinnamon' 1/98, C. cooperi 12/97, C. howeana 9/97 B, C. leichhardtiana 2/98 B, C. macarthuri 9/97 B, C. robusta 2/98, C. woollsiana 3/97, Dennestaedtia davallioides 2/98, Dicksonia youngiae 11/96, Gleichenia microphylla 5/97 B, Histiopteris incisa 5/97 B, Hypolepis elegans 9/97 B, Hypolepis glandulifera 5/96, H. rugosula 4/96 B, Lastreopsis acuminata 5/97 B, L. hispida 5/97 B, L. nephrodioides 9/97 B, Microsorium pustulatum ssp. howensis 9/97 B, Pellaea falcata 5/97, P. falcata 5/97, Platycerium superbum 5/97, Polystichum australiense 5/97, P. formosum 5/97, P. proliferum 5/96, Psilotum nudum 9/97 B, Pteris umbrosa, 9/97, Rumohra adiantiformis 5/97 B, Sticherus tener 5/97 B.

CONDITIONS FOR SPORE GERMINATION

In the March 1998 Newsletter, Geoff Simmons referred to an item in a letter received from a member of the American Fern Society in which it is said, "*burning Bracken produces highly alkaline ashes that favour the germination of Bracken spores*". Geoff said that the remarks about alkaline conditions surprised him as he had always thought that acid conditions were better for spore germination. Geoff wondered whether anyone has data on this point.

Our Leader has commented as follows:

"I cannot remember having seen any data regarding what is the optimum pH level for each fern species. This is not a simple proposition and perhaps someone needs to research the mid range favourable for germination. However, bracken is such an ubiquitous fern that it is likely to tolerate a wide range of pH. I have seen it apparently thriving on soils ranging from limestone to basalt or sandstone. Bracken, like grasses, is assisted by fire - the ashes from fires would help. A fire also helps by wiping out competition."

Bern Dempsey, a member from Glen Waverley, Victoria, has commented as follows:

"I found this item (on spore germination) interesting as it referred to a question I had been posing myself. I had noticed that some ferns seemed to thrive in the cracks of

cement sleepers which formed the walls of some Victorian railways stations. I also saw ferns growing in limestone outcrops in leaf mould. When I grew orchids - exotics - it was recommended that one dip the plant in a bucket of water and lime at the beginning of the growing season. It may all mean that like lots of gardens a small amount of lime releases the acids. Some natives - plants I mean, respond to a little lime, Banksias for instance do better on soil with limestone base. The regrowth of Adiantum aethiopicum, after fire can be remarkable and I use wood ash on mine regularly.

PLATYCERIUMS AND WATERING

In the March 1998 Newsletter members with experience in caring for Platycerium superbum, were invited to share their views on watering. Our Leader has a handsome, large Platycerium attached to a mature Eucalyt in his Mt Druitt garden. Peter provided the following comment:

"In nature Platycerium superbum (Staghorn) generally grow high in trees and are usually partly shaded. They are burnt when in full sun. In summer, I give my Stag a thorough soaking nearly every day during hot, dry weather so that it does not dry out. Plenty of spraying at this time is beneficial to create humidity. During winter, even during prolonged dry spells, watering is only necessary about twice a week. Again it is given a soaking but less when there is a likelihood of frost and only watered in the mornings."

Geoff Simmons, a member from Elimbah in Queensland, had earlier commented on this subject. Geoff has written again as follows:

"Re Platyceriums and watering - this raises an interesting subject. My informant was talking about what he had seen in USA where a drip system was in use to water what he thought was superb growth on these ferns. I was surprised to hear this but on reflecting on the best growing P.superbum and P.bifurcatum plants that I had seen, this seemed a true evaluation of water requirements for these ferns. Roy Vail in 'Platycerium Hobbyist's Handbook' points out that submerging platyceriums in water may result in the transfer of insects between plants. I find it difficult not to believe that species such as P.superbum and P.bifurcatum ssp. veitchii do not have distinct water needs, so lumping them together may be unwise. There is need to distinguish the requirements of small and large plants of the same species."

Bern Dempsey, a member from Glen Waverley, Victoria, has commented as follows:

"I think the watering of all plants follows the "soil condition" aspect, i.e., well drained light soil needs more frequent watering. A plant - fern, on a surface that hold water and is sheltered from drying out would need less water."

I have enclosed a photo of a plant I have had for more than 15 years; originally it was in the fork of the Acacia and did reasonably well but was badly displayed. About three years ago I hoisted it higher and it hangs on a strong wire, no. 8 fencing, I would say. The wire is just visible in photo number 1. (Ed.: Bern forwarded two coloured photos of a magnificent Platycerium superbum. The result of our attempt to copy photo number 1, appears on the last page). The plant is backed by a slab of tree fern.

