



THE FERN
SOCIETY OF
VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3 MAY, 1982

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the time of writing my message we are busy making final preparations for a two week holiday in Tasmania. As well as visiting the many tourist attractions in that state we plan to visit a few fern friends, and in particular Michael Garret, who is the President of the Tasmanian Fern Society, of which I am a member.

We are looking forward to spending quite some time exploring the fern flora of Tasmania with Michael and hopefully seeing some of their endemic species. There are quite a number of ferns in Tasmania that do not occur in Victoria.

It is good to see some of our members getting publicity in the newspapers. Dorothy and Ian Forte received quite a write-up in the Pakenham Gazette in November of last year, and Albert Jenkins received publicity in the Diamond Valley News on March 16th, "Watsonia's Tropical Rain Forest" was the title of the article. Anne Bryant wrote a comprehensive article on the cultivation of ferns which was published in the Williamstown Advertiser and the Western Times. And last of all we expect to have an article on ferns published in "Your Garden" in either May or June.

In my September 1981 message I wrote about the development of a walk through the Fern Glade at the Geelong Botanic Gardens. The area chosen has been excavated with mounds, walking

tracks, a water course and a large pool. The area is ready for planting, and will commence this month with the planting of dozens of large tree ferns. The smaller shade-loving ferns will be planted once the tree ferns put up a canopy. The Fern Glade will be well worth a visit in a year or two once the plants have established and made growth.

Mary Frost from the Wangaratta Garden Club has asked me to invite not only members but all people interested in ferns to attend the June meeting which will be held at The Centre, Chisholm Street, Wangaratta at 8.00 pm on Friday 4th June. All visitors welcome. I have accepted an invitation to be the Guest Speaker at this meeting.

The response to the Specimen Table at the last meeting was good, but more plants are needed, so bring along any ferns at all, i.e. your favourites, any you want identified, or perhaps anything unusual, or any problem plants.

Due to lack of response, the Fern Society of South Australia's proposed excursion to Binna Burra, Lamington National Park has been cancelled.

A typographical error was made in the book list in the April Newsletter. The authors of the book "Exotic Ferns in Australia" should read Jones and Goudey, not Jones and Clemesha.

THE SECOND ANNUAL FERN SHOW

"A GREAT SUCCESS"

Well, our Second Annual Show was a roaring success, with an amazing array of magnificent specimens grown to perfection by their owners - rare, exotic, tropical and some of the more common varieties.

These were displayed to allow members and general public to admire and appreciate what can be done with a lot of T.L.C. and dedication.

Some of the exhibits could not be bettered, such as the enormous *Drynalia Whightii*, of Chris Goudey, the beautiful tropical Maiden Hairs of Harold Olney, and the vast range of varieties of *Davallia* type exhibits by Richard Hartland, to name a few - but not forgetting all the other exhibits brought in by other members to make our Show world class.

There were 1,700 people, not counting children, who came to admire and seek information about ferns and our Society, which was very rewarding to those who spent a lot of time and effort organising.

Many thanks to those who brought in their prized possessions to make the show the great success it was, because without them this would not have been possible. Also, many thanks to those who brought plants for our sales, to make our new sales area something to be proud of and to allow the Society to make some well-needed cash which we can now put to good use for all members.

Special thanks must go to those who gave their time setting up and demolishing our show - not as easy as it looks! Thanks, Bert Boothman and Cath Brown, who gave us three full days and nights doing what they saw was needed. Barry and Gay Stagoll and family - special thanks for assistance and signs. Also thanks are due to Reg Seibel, B. & B. Coleman, Bernadette and our Treasurer, Jean Trudgeon (Money-bags), Bernice and Keith.

Not to be outdone in their own way - Rod and Lyn Hill and family, whose spore table was one of the big attractions, judging from the number of people continually gathered around their table.

Also not to be forgotten are the quiet ones, Rita and Harold Olney, who assisted every way in more ways than one, always a pleasant smile and witty words.

Chris and Lorraine, with their book sales, and Chris' demonstration were of great interest to the large number of people hungry for information on how and what to do with ferns.

Also not to be forgotten are those other committee members and members who helped throughout to make our Show such a success.

A special thank-you to my wife, Joan, who put in three very hard days work and has had to put up with me for the last month during preparation for the Show.

