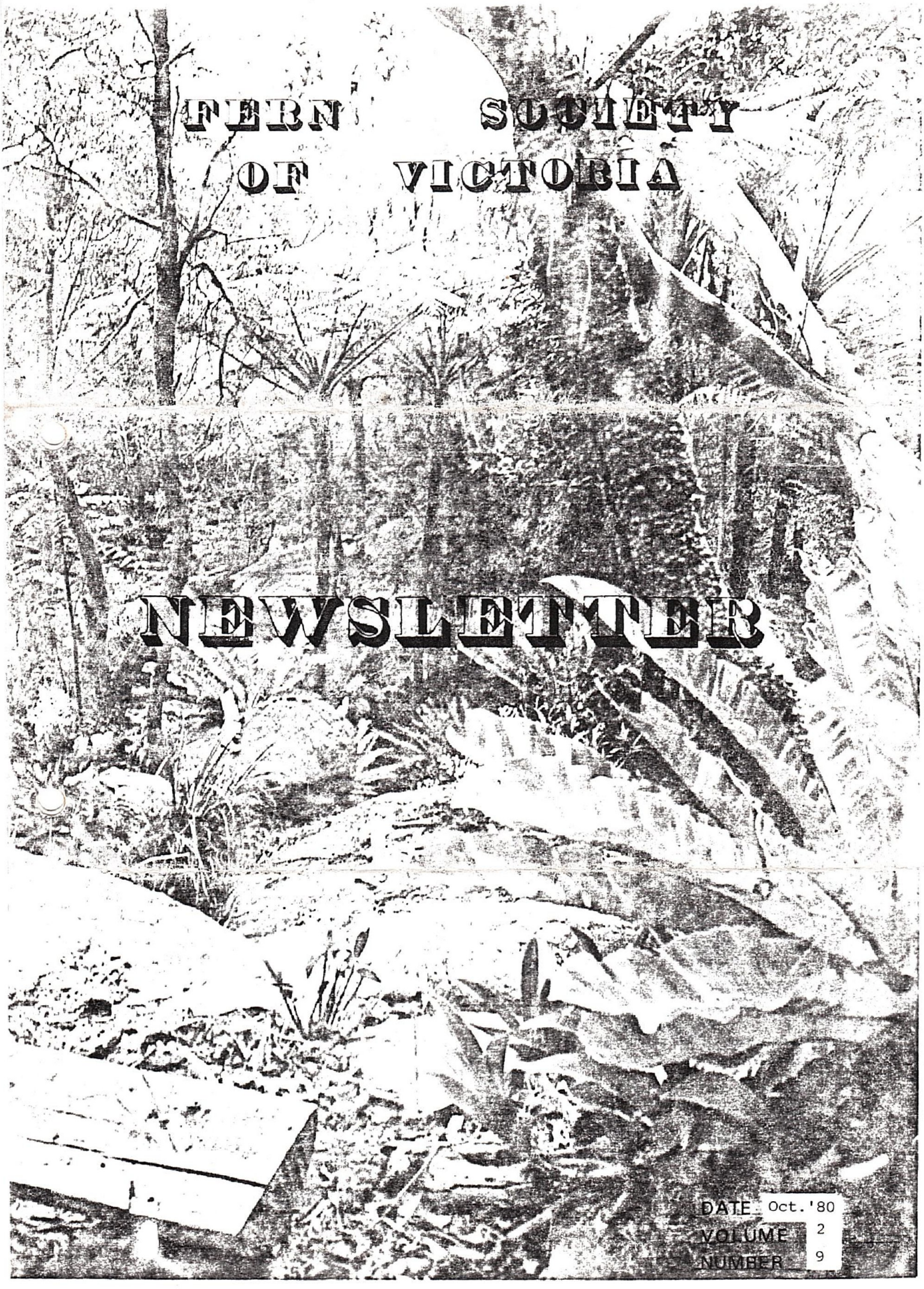

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER

DATE Oct.'80
VOLUME 2
NUMBER 9

OFFICE-BEARERS

PRESIDENT: Chris Goudey, Lot 8, Cozens Road, Lara, 3212. Tel.(052) 82 2154
VICE-PRESIDENT: Albert Jenkins, 11 Morwell Avenue, Watsonia, 3087. Tel.435 3863
VICE-PRESIDENT: Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove, Rosanna, 3084. 459 9716(A.H.)
TREASURER: Ray Casmere, Merrill Crescent, Warranwood, 3134. Tel. 876 2535
SECRETARY: Irene Bolster, P.O. Box 154 Ferny Creek, 3786. Tel. 755 1222
BOOK SALES: Lorraine Goudey, Lot 8, Cozens Road, Lara, 3212. Tel. (052) 82 2154
EDITOR: Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove, Rosanna, 3084. Tel. 459 9716 (Bus.)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

An enthusiastic audience attended our September meeting to hear Rosemary Ireson from the Garden Advisary Panel at the Burnley College speaking on ferns.