The plastic tubing above the fern has one small sprinkler - spray outlet. In summer the watering system operates 6 days a week for 10 minutes at around 7 a.m. On days around 40 degrees, I hose the atmosphere, with some water falling into the centre of the fern. In winter watering is around 3 days a week for 10 minutes. The fern is in an airy position with shade from the leaves of an Acacia longifolia.

I measured the fern recently and it is 4 feet from side to side and 3 feet from top to bottom. In my mind this fern has improved since put into the new position. It is sometimes attacked by Vine Hoppers but they appear to do little damage. I find they can be controlled by Pyrethrum soaked in boiling water. The cold infusion can be sprayed on".

Ed: In enclosing this contribution and the one on Watering Platyceriums, Bern said "I hope you can read this, and that I am not found guilty of heresy or some such." Perish the thought! Thanks for the article. We are just grateful that you have taken the trouble to write and share your experience with us.

Another Victorian member, Michael Healy of Ballarat, wrote as follows:

"Re growing Stags in cold areas. Stags will rot quickly if not allowed to dry out between waterings. So in cooler areas in winter it is preferable to keep plants drier rather than wetter, watering well occasionally, i.e., each fortnight or month. Another factor, it is preferable to water in the morning when required, definitely not late in the afternoon."

Schellolepis subauriculata cv. 'Knightiae'

Referring to an article in March 1998 Newsletter, Geoff Simmons has written:

Re Schellolepis subauriculata - as a garden design fern I wonder why no mention was made of the cultivar "Knightiae". This makes quite a good fern for a basket. As a comment, the specimen that I have of this cultivar seems different from the one that I had before (destroyed by a bushfire) so perhaps someone may indicate whether there are different forms in cultivation.

Can anyone help Geoff? Our Leader points out that if the differences between the two 'Knightiae' are not trivial, and if the ferns reproduce consistently, then apparently, Geoff either has, or has lost (in the bushfire) a possible new cultivar.

Some botanists prefer to call this fern, Goniophlebium subauriculata cv. Knightiae. It is a most attractive fern having broad, deeply cut pinnae. The pinnae sometimes overlap. It is of course, sterile. 'Knightiae' is a fern that was for many years very, very expensive. However, thanks to tissue culture, its propagation has been greatly simplified and it is now widely available at more reasonable prices. Tissue culture ensures identical progeny.

Geoff queried why 'Knightiae' was not mentioned as a garden design fern. The answer is that we had only considered it as a basket specimen, albeit one of the most handsome. Although we have not seen it growing out in the garden bed, there is no reason why 'Knightiae' should not be let loose. Schellolepis subauriculata does extremely well around a rockery where its rhizome can creep into well drained, composted soil and where its long trailing fronds are displayed to advantage. In discussing this with our Leader, Peter cautioned against transferring any prized 'Knightiae' from basket to the open ground in any regions where frosts may occur. It is frost sensitive.

ON GROWING MAIDENHAIR FERNS

In some gardens Adiantum aethiopicum grow like weeds. In others, they look miserable and are hard to keep going. Can lime cause a major difference? In Christopher Goudey's book 'Maidenhair Ferns in Cultivation' the basic requirements for good healthy growth are said to be soil, moisture and light. Under the section on soil, this is included:

"Maidenhair ferns are mostly lime lovers, and many species actually prefer to grow on limestone..... Most Adiantums prefer a neutral to slightly alkaline soil mix."

NSW MID NORTH COAST REPORT

Contributed by Steve Clemesha

Report on Outing to Way Way Forest & Yarrahapini Mountain, 7-9 October 1997

We first went to Way Way Forest. The forest area has a creek running through it and it is a good place for ferns. We found 40 species there. The one that interested us most was Doodia aspera. At an outing soon after our Group started, we found a crested Doodia aspera. This habit has persisted in cultivation so we were on the lookout for more. We found some more a few hundred metres from where the previous plants were found. It remains to be seen if these maintain the crested habit in cultivation. We drove to the mountain top and plants of Westringia amabilis were flowering beside the road.

The next place we visited was Hat Head National Park - Korogoro Point. This is not a good fern area but has nice wildflowers in spring and beautiful headland and ocean views. We found a total of ten ferns. Most of these were in and near a semi rainforest gully on the western side of the headland. The most interesting fern there is Asplenium difforme, the maritime or shore spleenwort..

