

VOLUME A NUMBER 1 FERRUARY 1000

### 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. Tel. 459 9716 TREASURER: Jean Trudgeon, 13 Eden Street, West Heidleberg, 3081. Tel. 459 4859 SECRETARY: Keith Stubbs, 14 Afton Street, Essendon, 3040 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 SPORE BANK MANAGER: Rod Hill, 41 Kareela Road, Frankston, 3199 LIBRARIAN: Bill Taylor, C/- Capitol Laboratory Pty. Ltd., Rm. 307,

220 Collins Street, Melbourne (Manchester Unity Building) PUBLICITY OFFICER: Geoff Echberg, l Railway Parade, Highett, 3190. Tel. 555 5115

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

It is interesting to read about the discovery of new records of ferns for the State of Victoria. When we read through some of the earlier fern books we read of many collections of New Zealand ferns in Victoria, such as Hymenophillum dilatatum at Cumberland Gorge, and Blechnum filiformis at Healesville and Cheltenham Springs (some 90 years ago). Other records, such as Blechnum vulcanicum (The Wedge Water Fern) in Gippsland, and Asplenium hookeranum (Maidenhair Spleenwort) along the Upper Hume River. It was with much interest that I read of the re-discovery of A. hookeranum near Bryces Gorge in the Snowy Range, and even more recently, of the discovery of B. vulcanicum growing in the same mountain range. Both these ferns occur in Tasmania as well as being common in New Zealand. Another new record for Southern Australia was the discovery of the European Maidenhair Fern, Adiantum capillus venevus, growing on sandstone on the Mornington Peninsula, south east of Melbourne.

It is amazing that in a State as small as Victoria that has been explored so well botanically, new fern records occur continuously. An example is the discovery of the Skirted Tree Fern, *Cyathea marcesans*, in the Dandenong Ranges only last year. I must congratulate the Committee of the Tasmanian Fern Society; they have got off to a fine start. I received their first, very informative, Newsletter last December, with an excellent line drawing of The Dwarf Coral Fern (*Gleichenia abscida*) a Tasmanian endemic - on the front cover.

With the holidays now over, we must again settle down to our duties within the Society. Our first speaker for the new year will be Russ Hall from the Burnley College, speaking on Tissue Culture of Ferns.

The fern chosen for the February competition is a *Platycerium* (Stag or Elk Fern). We should receive plenty of entries, as they are very popular ferns.

Books will be available at the next meeting from the F.S.O.V. Library, at a small charge; books borrowed are lent only for one month, and must be returned at the next meeting.

Don't forget Rod Hill's excursion on Saturday, 13th February (details at next meeting) and also the excursion to my place at Lara on Sunday 21st March.

In closing, I would like to pay a tribute to Jimmy Dyce. You may well ask "who is Jimmy Dyce?". Jimmy retires from the presidency of the British Pteridological Society this year, after serving in various capacities for the B.P.S. for the past 30 years.

...Cont'd.

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (Cont'd.)

Jimmy Dyce joined the British Pteridological Society in 1935, and through the years served as auditor, treasurer, editor, secrerary, president and head of the B.P.S. book sales.

He was awarded the Stanfield Medal for recognition of his services. He has been an invaluable help to me in the eight years I have been a member of the B.P.S. The anatomy of any Society includes four kinds of bones:-

1.	WISHBONES:	go along with any	
		idea, but want others	
		to do the work.	
2.	JAWBONES:	talk a lot, but	
		do nothing.	
3.	KNUCKLEBONE	KLEBONES: knock everything	
		everyone else does.	
4.	BACKBONES :	who do all the work.	

CHRIS GOUDEY President

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*

FEBRUARY SPEAKER .....

1982 gets off to a good start, with Burnley College's Russ Hall speaking on: TISSUE CULTURE OF FERNS

Don't forget the date ..... Thursday, 11th February, 8 p.m., Burnley College School Hall

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*

SCOOP! .. SCOOP!

Our March speaker will be the noted

#### DAVID JONES

who will speak on Australian Tropical Ferns.