I will be giving an illustrated talk at our next meeting on the ferns of New Zealand. In addition to showing slides I will bring along a selection of New Zealand ferns as well.

New Zealand is famous for its beautiful ferns, particularly the South Island.

For those who are interested, I will have on hand itineraries of the Fern Society Tour I am planning for next year.

If you have any queries about the New Zealand tour, please give me a tel phone call any evening on (052) 822154 or see me at the meetings.

Ray Best's book on Growing Ferns proved to be very popular; over fifty copies were sold at our last meeting.

We will have another new fern book at the next meeting, Ferns and Foliage Plants by Mary Moody and Cheryl Maddocks. It retails at $3.95, and we will be able to offer it to members at $3.20 per copy.

The winners of our September competition at the meeting were:

	Open	Novice
1st	Mrs. M. Bryant	Mrs. A. Bryar
2nd	Mr. Neil Beasley	-
3rd	Mr. Blacker	-

The fern chosen for next month's competition is a fishbone fern, which can be either Nephrolepsis cordifolia or one of the Blechnums.
We would like to see more members participating in making our Newsletter more informative.
Let us hear about how you grow your ferns, or how you raise ferns from spore, or a holiday you may have had.

How do you get rid of your insect pests?

We can obtain permission to re-print newspaper or magazine articles if you have any of interest to other members, so let us hear from you.

Contributions should be forwarded to:

Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove,
Rosanna 3084.

CHRIS GOUDEY
President

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Members visiting the city area in Melbourne will be interested to know that the collection of reference books on ferns owned by the Society will in future, be kept at the office of Mr. Bill Taylor, where they may be perused during normal office hours.

Bill's address is: C/- Capital Laboratory Pty. Ltd.,
Room 307, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne
(Manchester Unity Building)

There will be a small charge of 20¢ per visit for the Society's funds and members are assured of a warm welcome and help if necessary.

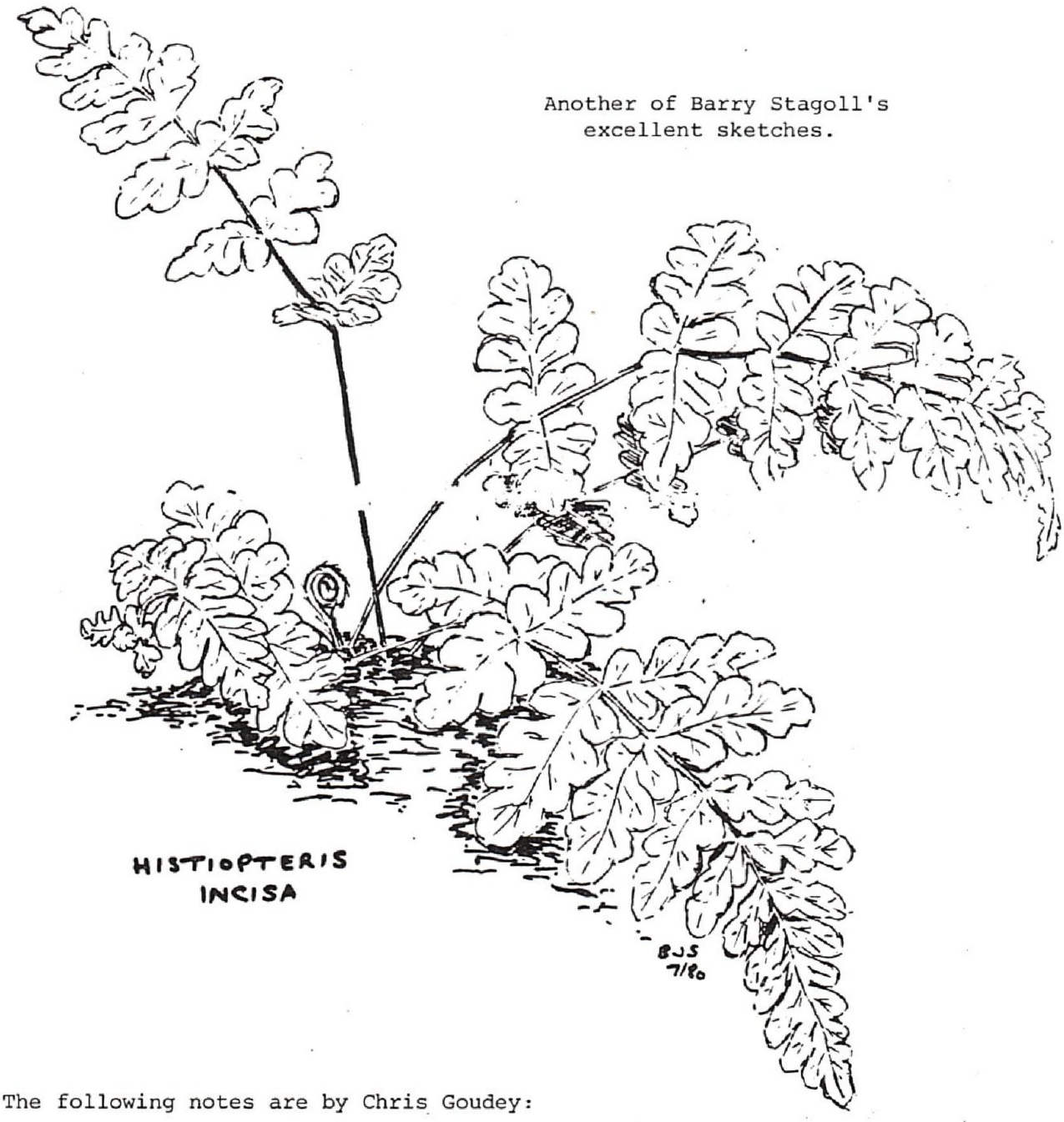
As mentioned elsewhere in the report of her talk, Rosemary Ireson is from the Department of Agriculture's Garden Advisory Service. This department provides a team who are available to answer queries on all aspects of gardening and horticulture. For phone enquiries the number to ring is 819 4422 8.30a.m. to 12.30p.m. or appointments can be made to call personally.