THE SECOND ANNUAL FERN SHOW (Con'td.)

Appreciation is due to Rite Lite Glasshouses, for not only lending us a glasshouse, but also for erecting it and removal.

Thanks to Mrs. Gardiner for a loan of a tent - and also to my partner for holding the fort in my absence, as well as helping with setting up and demolishing.

The Second Annual Fern Show was a great success - so think about next year. You may have some ideas, or you may like to be part of it. Think on it, and help to make the Third Annual Fern Show a bigger and better show.

Till next year ...

BILL TAYLOR

GETTING RID OF PESTS (INSECT TYPES!)

Fern Society members at the April meeting were told that modern pest control falls into three categories.

Philip Hicks of the Garden Advisory Service gave a professional and humorous presentation on pest control to a surprisingly large audience considering that it was Easter Eve.

Mr. Hicks' early background was at Burnley where he spent 11 years as an insect specialist before joining the Garden Advisory Service three years ago.

Slides of various types of insects took up the first part of Mr. Hicks' talk. He outlined how insects are structured very similarly to humans, having eyes, limbs, nervous systems and organs. "Before you hit them on the head with insecticides or whatever you use," Mr. Hicks said, "you should realise that they are similar to ourselves and perhaps there are some you should learn to live with." He added that in some cases even though you think pests are causing lots of trouble, in fact they may be doing some good in your garden or fernery.

It was pointed out that most of the problems that we have with insects involving native plants are problems that the plants will tolerate. It is only when they get out of balance that problems start.

To assist members in controlling their pest problem, Mr. Hicks told us about a publication which should be available in May, called "What Pest is That?" It will cost about \$11.00 and covers diseases as well as insects. It is published by BAY and is the first comprehensive book on insects published in Australia. (The Society intends adding it to its book sales section).

The three types of pest control practised are:

Chemical control
Biological control
Integrated control

Mr. Hicks said that there are many areas where you should not take control measures. Even when you do act, there are a number of choices available.

The older generation will probably look to chemicals first of all. However, the meeting was reminded that use of chemicals can be dangerous both for the plants and the grower unless strict precautions are taken.

An excellent way of using chemicals is by feeding them to plants in granular form. In this way, chemicals are absorbed through the root system throughout the plant - an excellent way of treating soft and tender plants to avoid burning the foliage.

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GETTING RID OF PESTS (Cont'd.)

However, care should be taken when repotting plants when granular chemicals are used as the body will absorb the poison if, for instance, they are handled with wet hands. There have been some instances when repotting ferns, even months after applying granular chemicals, has caused poisoning because the grower has not used gloves. "At all times, gloves should be used when potting ferns; this is particularly so when repotting ferns purchased from nurseries as you don't know if, in fact, granular chemicals have been used," Mr. Hicks said.

Toxicity levels of various insecticides vary and Mr. Hicks rated the various chemicals on the market. It was surprising to see some of the popular items used by most fern growers being quite toxic and lent weight to Mr. Hicks' cautions about taking care when handling chemicals. Use chemicals sparingly.

Some of the biological control aspects were discussed. He told the meeting about predatory spotted mites which are now available. These mites cost about \$10 per thousand and when let loose in the gardens and ferneries are active for a couple of years and work extremely well in controlling certain pests. (House & Garden advertise each month where these may be obtained).

A good example of biological control was shown on the Norfolk Island Pine. A slide was shown of a pine which was starting to brown-off after being attacked by mealie bug; this pest was starting to become visible. Lady Bird beetles feed on mealie bug and soon get this pest under control. However, spraying with chemicals on a large tree like this would be a waste of time and would only damage the environment.

Bacteria spray will work well on ferns. There is one on the market for instance for caterpillars which breeds over the insects' bodies and kills them off. This type of control is perfectly safe for humans.