MARK YOUR DIARY NOW .... THURSDAY, 11TH MARCH.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

The following reports have been submitted by our Treasurer, Jean Trudgeon.

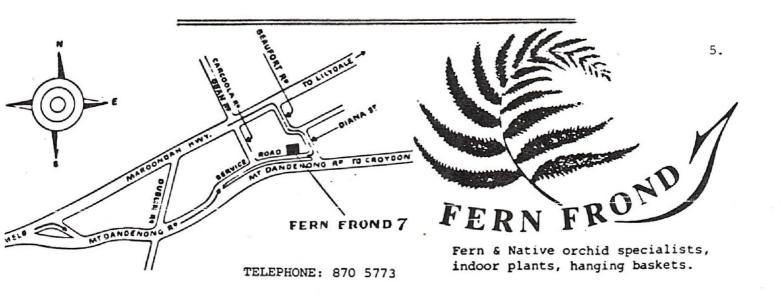
INCOME TO END OF DECEMBER, 1981:

	Money transferred from Croydon	c	1,975.14
	Money transferred from Greensborough	Ŷ	567.00
	R. Casmere cash in hand		109.76
	Interest		4.26
	Subscriptions		2,007.05
	Special Effort		211.50
	Plant Sales		139.00
	Spore Bank		80.65
	Teas		7.00
	Posters		12.00
	Two Diaries		10.00
	State Festival	•	32.00
			23.53
	Petty Cash re-banked		
	Return of deposits books		102.60
	Cash replacement for written cheques		134.70
	Total income:	\$	5,416.19
EXPENDITURE	TO END OF DECEMBER, 1981:		
	Postage & July & August Newsletters	\$	413.29
	Hire of Hall		36.00
	Postage & September Newsletter		307.25
	Application Forms		27.26
	Expenses, I. Bolster, June, July, August		37.75
	Bank charges		8.00
	Postage & October Newsletter		234.11
	Treasurer's expanses		15.05
	Refund of book deposits		102.60
	Postage & November Newsletter		241.55
	December purchase of library books		201.64
	Library		60.00
	Promotional prizes, presents		64.10
	Christmas break-up expanses		75.00
	Newsletter December		195.00
	Cheque books 'n' things, per C. Gouday		134.70
	Investment Transfer of \$2,000.00 =	\$	4,153.30
	Less unpresented cheques		156.70
	Total expenditure:	\$	3,996.60
SUMMARY:			
	Income	S	5,416.19
	Less expenditure	Ŷ	3,996.60
	Credit bank balance	\$	1,419.59
	Plus savings investment account		2,000.00

1=

\$ 3,419.59

Credit trading balance



#### LIVELY DECEMBER FERN FORUM

December was a meeting with a difference.

Not only did members enjoy social conviviality around an excellent Christmas supper and inspect a wide array of members' favourite ferns, they were also treated to an hour's forum where experts tossed around questions and gave assistance to members.

Panellists were Chris Goudey, Albert Jenkins, Harold Olney, Keith Hutchinson and Rod Hill, with Keith Stubbs acting as moderator.

Once again, answers by the panel demonstrated the varying practices and beliefs of experienced fern growers. Often there was lively debate amongst the panel as some recommendations were hotly contested by other panel members.

"Fern Forum" was a success with the audience. Several members commented to the Secretary that it was the best meeting they had attended since joining the Society.

Here is a selection of questions and some answers given by the Panel.

- Q. "I have a birdsnest fern with 18 leaves. It looks healthy but the leaves are becoming pale and variegated."
- A. One panellist siad that the fern was not receiving enough nutrient from the soil, that there was some chemical lacking and a light dose may help every 5 to 6 weeks. The popular practice of "feeding" banana skins was not enough in these circumstances.

Another member agreed, saying that iron was lacking and that chelated iron should be fed to the fern.