Keith Hutchinson has offered to show members some of the Fern Gullies in the Tarra Valley and Bulga National Parks. Early November is considered to be a good time to visit these areas. As time is limited perhaps we could discuss this at the next meeting in October and arrange a date.

We have other trips in the pipeline - let's hope our luck with the weather continues.

IRENE BOLSTER
Secretary

Another of Barry Stagoll's
excellent sketches.



The following notes are by Chris Goudey:

The Bat's-wing Fern, Histiopteris incisa is widely spread, mainly in tropical regions. The genus is mostly terrestrial and consists of about eight species, with one only in Australia. Histiopteris incisa is a strong growing fern with a creeping rhizome, it usually forms thickets in open rain forest, i.e. along road sides and water courses.

There have been records of this fern in Fiji with fronds up to twenty three feet in length.

The Bat's-wing Fern is an invasive fern in cultivation; it always comes up in new tree fern baskets, on fern slabs, and in potting soil which contain tree fern fibre.

If you have a plant of it in your collection, you will find it continually coming up in your spore pots no matter what precautions you take, as the sporelings germinate very rapidly.

Young plants look most attractive with their delicate blue green stripes and fronds, but the plant gets quite lanky and untidy as it matures. It resents disturbance and is therefore quite difficult to transplant.

TEXT OF A TALK GIVEN BY ROSEMARY IRESON OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S GARDEN ADVISORY SERVICE

Rosemary began her talk by telling of some of the most frequent queries regarding cultivation of ferns.

A question often asked concerns ferns suitable for different conditions and uses, and the following lists show where and how those ferns may be used.

Hardy Ferns

Nephrolepsis Cordifolia
Cheilanthes Tenuifolia
Doodia Media

As Border Plants

Adiantums
Blechnums
Nephrolepsis

Shade Tolerant

Adiantum Capilleris Veneris
Adiantum Raddianum
Asplenium Bulbiferum
Nephrolepsis Cordifolia

For Dryer Areas

Adiantum Aethiopicum
Blechnum Wattsii
Pteris Tremula
Histiopteris Incisa
Cyathea Australis
Cyrtomium (Holly Fern)

Sun Tolerant

Ateris Cretica
Platycerium
Doodia Media
Cheilanthes Tenuifolia
Nephrolepsis Cordifolia
Blechnum Occidentale
Dicksonia Antarctica

For Colour

Adiantum Raddianum
Adiantum Hispidulum
Blechnum Wattsii

For Use In Baskets

Adiantum Capillus Veneris
Nephrolepsis Bostoniensis
Dauallia
Playtcerium
Lygodium

Easy To Grow From Spores

Adiantum Capillus Veneris
Adiantum Hispidulum
Adiantum Raddianum

When planting ferns, match suitable ferns to the environment - see the lists above and pick varieties to suit the soil, the area and the climate.