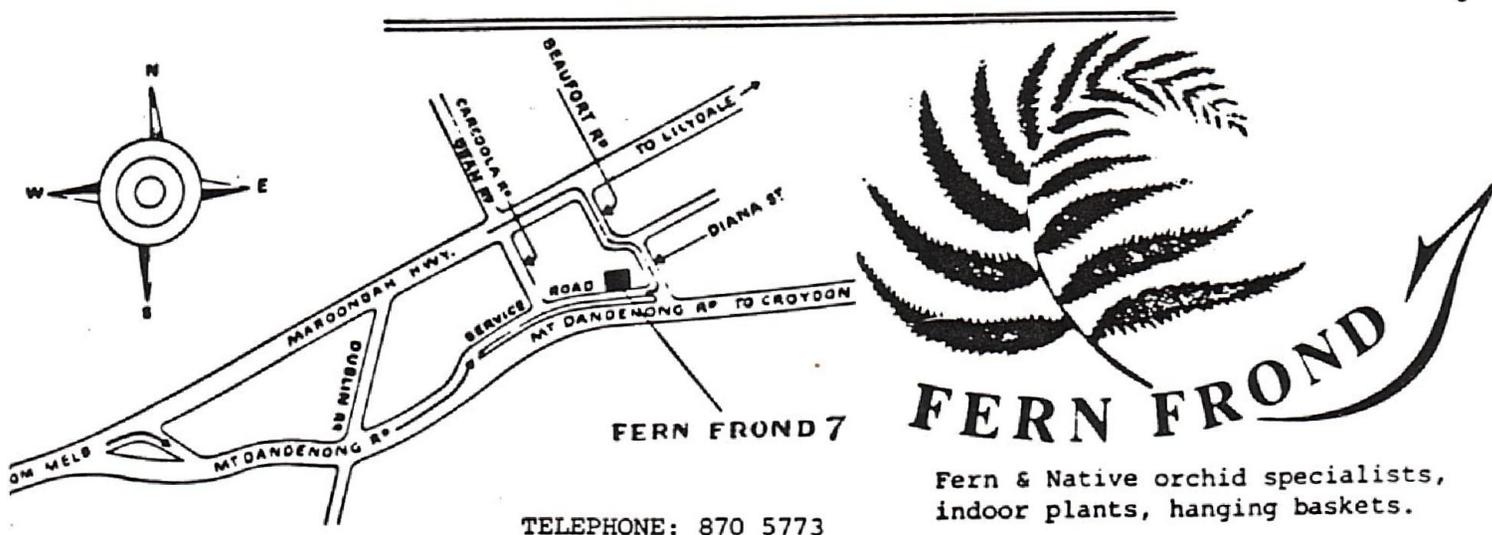
Garlic control? "If you believe it works, then use it," Mr. Hicks said. "It won't cause any harm to the plant or the environment - and probably won't cause any harm to the insect! If garlic works, it is probably because paraffin is used on the mixture - and paraffin is a well known insecticide used since the year dot," he added.

Have you tried the "beer technique"? This is a good way of controlling pests. Put a cork in the bottom of a funnel, fill it with beer and make the lip level with the soil. Insects will sip, get drunk and can't find their way home. (No, Mr. Hicks did not propose .05 laws for slugs and snails!)

The third system used is integrated control. This is a combination of chemicals and parasites and predators and this is the latest technique used by commercial growers and orchardists.

Integrated control is also used to ascertain how many insects there are in an area. This determines when to spray, thus reducing the number of times that spraying is carried out, i.e. spray only when insects are about.

During his talk, Philip Hicks showed numerous slides of insects and treatments available. It opened up to us another world.



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TREASURER'S REPORT

After a very successful and lovely Fern Show, the Society has enrolled 45 new members and at the time of printing the May Newsletter, the Credit Ratings are: \$2,000 on Fixed Deposit, as well as \$3,686 in the cheque account.

JEAN TRUDGEON

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE APRIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A letter has been written to the British High Commission in Canberra supporting the call from the British Pteridological Society which is seeking public recognition for Jim Dyce, who has recently retired as President of the Society. During his lifetime of service to the Society, he was awarded the Stanfield medal in recognition of his service.

The Secretary relayed complaints from several members that they were no longer bringing ferns for sale at the monthly meetings due to being swamped by bigger growers and the Executive Committee resolved that ferns for sale at the monthly meetings should have a maximum value of \$150 retail price per member.

The Committee also resolved that the Fern Society of Victoria produce a Fern Year Book and that this be issued in 1983. David Jones has been approached to edit the journal and has accepted the task. The book will contain colour plates and will be on sale through the various societies and book shops.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following people, who joined the ranks of Fern Society of Victoria members during the past month.