Asplenium difforme is one of a number of species that grow in rock crevices by the sea in various parts of the world. It grows in many northern NSW headlands. South of Sydney,

many kilometres separate some of the populations. Adiantum aethiopicum grew in some exposed open places with no protection except the kangaroo grass and southerly aspect.

The next day we went to Nulla Creek. The most memorable event in this area is the last few kilometres of the road. It is almost overgrown and atrocious. It is a good fern area and we saw 42 species. Among them was Pityrogramma austroamericana. This introduced fern has spread quite a lot since it first started to appear in road cuttings. It is now found in some places a long way from habitation. Nephrolepis cordifolia was present. When you see this it is hard to tell if it is native or a garden escape or from a spore in a garden a few kilometres away. All the other ferns were true natives and are the species we commonly find in NSW.

Report on Outing to Barrington Tops, 18-22 January 1998

For our visit the weather was pleasant and mild with only one storm - a nice change for a January outing. By May in this area morning temperatures of -10 degrees C. are experienced. This severe climate has restricted the number of plant species that grow there.

We camped at Pohlblue camping area. This, and a number of other places on the way up, is maintained by the Forestry Department. Pohlblue is a creek with a large swamp around it and a walking track goes around the margin of the swamp.

Ferns there included Blechnum penna-marina which was common on the "Tops" in wet places that were fairly open. It does not grow in heavy shade. Blechnum nudum B. minus, Polystichum proliferum and Dicksonia antarctica are also there and these plants are very plentiful in the Barrington Tops area and we saw them many times. Microsorium diversifolium and Pyrrosia rupestris also were fairly widespread and common. An uncommon species on the edge of Pohlblue swamp is Lycopodium fastigatum. This grew among grassland and under tall eucalypts. Scotch broom, an introduced pest, is a threat to its long-term survival.

At Pohlblue Falls, about 4 km away, Blechnum fluviatile grew with B. nudum and B. minus on the vertical walls of a small creek bank. We saw it in a number of places, always in the same sort of situation. It grows at Gloucester Tops also but its main distribution is the Snowy Mountains and in Victoria and Tasmania, both on the coast and in the mountains.

In the rock crevices near the "falls" (cascades really) Polystichum fallax grew. The plants had small fronds for the species. It grows in a number of cold places such as near Walcha and Ebor Falls, as well as milder places. Nearby were plants of Asplenium trichomanes, presumably subsp. quadrivalens. These look rather like miniature plants of Pellaea falcata except for the spore pattern. It is a widespread species and a diploid race is found in Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Himalayas and Australia. A triploid race is found in Canada and Europe. The two forms do not interbreed and the spores of them differ in size. In New Zealand the species is hexaploid. On the North Island it is confined to limestone whereas in the South Island it is less exclusive and found in many sub-alpine

regions and often in Mountain Beech forest. It is recommended to add some form of lime to the growing medium if attempting to cultivate it.

A beautiful looking Nothofagus (Antarctic Beech) forest looked promising but only a few common species were present and Hymenophyllum cupressiforme which we saw in a number of places after that.

We visited an experimental Douglas Fir plantation. Literally nothing grew under them except near the edges where Pteris tremula grew as well as Dicksonia antarctica and Polystichum proliferum. Lyre Birds live there and are the main attraction.

The next day we went along some side roads. One was to the headwaters of the Manning River. We found Polyphlebium venosum on Dicksonia trunks. In most areas the Dicksonias were heavily skirted with dead fronds so were not suited to filmy and other ferns. Dicksonia antarctica was very common but there were no species of Cyathea, Lastreopsis, Doodia, etc.

A tiger snake near a creek caused a bit of excitement. It hissed and then swam across the creek. Under beech trees there were small plants of Blechnum wattsii with leaves only a few centimetres long. Larger plants of it grew near the margin of this forest. Gleichenia microphylla grew in a swampy area near the Upper Manning and Blechnum fluviatile was present again and a single plant of Todea barbara. Lycopodium deuterodensum grew in a heathy area near there.

We then visited the other lookouts and picnic areas as most have short walking tracks. First was the Devils Hole. This is the only NPWLS lookout as the Barrington Tops National Park only touches the Gloucester to Scone road for a few kilometres. Few ferns were there but some wildflowers were and the lookout was spectacular.

Honeysuckle picnic area and walking track had a great abundance of Dicksonia and there we saw Diplazium australe for the first time. Moppy Lookout had a beautiful beech forest with acres of an almost pure stand of Blechnum wattsii under it. A small waterfall had Asplenium bulbiferum growing on it. This grew in other wet places as well. I saw no bulbils on any of the plants though there are some on larger plants in New England National Park. Microsorium diversifolium was plentiful there and also in many places on the Tops. A curious sight there was a Dicksonia with fronds about 2 metres across. It was about 20 metres up a beech tree.