FERNS CAN BE USED in many ways e.g.

As Features - maybe combined with rocks
As Accent plants e.g. birds nest ferns
As Borders
As Ground covers
To Create illusion of space e.g. with hanging baskets
To Create a fern wall
To Shade off patio area
To Add height to or cover walls.

WATERING

Ferns can be watered from above or dunked pot and all into a bucket until no more bubbles rise. Capillary watering e.g. pot sitting in saucer of water, will, over a period of time, cause a build up of salts which can kill off the root system.

Symptoms of this condition especially with Maidenhair are a white incrustation on the pot and sudden dying off of the new fronds, and die back on the tips of other fronds. Feed with liquid fertiliser, fish emulsion Maxicrop etc. Maidenhair Ferns have been grown successfully by planting in one pot preferably a porous terracotta pot, (inside another) and filling the space between with spagnum or peat moss. Watering the moss keeps the maidenhair moist at all times.

With Hanging Baskets, there are two types - porous - which can be terracotta, Tree Fern Fibre, Coconut Fibre and non porous - usually plastic. There is no movement of air through a non-porous pot so that it loses less moisture and is therefore more suitable for an exposed position.

Note that Terracotta pots/baskets dry out three times as fast as plastic ones on a hot day.

CULTIVATION PROBLEMS

Slow growth of fronds - they yellow off due to

(a) cooler temperatures or
(b) plant has rested or
(c) over watering

Re over-watering, it is often thought that Maidenhair needs plenty of water but one good watering a week is better than a small amount every day. By this means salt build-up is washed away and there is no soil compaction to suffocate the root system.

Other causes of yellowing of the fronds are:

(d) too much light
(e) insufficient fertiliser or too much
(f) plant is pot bound.

EDGES OF FRONDS TURNING UNDER - due to

(a) lack of humidity or
(b) fumes or
(c) pollution.

VERY ELONGATED FRONDS due to insufficient light.

SHRIVELLED OR WILTED FRONDS caused by wrong atmosphere sometimes due to too high a temperature or possibly near a fan blowing air onto fern.

SOIL DRIED OUT; if completely dried out can cause cells to collapse - nothing can be done to revive a fern no matter how much it is watered.

BURNS ON LEAVES can be caused by

(a) incorrect application of insecticide or fungicide, wrong type or wrong strength or
(b) excess salts or
(c) frosts.

PROPAGATION

Spores have been grown successfully using blocks of oasis foam (green sponge used by florists). Sprinkle spores on top, keep damp and spores will germinate.

If no room in flat or house for pots for propagating, mix sand and peat moss in plastic bag, sprinkle spores on top of mixture, make drainage holes in bag and keep moist.

Hang on clothes line o. in bathroom if light enough and watch sporelings develop.

By using small ferns such as young Bulbils etc. you can make a type of terrarium. Roll a length of chicken wire into a tube and fill with Spagnum Moss, Peat Moss and some soil. Plant ferns in the holes and fill edges with spagnum moss to neaten. Plant tube in pot and cover with bell jar or similar. As ferns grow you get a Totem Pole effect.

BIGGEST PERCENTAGE OF QUERIES ARE ON PESTS AND DISEASES

There are not many diseases common to ferns. Other than pests most problems are environmental.

Most common Pests are:

(a) Aphids - they come in various colours
(b) Mealy Bug
(c) Scale - also varied in colour
(d) Mites
(e) Thrips.

If possible treat ferns by hand.

e.g. Aphids or Scale - squash them. Even cut off fronds if badly infected.
Wipe over with soap and water and rinse off.

e.g. Mealy Bug - spray with mixture of ½ Methylated Spirits and ½ water. After half hour, rinse off.