Nikolas Baker, 6 Derby Street, Kew, Vic. 3101
 Mrs. Marie Beattie, 28 Clyde Street, Ferntree Gully, Vic. 3156
 Ms. L. English, 105 Deakin Street, East Bentleigh, 3165
 Lia Bronstijn, 3/17 Wolseley Street, Mont Albert, Vic. 3127
 Mrs. Bev Caithness, C/- 85 Victoria Street, Williamstown, Vic., 3016
 Ian Crilly, 54 Market Street, Cohuna, Vic. 3568
 Laurie & Meryl Davis, 42 Haley's Gully Road, Hurstbridge, Vic. 3099
 Marc Denefeld, 495 Station Street, Box Hill, Vic. 3128
 Mrs. Cheryl Evans, 2 Buchanan Avenue, North Balwyn, Vic. 3104
 Ms. Viviane Farley, 35 Brandon Park Drive, Brandon Park, Vic. 3170
 Ms. Linda Fletcher, 102 Watton Street, Werribee, Vic. 3030
 Mr. John J. Flint, 25 Oak Avenue, Doveton, Vic. 3177
 Dawn, Bill & Michelle Freeman, Anzac Avenue, Koroit, Vic. 3282
 Kevin Hannan, 23 Downs Street, Pascoe Vale, Vic. 3044
 Mrs. I. Harris, 18 Charles Street, Mooroolbark, Vic. 3138
 O. & H. Heydeman, 22 Urquhart Street, Hawthorn, Vic. 3122
 K.G. & B. Hill, 26 Raymond Street, Ashwood, Vic. 3147
 William John Hinds, 13 Wrixon Avenue, East Brighton, Vic. 3187
 William J. Hoggett, 28 Fewster Road, Hampton, Vic. 3188
 Ms. Sally M. Hosgood, Leslie Manor Rsd., Camperdown, Vic. 3260
 Alan & Roby Jones, 63 Albert Street, Mt. Waverley, Vic. 3149
 Ms. Heather King, 13 Whitehorse Road, Blackburn, Vic. 3130
 D. M. Keseff, 30 Menarra Street, Doncaster, Vic. 3108
 W & A Latimer, C/o 45 Lavender Park Road, Eltham, Vic. 3095
 Mrs. Eurice MacPherson, Braxholme, Vic. 3302
 Mr. Peter Manuel, 70 Holyrood Street, Hampton, Vic. 3188
 Mr. Peter H. Matthews, 20 Steele Street, South Caulfield, Vic. 3162
 Melton Garden Club, C/o 72 O'Neills Road, Melton, Vic. 3337
 Mr. & Mrs. C.J. Morgan, 31 Robern Parade, View Bank, Vic. 3084
 Ms. Sue Pearce, 11 Davanzo Street, Clarinda, Vic. 3169
 Mrs. Doreen Price, Braxholme, Vic. 3302
 Mrs. T.D. Robyns, 19 Marie Street, Boronia, Vic. 3155
 Mrs. M.A. Smith, 93 Dover Road, Williamstown, Vic. 3016
 Mr. Ron Sorens, 25 Wellington Parade, Williamstown, Vic. 3016
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Tame, 77 Hallifax Street, Seaford, Vic. 3198
 Ms. Judy Tinker, 672 Canterbury Road, Vermont, Vic. 3133
 Mrs. L. Ward, 6 Bowes Street, Frankston, Vic. 3199
 Ms. Patricia Webb, 3/33 Medway Street, Box Hill, Vic. 3128
 Mr. & Mrs. S. Wherrett, Lot 12 Arundel Road, Keilor, Vic 3036
 Mrs. Roseanne White, The Fern Spot, Princess Highway, Longwarry North, Vic. 3818
 Vudi Zaralli, 64 Webster Street, Alexandra, Vic. 3714
 R.J. Pattison, 12 Bundarra Avenue, Wahroonga, N.S.W. 2076
 Mrs. G. Ratcliffe, 549 Kalimna Crescent, Lavington, N.S.W. 2640
 Mrs. Jean Reed, 1 Baker Avenue, Plympton, S.A. 5038
 Mrs. Betty Weaver, 15 Norman Street, St. Marys, S.A. 5042
 Mrs. P.A. Bloesch, Lot 14 Forest Hills Drive, Morayfield,
 C/- Caboolture P.O., Qld. 4510

V.I.P.s AT 1982 FERN SHOW

During the Saturday afternoon of the Fern Society's Show, the President and Secretary received a delegation from the People's Republic of China, escorted by Dr. Churchill of the Herbarium.