- Q. "I have a birdsnest which has grown to 3 feet tall. When the fronds are about halfway out, they become deformed. Also, I am getting burn marks on stags and elks and something is eating them. What is my problem?"
- A. Having established that the member is occasionally feeding his stags slow release fertiliser to the fern, the point was made that these stimulants should not be allowed between the leaves, but must be put in the centre of the fern. Plenty of drainage was essential for healthy growth. Health growth also attracts caterpillars and small snails which could provide the condition discribed. The birdsnest problem could be due to some malfunction underground or to excessive heat.

## FERN FORUM (Cont'd.)

- Q. "I have a nice gold fern which I kept in a pot. When I transferred it into a basket, using the same mixture, it lost its gold. Why did the leaves lose their gold?"
- A. Most gold ferns lose gold according to one panellist by overhead or hose watering. But another panel member felt that as the gold fern is tropical, too much light or being too close to the glass could cause this problem. Loss of gold varies from plant to plant. A point to remember is that they need a warm position in winter and need to be kept fairly dry in winter.
- Q. "How do I get rid of aphis from my outdoor maidenhair ferns?"
- A. There are many proprietary lines on the market. Due to the considerable difference of opinion regarding the safety and effectiveness of these, we dare not publish panellists' comments for fear of a libel suit!

Care should be taken if aerosol sprays are used, to avoid burning tips of ferns. A very light "puff" is all that is required - one member wipes the fronds 10 minutes after application. If pest strips are to be used, one recommended way to use them is to place the fern and the pest strip in a plastic bag and close the bag for a few hours - or put the fern and pest strip under an upturned plastic bucket.

- Q. "When I grow ferns from spore, my prothalis brown off. What am I doing wrong?"
- A. Prothalis browning off is usually due to too much sunlight or the mixture drying out. Members were advised to use a good medium which will not collect water on top and avoid direct sunlight as the two most important points to observe if growing ferns from spore.
- Q. "My tree fern fronds are 'forking'. Why?"
- A. This was considered not to be unusual for the odd "crest" to be produced. However, if this problem was the rule rather than the exception, then probably something was having a nibble at the fern.
- Q. "I've tried to grow Boston Ferns outdoors without success. What should I do to avoid them dying?"
- A. Soil was considered to be the most important factor by one panellist. Organic soil should be used, not mountain soil. These ferns like light, aerated soil.

All Exaltata varieties are tropical; one panellist suggested that it is almost impossible to grow outdoors in Victoria, as they will not take cold conditions. But Cordifolia varieties will grow well in Victoria without artificial heat.

6.

.../Cont'd.

#### FERN FORUM (Cont'd.)

- "My Fandancer is going brown on the edges. Why?" Q.
- Again, as this is a tropical fern, excess light or being put too close A. to the glass will cause this problem. The Fandancer will tolerate drying out and a soak in water will restore the fern and bring back the colour.

The panel was asked to nominate their favourite ferns and reasons for their selection. ALBERT JENKINS selected the Necklace fern, primarily because at last, after 4 - 5 years, he's had some success in growing them. (He uses tree fern fibre as a medium with a little leaf mould and not too much water with HAROLD OLNEY grows a few of everything. not too much light.) ROD HILL nominated the New Zealand Black Tree Fern because of its grandeur and size (fronds up to thirty feet long). The Prince of Wales Plumes was CHRIS GOUDEY's selection (a real challenge to grow, needing humid conditions). KEITH HUTCHIN ON nominated the Button Fern and the New Zealand Black Tree Fern.

Their answers to Moderator Keith Stubbs' question was as diverse and as interesting as most answers to the floor members on their ferns and fern growing problems.

#### GLEN NAYOOK & TOORONGO FALLS EXCURSION ..... SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH

Members interested in joining this outing should meet at Glen Nayook (about 2 km due west of Neerim Junction) by 10.00 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Neerim Junction may be reached from either the Princes Highway (turning left a few kilometres past the 85 km post and just before the Robin Hood Motel, along the Mt. Baw Baw/Neerim Sth/Noojee road for about 28 km) or from the Warburton Highway (turning right at Yarra Junction, through Powelltown, and after the 11 km un-made section of road towards Noojee, continue 4 km along the bitumen before turning right onto the Drouin road to Neerim Junction)

At Glen Nayook, a fairly short track makes its way along the banks of a small stream through a very lush, sheltered fern gully.