Cobark Lookout is the last one before you make the steep, windy descent to the lowlands. The easterly influence there caused a milder climate so while most of the alpine species were still with us we saw for the first time Cyathea australis, Doodia aspera, Calochlaena dubia, Blechnum cartilagineum and Pyrrosia confluens. Rumohra adiantiformis grew on Dicksonias in a wet area and a few epiphytic Dagger and Orange Blossom orchids were on the trees for the first time this trip. Both species of Microsorium in NSW were there and some which could be intermediates.

It was then down the mountains to Mitchell Rest Area. This did not have a walking track but you could walk a few steps to a ferny area. What a difference. Much of the mountain species were gone and there were large quantities of Pteris umbrosa, Lastreopsis munita, L. microsora and L. decomposita and many other species. A few plants of Polystichum proliferum were the only reminders of the high country.

SOUTH EASTERN QUEENSLAND REPORT

Contributed by Irene Cullen

Report on Meeting at Belbowrie, 1 March 1998

This was a meeting of lively discussion. Many samples of potting mixes were shown. Especially commercial ones of inferior quality. Naturally members had their own preferences. All agreed there was no such thing as a universal mix. General consensus was to start with a good quality mix and then add extra peat, fine pine bark or sand such as the plant required.

Watering. Generally it was agreed that the drip system was out, owing to the way the water gradually made a channel to the bottom of the pot and left the rest dry. The misting system seemed most favoured. However all agreed that nothing beat the good old time consuming hand watering. One suggestion was to try a hydroponic type system on benches. Has anyone tried this or tried using water retaining crystals or powder? We would be pleased to hear of these attempts.

Report on Outing to O'Reillys, Lamington Plateau 4 & 5 April 1998

Sixteen members and friends had a very pleasant and fruitful weekend in perfect weather. We were happy to have Calder Chaffey with us and delighted that Peter was able to lead him to the elusive Cyathea cunninghamii, near Gwongutai Falls. A few of the more senior of the party suffered weary legs for a day or two after. A list of ferns compiled by Lorna Murray and Merle Goadby follows:

Adiantum aethiopicum, A. diaphanum, A. formosum, A. hispidulum, A. silvaticum, Arthropteris beckleri, A. tenella, Asplenium australasicum, A. polyodon, Blechnum cartilagineum, B. patersonii, B. wattsi, Calochlaena dubia, Christella dentata, Cyathea australis, C. cooperi, C. cunninghamii, C. leichhardtiana, Davallia pyxidata, Dennstaedtia davallioides, Deparia petersonii ssp. congrua, Dicksonia youngiae, Dictymia brownii, Diplazium assimile, D. australe, D. dilatatum, Doodia aspera, D. caudata, Grammitis stenophylla, Histiopteris incisa, Hymenophyllum australe, Hypolepis glandulifera, H. muelleri, H. rugosula, Lastreopsis acuminata, L. decomposita, L. marginans, L. microsora, L. smithiana, L. silvestris, Macroglena caudata, Microsorium scandens, M. pustulatum, Nephrolepis cordifolia, Pellaea falcata var. falcata, P. falcata var. nana, Platyserium bifurcatum, P. superbum, Polyphlebium venosum, Pteridium esculentum, Pteris comans, P. tremula, P. umbrosa, Pyrrosia confluens, P. rupestris, Sticherus flabellatus, S. lobatus, Todea barbara, Vittaria elongata.

Report on Meeting at Greenbank 3 May 1998

Claire Shackel brought about eight specimens of germinating spore at different stages of growth. Her unique sporing boxes were proving very successful. She uses a large plastic soft drink bottle, which she cuts in half. She inserts a punnet of sporing medium in the base half, then slightly pleats the top and inserts it into the base. This small pleat allows just enough air circulation. The bottles lie flat and can be stored neatly in a foam carton in her fernery. She is successfully using a medium of peat well soaked in boiling water.

A tip from Peter. Never dry a frond wrapped in news paper - the fertile spore will cling to the paper. After lunch we visited our host, Kerry Rathie's, fernery where a good part of Cliff Ritchie's collection is awaiting sale and division.