The delegation leader, His Excellency Jin Xun, who is Vice Governor of the Province, attended the Fern Show together with three delegates.

The President presented the delegation with many types of spore from the Society's spore bank. The fern spore given to the delegation were all types which should survive the climate of the Province, which is situated in the Shanghai region.

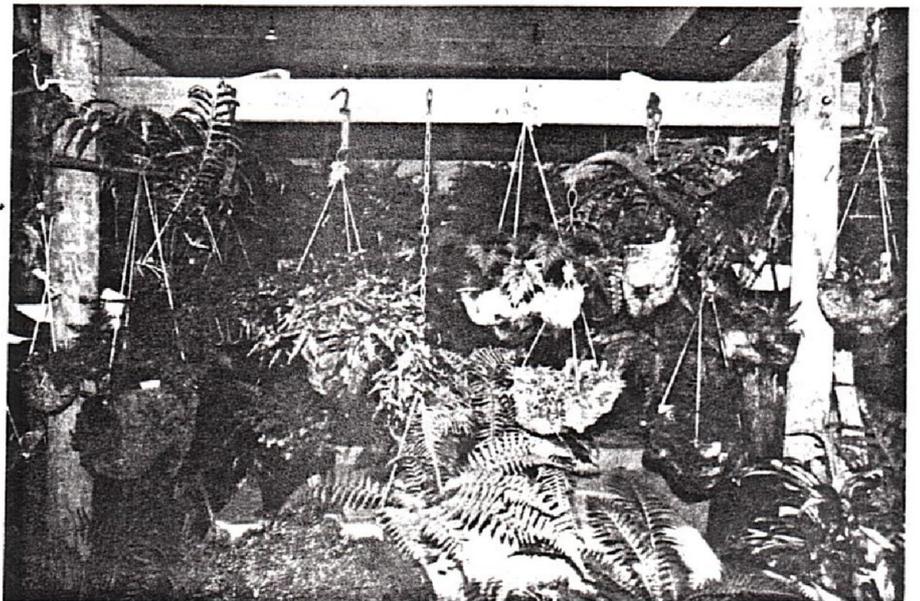
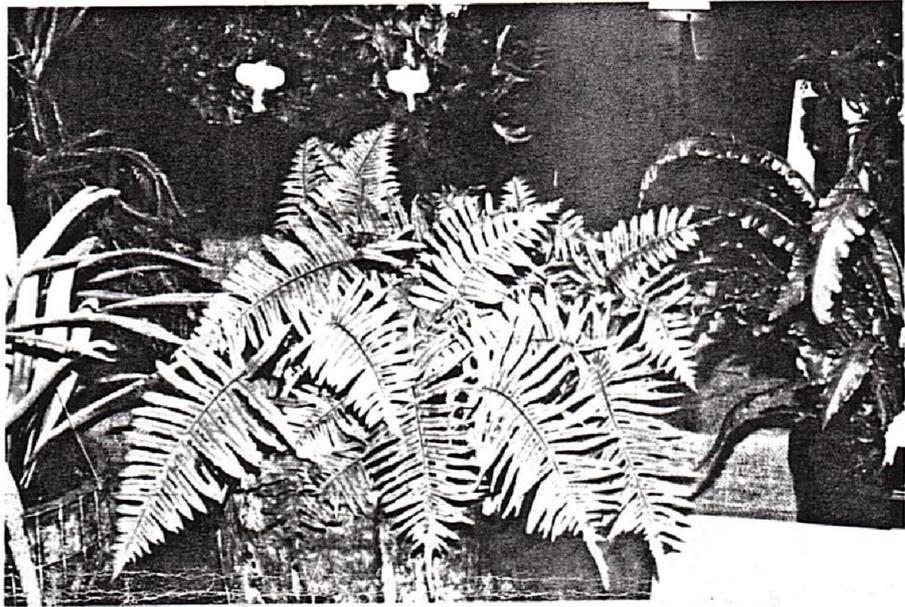