After completing this valk, we will move to the better equipped picnic ground at Toorongo Falls for lunch (several kilometres past Noojee, after crossing the Toorongo River a signposted road veers to the left and follows the river valley some distance upstream to the car park and picnic area - possibly members unable to join the morning excursion may like to meet us here in the afternoon).

The circuit track here is somewhat longer and follows a fast-flowing, boulder-strewn river and features some quite spectacular waterfalls and cascades (as well as many ferns, of course). The track is inclined to be a little rough in places and sturdy footwear is recommended.

P.S. Don't forget to wear your F.S.V. nametags! And bring along a pencil and "Ferns of Victoria and Tasmania" if you have it.

#### NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

As promised at the December Forum, we've included a brief report on the November meeting. Our thanks to Bernie Coleman who transcribed the tape.

Chris Goudey ansered the Secretary's S.O.S. to be the Society's November speaker when the scheduled speaker was unavailable due to illness. Chris spoke about his recent Fiji trip and again provided some excellent slides.

There is only one fern native to Fiji - the Cycas rumphii which is a magnificent plant. Driving from Nadi to Suva, these are seen in abundance, as the drive is made through quite a bit of rain forest. It was obviously pleasing to Chris for him to see many ferns which are popular in Australia, including Cyathea decurreis.

"A lot of maiden hair ferns, which we cherish as exotic here, grow as weeds around Suva," Chris said. "Whole terraces and embankments around Suva are completely covered in Adiantum. The humidity is so high that even growing them in full sunlight does not affect them," he added.

The most common tree fern on the island is Cyathea lunalata and is quite similar to Cyathea cooperii.

Probably the main attraction of Fiji for Chris was the crepe fern - Leptopteris wilkisiana, which is an extremely common fern there. There is only one species of Leptopteris in Australia - the Leptopteris fraseri. Whilst botanists suggest that these two are the same fern, Chris believes that they are different.

It saddened Chris to see ferns treated almost as weeds in Fiji. An example he gave was where people cut down Cyathea lunalata, cut off the top and sell the fibrous butts. The locals buy them, invert them in their gardens and grow Davalia and orchids on them. "You see whole rows of them in gardens quite a shame" Chris lamented.

The Tree Maiden Hair Fern, Didymochlaena truneatula is quite common in Fiji, growing to about four feet high. There are a few of these around the trade in Australia. Unfortunately, in the wild, they do not form a good specimen as the old fronds usually get eaten and usually there are only one or two good fronds on a plant.

Chris also showed quite a few slides of ferns growing on Lord Howe Island and other locations.

#### \*\*\*\*\*



The world's first 100% organic liquid seaweed plant food.

Maxicrop is marketed in Australia by: R.A. BELL-BOOTH & CO. (Aust.) P/L

VICTORIA: 4/375 Bayswater Road, Bayswater, Vic. 3153. Phone: Melb. (03) 720 2200. P.O. Box 302, Bayswater Vic. 3153.

NEW SOUTH WALES 4th Floor, 309 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, Phone, (02) 235 8100.





VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE .....

The fern display at the Herbarium is now NEXT MONTH, so arrangements must be made very quickly to ensure that it is a great success.

To ensure that success, members who will be providing ferns are asked to contact Bill Taylor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to let him know the number of ferns and the types of ferns they will be providing.

Bill can be contacted at 63 3725 during working hours, and at 277 4310 after hours.

Ferns will be sorted into three major groups -

hothouse and glasshouse protected situations hardy and native ferns.

Bill is also most anxious to hear from those people who can come along on the Friday evening 26th March, to help with the all-important setting up, as well as from those who will be able to lend their assistance during the two days of the actual display - 27th and 28th March.

PLEASE GET CRACKING ON THIS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE - AND GIVE BILL A RING.