INSECTICIDES SUITABLE FOR CONTROL OF:

Aphids	Pyrethrum based sprays
Scale	White Oil 1/3 to ½ strength
Thrips) Mites)	Malathion or Pyrethrum sprays

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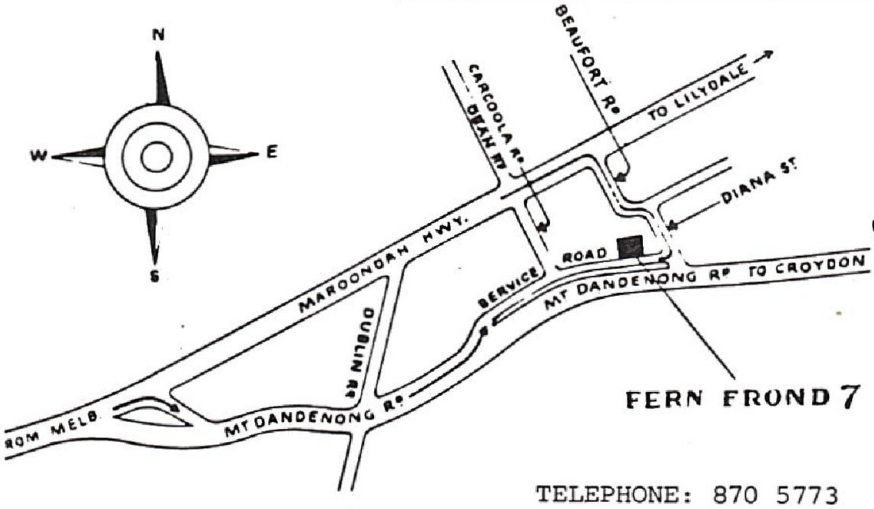
A question I have been asked:

Do earthworms eat the roots of ferns? Especially the fine hair or feeding roots.

The answer is "NO" they will not attack living plants if there is plenty of organic matter incorporated in the soil. It is only when the worm is desperate for food and working in a sterile soil. Pot culture can be greatly helped with the addition of worms but one must be sure to have a potting mixture rich in humus and a mulch of old manure on top of the pot.

A good soil, as you know, is a teeming mass of bacteria, actinomycetes, fungi moulds, yeasts, protozoa, algae and other minute organisms. All are microscopic plants except the protozoa which represents animal life. These lower animals and plants are the biological life of the soil. This population in the soil is concentrated mainly in the upper four or five inches where the bulk of organic matter is found.



FERN FROND

Fern & Native orchid specialists,
indoor plants, hanging baskets.

TELEPHONE: 870 5773

FERTILIZERS: A FEW WORDS OF WARNING

"Most Australian soils tend to be impoverished and, in general, low in available phosphorus (P).

There is evidence also that some native plants have been damaged or killed when superphosphate has been applied to them. This susceptibility to high levels of P is particularly noticeable in plants of the Proteaceae family and may be the basis for the generalisation that native plants (which includes ferns) should not be fertilized."

"A major source of plant nutrients is from organic sources such as animal manures and compost. These items have a much lower concentration of N, P & K but are most useful in the dual role of fertilizing and texturizing the soil.

Cow, horse and pig manures are particularly useful for this purpose. Poultry manure, while being very good for vegetables should be used with caution on native plants because of its high phosphorous content.

Blood and bone is another organic fertilizer which has been recommended in the past. In its old form it was a safe, slow release fertilizer which could be used on the most tender plants. Extreme care, however should be taken with the currently available products sold under this name, as often some inorganic material is added in manufacture."

From AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS
by WRIGLEY & FAGG 1979

Note from Rod Hill

My apologies for the incorrect naming of spore samples listed previously:

Adiantum cunninghamii	was	actually	A. sylvaticum
Cyathea sp. (Taiwan)	was	actually	Macrothelypteris polypodioides

SPORE LIST - OCTOBER, 1980

Arachniodes aristata (8 - 80)
Canpyloneuron phyllitidis (5 - 80)
Cheilanthes californica (6 - 80)
Davallia solida (6 - 80)
Doryopteris concolor (8 - 80)
Dryopteris goldiana (?)
Lastreopsis munita (8 - 80)
Lygodium flexuosum (8 - 80)
Macrothelypteris polypodiaides (11 - 79)
Microlepia speluncae (8 - 80)
Platycerium superbum (8 - 80)
Platycerium veitchii (8 - 80)
Polystichum standishii (8- 80)

The above list is supplementary to the Spore List which appeared in the September Newsletter.

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Who does his duty is a question
Too complex to be solved by me
But of this I'm certain
He does part of his who plants
a tree FERN

'Anon'

The above verse is attributed to that prolific writer "Anon", and I felt he wouldn't mind if I added an extra word!

DIARY DATES - MAKE A NOTE!

October 9th:	CHRIS GOUDEY An illustrated talk on New Zealand
November 13th:	BOB BONE Fern growing
December 11th:	ALBERT JENKINS Creating a mini rainforest
	CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP
TIME OF MEETINGS:	8 p.m.
VENUE:	Burnley Horticultural School Hall, Burnley.

NOTE: In the event of a power strike on the evening of any meeting, we regret that the meeting must be cancelled.

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