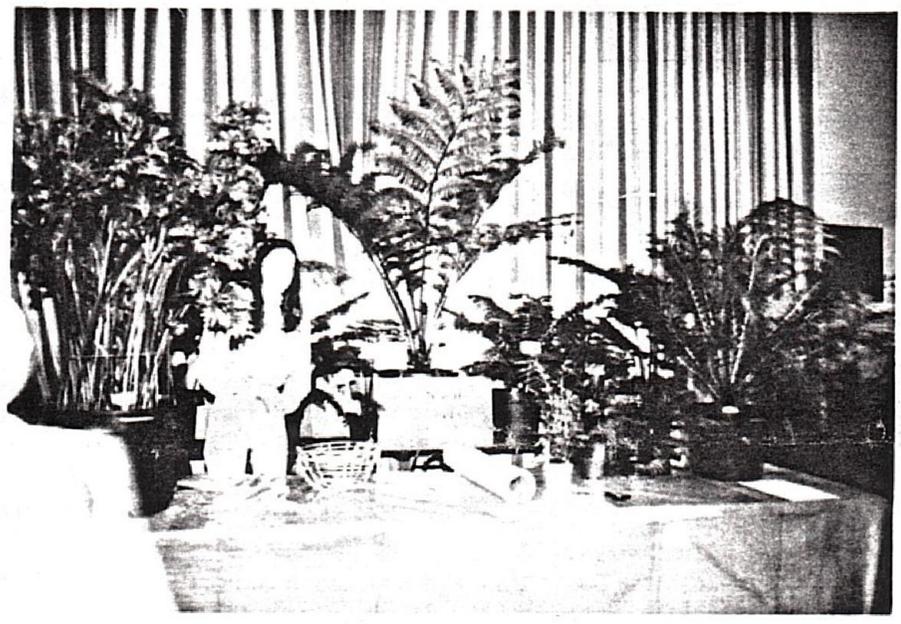
BUS LOADS VISIT 1982 FERN SHOW

51 fern lovers from Ballarat visited the Fern Show when it opened at 10 a.m. on the Saturday.

Bus loads also visited the Fern Show from Wangaratta, Benalla and the Shepparton bus had 40 fern lovers on board.

Other visitors included two car loads from Traralgon and visitors from Germany, Sydney and North Queensland.





CONGRATULATIONS, BILL TAYLOR

The Executive Committee at its May meeting passed a vote of thanks to Bill Taylor for his outstanding effort in organising the 1982 Fern Show. The motion was carried by acclamation.

Those who saw Bill and his team in operation on the Friday setting up their display and on the two days of the Show were quite impressed with the professionalism of how the evening progressed.

Bill told the Executive Committee that he was disappointed that some members, who indicated that they would give assistance over the weekend, were not able to participate. To overcome this for the 1983 show, a sub-committee has already been formed under Bill Taylor's chairmanship and consists of his wife, Joan, Mr. & Mrs. Bernie Coleman and Mr. & Mrs. Barry Stagoll. Other members are welcome to participate on the sub-committee.

***** ***** *****

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Sydney, NSW 2000. Phone: (02) 235 8100.



NEWS FROM THE SPORE BANKRod Hill

Members who have purchased spore of the following from the spore bank please note the corrections to their names below:-

Amphineuron opulentum was incorrectly identified and should be

A. terminans

Polystichum aculeatum: batches of ferns bearing this label have been released from time to time, but seem to bear little resemblance to the European P. aculeatum (which is not readily available). They appear to be very close to the native P. australiense and I have listed this in future spore lists simply as Polystichum sp. Polystichum standishii seems not to be more frequently referred to as

Arachniodes standishii

Could your business benefit from an advertisement placed in the Fern Society Newsletter?

Full page	\$30.00
Half page	\$17.50
Quarter page	\$10.00
Eighth of page	\$ 5.00

If you would like to discuss an advertisement, just give the Editor a call - he'll be happy to help you.



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RAIN FOREST FERNS

(Further highlights from David Jones' February talk)

The Northern Queensland tropical forests look like anything but rain forest in much of Queensland's tropical belt.