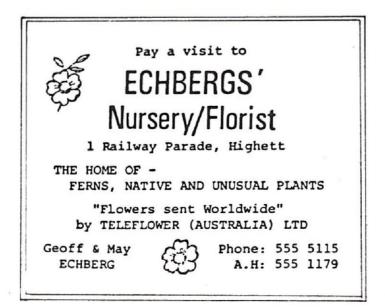
\*\*\*\*\*

# NORTH BALWYN FERNERY

91 DONCASTER ROAD, NORTH BALWYN

Ring Greg - 859 9330 9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m. Monday - Saturday

- \* LARGE RANGE OF NATIVE AND EXOTIC SPECIES
- ADVICE ON GROWING AND LANDSCAPING FERNERIES



9.

#### SPORE LIST : FEBRUARY, 1982

Listed below are <u>new</u> or <u>up-dated</u> species only. All species from the November list and most from the December, short-supply, list are still available.

Spore samples may be purchased at monthly meetings, or by sending a list of your requirements with 20¢ for each species, plus 40¢ for packaging and postage, to Mr. R. Hill, 41 Kareela Road, Frankston, Vic. 3199.

Payment for orders may be by postage stamps (24¢ stamps preferred where possible) or by cheque (payable to "Fern Society of Victoria")

Adiantum raddianum 'Scandens' (12-81)Pellaea paradoxa (12-81)Adiantum tenerum 'Victoriae' (12-81)Polystichum proliferum (1-82)Cyathea medullaris (0-80)Pteris umbrosa (1-82)Dennstaeoltia davallioides (12-81)Pteris vittata (1-82)Onoclea sensibilis (8-81)Rumohra adiantiformis (Native) (12-81)Ophioglossum lusitanicum coriaceum (12-81)Thelypteris spp. (Canada) (8-81)Ophioglossum pendulum (10-81)Todea barbara (1-82)

#### \*\*\*\*\*

#### Help!

During the past ten days at my nursery we have had many calls for assistance with sickly ferns and indoor plants which have been left in a neighbour's care. The neighbour, not wanting them to dry out during the hot weather, has simply drowned them with enormous amounts of tap water. If you have a similar problem, it is very important to act immediately.

Check the roots - if they have been overwatered most feeder roots will have rotted and be dark brown instead of light brown with lighter or even white tips. Trim off approximately one-third of the roots and a similar amount of foliage, re-pot in a fresh potting mix and water with Formula 20 twice a week, keeping in a humid atmosphere for a month.

To create humidity, fill a plastic bucket with spaghnum moss, push your fern down into it and keep the spaghnum moist, much the same as Albert Jenkins' double potting method.

If you are still unsure, take your fern down to your nurseryman, and ask his help. If he is a genuine lover of plants, he surely will happy to assist.

NOTE: TAPWATER HAS SMALL AMOUNTS OF CHLORINE AND FLUORIDE, ETC., WHICH BUILD UP TO DANGEROUS LEVELS OVER A PERIOD. SO IT IS VERY BENEFICIAL TO FLUSH YOUR POTS OUT WITH RAINWATER OCCASIONALLY.

Keith Hutchinson

-

10.



THE PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE AND THOSE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES APPEARED IN THE PAKENHAM GAZETTE, IN THE WEDNESDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER, 1981 ISSUE.

They accompanied an article about Fern Society member Dorothy Forte and her husband, and we thought excerpts from the article would be of great interest to members.

..." An enormous maidenhair fern measuring 12 feet around the circumference is the pride and joy of Dorothy Forte of Garfield North.

Dorothy grew the fern from spore six years ago and apart from repotting into fresh potting mix each year, the giant has received no special attention.

Of course it has had plenty of loving care and admiration and if "talking to the plants" really does make them grow, then that has probably contributed to its gigantic size.

... Article continued next page

## (Cont'd. from previous page)

Dorothy is unsure of the fern's exact variety, but says it belongs to the Raddiannum family.

The fern has recently been potted into a black plastic pot with a two foot diameter but this is completely hidden by the lush growth of lacy green fronds that hang gently all around.