SYDNEY REGION REPORT

Report on Outing to Fox Ground, 21 March 1998

Fourteen persons counted themselves most fortunate for the day spent at Ann and Geoff Long's two properties at Fox Ground, 50 km south of Wollongong. Our first call was to 'Bolwarra' their house hidden in the sub-tropical rainforest. During a short walk through a veritable Garden of Eden, Geoff told us that God was in fact, the gardener. We noted, however, subtle developments since our previous visit. Not a weed was in sight, paths rehabilitated and steps installed using natural stone of the area. The rainforest was coming back strongly in the previously disturbed sections. The 25 species of ferns identified on the day looked fresh and healthy apparently not troubled by the prolonged dry spell we have been experiencing,

After driving further up and along the escarpment we reached the Long's newly acquired 20 ha property. While disposing of lunch we admired the panoramic view down to the coast. Following the lunch break, our hosts led us along the edge of the escarpment and for a walk tracing the course of two of the property's three creeks. Ferns identified were: Adiantum formosum, Arthropteris beckleri, A. tenella, Asplenium australasicum, A. flabellifolium, Blechnum cartilagineum, B. patersonii, Calochlaena dubia, Dicksonia antarctica, Cyathea australis, C. leichhardtiana, Davallia pyxidata, Dennstaedtia davallioides, Diplazium australe, Doodia aspera, Hypolepis muelleri, Lastreopsis acuminata, L. decomposita, Microsorium scandens, Pellaea falcata, P. falcata var. nana, Pteridium esculentum, P. rupestris, Pteris comans, P. umbrosa.

Of the ferns seen on the day, Pteris comans, superficially a large, softer-looking version of P. tremula, excited most interest. This fern, rarely found in the Sydney region, was in two areas. Most were growing near a soak along one of the creeks.

Given the beauty of the Longs' property and the diversity of its flora, ferns provided only part of the day's enjoyment. With Peter's help many interesting plants were identified including Zieria granulata, known to be a rare species. All members expressed appreciation to Geoff and Ann for making the day a really memorable occasion.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS : IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Sunday 7 June 1998, Excursion to Belthorpe

Travel through Woodford on the D'Agular Highway and turn onto the Kilcoy - Beerwah Road. Meet at 9.30 am at Cruice Park (500 metres from the intersection on the left) for morning tea.

Sunday 2 August 1998, Excursion to Bald Knob

Travel to Beerwah, cross the railway line and turn right. Morning tea at Mill Park, just past the Railway Station on the right.

For information regarding South East Queensland Fern Study, please contact Peter Bostock phone (07) 3202 6983 or Irene Cullen on (07) 3273 1055.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS : IN THE MID NORTH COAST, NSW.

For details of the above events contact Charlie Charters, phone (065) 86 1088.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS : IN THE SYDNEY REGION

Sunday 21 June 1998, Meeting at Kenthurst

Meet at the home of Betty and Eric Rymer, 48 Annangrove Road, Kenthurst. Arrive from 11 am. Formal business and study session on Diplazium spp. begins at 1 sharp. The cameo "A Favourite Fern" will be presented by Joan Moore. Bring lunch and plate for afternoon tea. Enquiries to the Rymers 9654 1831.

Saturday 18 July 1998 Outing / Working Bee at Bulli

This is a follow-up of the planting done at the Grevillea Park in June last year. In addition to weeding we hope to plant a few more ferns. Members are asked to bring any spare ferns. Ray Brown will be attending gate as this is a regular "open day" but the sight of a fern in your car should get you in free! Meet from 10 am. Bring lunch and hot water if required. If weather doubtful or for other enquiries contact Moreen 9528 4881.

Sunday 16 August 1998, Meeting at Gladesville

Our host is Joan Moore. Meet at her home, 2 Gannet Street, Gladesville. Arrive from 11 o'clock. Formal business and study session on Colysis spp. begins at 1 pm. "A Favourite Fern" will be presented by Pat Kenyon. Bring lunch and plate for afternoon tea. Enquiries to Joan 9817 5487.

Saturday 19 September 1998 Outing to Mt. Katandra

Advance notice. Details to be included in next Newsletter. If weather doubtful or for other enquiries contact Peter 9625 8705.



Platyterium superbum shown above in the garden of Bern Dempsey - refer to page 5. This fine specimen is a tribute to Bern and to the fern's adaptability. In nature it is found in the rainforests of eastern Queensland and NSW south to around the Manning River.

DEADLINE FOR COPY

Contributions to the Newsletter are more than welcome - the success of the Newsletter (and its size) depends upon them. Our thanks to those who contributed articles to this edition. Copy for the September issue should be forwarded to reach the Secretary by no later than 15 August 1998.

If undelivered return to:
3 Currawang Place
COMO WEST NSW 2226

Print Post Approved
PP245358/00018

SURFACE
MAIL

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

Mr R & Mrs S Backhouse
Old Mt Sampson Road
Closeburn
Queensland 4520