There are vast open spaces where Eucalypts abound and sandy soil which tends to become boggy in the wet season. In the "wet" grass is abundant and fires in the area produce magic growth. In these climatic conditions, one would expect ferns to be wiped out but this is not the case.

It was interesting to hear that the Jardine River empties about as much water as the Murray River but is only one third the length. Creeks dry out completely in the dry season.

The contrasts between wet and dry are startling. When showing one slide of the forest area denuded of foliage in the dry, David Jones commented, "Believe it or not, that is a rain forest. Sixty percent of the plants and trees leaves had been shed and the ferns look very dry.

"There are ferns growing in that area but most of them are deciduous."

Wild life is taking its toll on Australia's largest size fern, *Angiopteris Erecta*. Wild pigs find it so tasty that they bite through the roots, tip over the fern and eat out the trunk.

There are four species of platyceriums in Australia which David showed growing in their various habitat. A lesser known species, *Platycerium Hilli* grows in rain forests and on trees and rocks. He showed us how this transforms from robust healthy-looking plants in the "wet" to papery objects which lose their consistency in the dry. However, with the onset of rain, they build up again.

Various types of tassel ferns were shown. These ferns grow from sea level up to 1000 feet on trees or rocks. David showed one Johnson River hardwood tree which had 60-80 common tassel ferns on it, with tassels up to five feet in length.

Rats-tail tassel ferns grow at high altitudes in Northern Queensland. These plants thrive in high altitudes.

One of the most sought after ferns is the blue tassel fern. It's a long slender plant which commands up to \$1,000 per fern for large specimens. These ferns are very difficult to grow. David estimates that 90% of those taken from their natural habitat do not survive because growers cannot duplicate the rain forest conditions. The only successful grower David has seen is in Babinda, Northern Queensland, where over 200 inches of rain falls each year. So David concludes that the ferns should be left in the wild.

Next month: Swampy ferns.

C.S.I.R.O. SCIENTISTS SINK SALVINIA

Salvinia molesta is a floating fern introduced to Australia from Brazil.

It has proved to be a serious weed in tropical and subtropical rivers and lakes. This is due to its extremely rapid growth rate - its weight can double in 2 days, and to the absence of parasites and diseases in Australia.

In Australia the worst infestation was on Lake Moondarra near Mt. Isa. In 1978 it was estimated that some 50,000 tonnes of salvinia covered 400 hectares. Attempts to use herbicides were abandoned in 1979 after spending \$15,000.

Searching for a new method of control, C.S.I.R.O. scientists introduced from Brazil a black long snouted weevil about 2mm long and called *Cyrtobagous singularis*. This weevil feeds on the salvinia buds.

On 3rd June, 1980, 1,500 beetles were released into an inlet in Lake Moondarra. A further 1,500 were introduced in January 1981. A storm in February swept the beetle infested salvinia from the inlet out into the main body of the lake.

In March salvinia throughout the lake started to turn brown and sink. By April all the salvinia was dark brown. By August it was estimated that there was less than one tonne of salvinia left in the lake.

Previous attempts in Africa and Fiji to control salvinia with this beetle were failures. The Australian success is suggested to be due to collecting a variety of the beetle particularly adapted to *Salvinia molesta*. Previous collections of the beetle had been made from *Salvinia auriculata*.

The Australian success may lead to revived efforts at biological control in other countries. *Salvinia* is a serious problem in Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS:

This space is available for you.

Any articles, cartoons, jokes, comments (complimentary or otherwise) will be most welcome.

Don't forget - this is YOUR newsletter!

SPEAKER PROGRAMME

MAY 13TH	Trevor Prescott "Fern Gullies in the Otways"
JUNE 11TH	Chris Goudey "Specialised Family"
JULY 8TH	Dr. John French - C.S.I.R.O. "Does Forestry Management Protect Flora Habitat"
AUGUST 12TH	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & DEMONSTRATION NIGHT
SEPTEMBER 9TH	Rod Hill "Tree Ferns"

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

VENUE OF MEETINGS: Burnley Horticultural School Hall,
Burnley

TIME OF MEETINGS: 8 p.m.

PREPARED AND PRINTED
FOR THE FERN SOCIETY
OF VICTORIA BY



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