The giant is housed in an igloo behind Dorothy's home in Garfield North Road and its huge bulk leaves very little room in the igloo for anything else.

The maidenhair is just one of thousands growing in a cluster of greenhouses near the small farmhouse belong to Dorothy and her husband, Ian.

Dorothy is quite an expert on ferns and their complicated botanical names fall easily from her tongue as she identifies each much loved variety.

The fern growing has mushroomed from a small hobby to an allconsuming spare time operation still a hobby but a very demanding one.

Dorothy says she always loved growing things, a trait she inherited from her mother, Mrs. Eva Rouse who tended a large and beautiful garden and encouraged her daughter's interest.

Dorothy always grew a few ferns on the back verandah of her home, then a significant finding in the bush by her son Alan 10 years ago led directly to the escalation of her fern growing activities.

Two hundred acres of the Forte's 400 acre property are in a special conservation area of natural forest. Ian says the forest stretches almost unbroken from behind their home up into the hills and mountains of New South Wales.



... Cont'd.

#### (Cont'd. from previous page)

Young Alan Forte loved the bush country and on one of his rambles, found a rare Butterfly Orchid growing on musk and prickly currant trees.

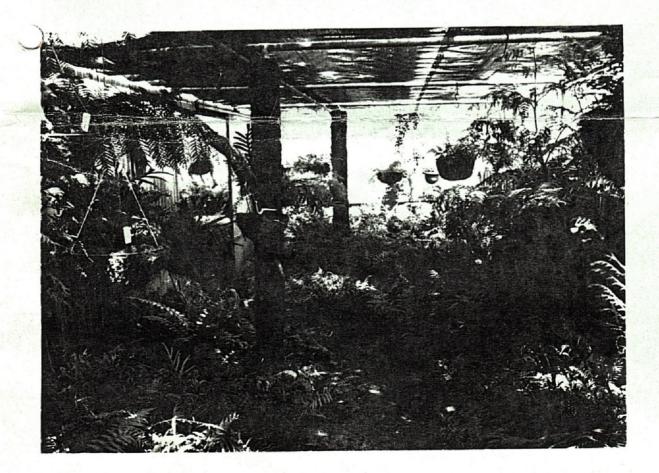
His discovery excited the interest of the Field Naturalists and really put the family in the public eye. The Warragul Field Naturalists Society came as a group to inspect the orchid and were at the same time highly enthused by the variety of ferns growing in the bush. In all, they identified 36 different varieties on the property.

This visit heightened Dorothy's interest in ferns. She collected the spore from plants on their land, read books on their cultivation and grew them very successfully. Very soon the back verandah overflowed and a small greenhouse was built. That too was soon filled to capacity and so the igloo was constructed. As the plants continued to multiply, the original greenhouse was extended three times then two years ago, a larger greenhouse measuring 20 ft x 40 ft. was erected.

Dorothy says this was to be the 'be all and end all', but it is now full of beautiful ferns and the overflow plants are grouped around in any suitable shady spot.

Her collection of ferns now boasts 350 different varieties and the majority of these have been grown from spore. Several she inherited from Ian's family, and she estimates that they would be at least 70 years old. Of course over the years, they have been divided up but the original parent plants date back to early this century.

(Space permitting, more of this article will appear next month)



An Index to Volume 3 of the Fern Society of Victoria's Newsletter.

DATES FOR YOUR	DIARY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
FEBRUARY 11TH	TISSUE CULTURE OF FERNS by Russ Hall, Burnley College
MARCH 11TH	NORTHERN QUEENSLAND FERNS by David L. Jones, Author
APRIL	FERN PESTS by Philip Hicks, Garden Advisory Centre
МАҮ 13ТН	FERNS OF THE OTWAYS by Trevor Prescott, Botanist
JUNE 11TH	THE FAMILY POLYPODIUM by Chris Goudey

PREPARED AND PRINTED FOR THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA BY



# JUDY BIELICKI'S EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Box 106, Ivanhoe, Victoria 3079

First Floor 153 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe, Victoria 3079

Telephone 497 1913 492937