

#### OFFICE-BEARERS

PRESIDENT: Doug Thomas, 17 Knaith Road, Ringwood East, 3135 Tel. 870 7229 VICE-PRESIDENTS: Albert Jenkins, 11 Morwell Avenue, Watsonia, 3087 Tel. 435 3863 Bill Taylor, 1 Princetown Road, Mt. Waverley, 3149 Tel. 277 4310 TREASURER: Jean Trudgeon, 13 Eden Street, West Heidelberg, 3084 Tel. 459 4859 SECRETARY: Keith Stubbs, 14 Afton Street, Essendon, 3040 Tel. 337 8284 EDITOR: Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove, Rosanna, 3084 Tel. 45 2997 SPORE BANK MANAGER: Rod Hill, 41 Kareela Road, Frankston, 3199 BOOK SALES: Lorraine Goudey, Lot 8, Cozens Road, Lara, 3212 Tel. (052) 82 2154 LIBRARIAN: Bernadette Blackstock, 65 Hobson Street, Newport, 3015 Tel. 391 5517 PUBLICITY OFFICER: Geoff Echberg, 1 Railway Parade, Highett, 3190 Tel. 555 5155

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

#### Dear Member,

Were you there? If you were not, then I must try to tell you something about our April General Meeting. The meeting hall was packed with over two hundred fern lovers present. They had come from far and wide to see and hear our interstate Guest Speaker, Mr. Ray Best, who delivered an exhilerating address titled "An Introduction to Ferns". Ray was delighted to have had the opportunity to speak to such a large audience; in fact he confided to me that it was the largest he had ever addressed.

A couple of points from the talk interested me greatly. To show us how the reproductive process operates in ferns, Ray constructed large scale models of the prothalli, the archegonium cushion (female cells), the antheridium (male cells) and even the fertilizing sperms. He had taken photographs of the models and these were clearly presented to us on the hall screen. I was further fascinated when Ray stated that almost the entire modern world depended on ferns for provision of energy and home heating. He pointed out that fossilised ferns form the bulk of the material laid down in coal deposits the world over.

And so it went on; the talk was informative, lucid and great entertainment. Our Secretary, Keith Stubbs, deserves our thanks for his enterprise in negotiating the arrangements which brought Ray to our meeting. The Annual Fern Show: The Society's Fern Show, March 26th-27th, was an outstanding success in every way. In every area of activity, a greater degree of success was achieved. In total, this amounted to a healthy increase in the Society's treasury. The Show Sub-Committee members, their leader, Bill Taylor, and all members who contributed their ferns and their time are worthy of our highest praise and sincerest thanks.

Lawn Mower Raffled: Ray Best drew the winning tickets for the big raffle organized by the Show Sub-Committee. The result was:

- Mr. E. Morow of Bulleen

   Victa Mower
- Mr. M. Lilley of St. Kilda
   10 Litre Maxicrop
- Mr. Alexander of West Meadows

   Large Fern.

Congratulations to all three.

<u>Next Meeting</u>: Demonstrations of basic fern management and a display <sup>6</sup> of equipment and gadgets are planned for the General Meeting, 12th May, 1983.

Members are urged to bring to this meeting any "special aids" which help them in the management of their ferns. This is to be a sharing night; please come prepared to exchange ideas, to assimilate basic knowledge, to mingle and to chat. AN INTERESTING EVENING IS ASSURED AT OUR BEGINNERS AND GADGET NIGHT - THURSDAY MAY 12TH. (THE EVENINGS MAY BE GETTING COOL AS AUTUMN PROGRESSES, BUT YOU'LL RECEIVE A WARM WELCOME AT THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA'S MEETING!)

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# Establishing an Outdoor Fern Garden (Continued from April 1983 issue)

#### 8. INSECT PESTS:

The fern garden is by no means immune from the ravages of insect pests. To deal with them it should be realized that ferns have little resistance to strong chemicals and can be damaged by the application of full strength commercial sprays. When in doubt we opt for half strength sprays, preferring to follow-up with subsequent sprayings at nine or ten day intervals. Snails, Slugs and Slaters: When left unchecked, snails and slugs will take the new growth of a fern unerringly. Baysol snail bait pellets have been effective.

Leaf Eating Caterpillars: Because of effective camouflage colouring, their presence is seldom noticed until the best fronds are damaged. Control with half strength Carbryl.

(To be continued)

with kindest regards Doug Thomas

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### TREASURER'S REPORT

Highlights of the March Fern Show

Door Takings Plant Sales Spore Sales	\$1,270.00 \$1,681.70 \$405.00
March - April 22	\$500.00
Pasta Sales	\$60.00
Book Sales	\$359.46
Lawn Mower Raffle	\$4,276.16 \$700.46
	\$4,976.56
	JEAN TRUDGEON

Hon. Treasurer

P.O. Box No. 45, HEIDELBERG WEST 3081

### FERN GROWING - the "BEST" way

Noted author and fern authority, Ray Best from Sydney, was the Society's guest speaker in April.

Over 200 members and friends attended the meeting. Ray was brought to Melbourne as 1983's interstate guest speaker.

Ray Best has had a long association with the Fern Society of Victoria. He designed and drew the Society's emblem.

The audience was not disappointed with Ray's presentation which included photos of special models to demonstrate propagating techniques of different varieties. He also used macro-photography to show the various stages of growing from spore and the interesting and varied spore patterns which different varieties exhibit.

As is often the case with talks that use slides extensively, it is not easy to report the commentary without the accompanying slides. Ray Best's talk falls into this category. Those who attended, though, will vividly recall the magnificent photography and the amazing wealth of knowledge which he imparted during the commentary.

Many years ago, Ray planted out tall growing gum and other native trees on his five acre property to provide a protective canopy for a fern gully which he has created since. The result is spectacular and demonstrates the thoughtfulness which must be exhibited if ferns are to be grown successfully. The fern gully was the envy of all those who attended.

Several helpful hints were given to the audience. One, particularly, dealt with growing platyceriums from spore. Ray transfers the sporlings onto plastic mesh which is cut easily by scissors and easily fixed to the plastic with green tie wire. When the ferns have reached the desired size, he simply cuts the plastic and transfers the ferns to the desired location.

Another helpful pointer given is how to deal with thrip. Whilst systemic sprays are used in most cases to control this pests, they may be dangerous, particularly to the user. Ray prefers to use a soap solution regularly which he considers to be much safer.

Once again the Society was fortunate to hear an excellent talk from a member who has become respected for his willingness to impart his extensive knowledge on fern growing to others.

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IN OUR NEXT ISSUE ..... More from an article from Chris Goudey -"A SELECTION OF ASPLENIUMS CULTIVATED IN AUSTRALIA"

### 3rd Annual Fern Show A GREAT SUCCESS

Well, Members, congratulations for the support and assistance you gave to your Sub-Committee towards making our show such a great success, as the show's very existence is dependent upon your help.

The fern display was again a great success, together with the landscaping of the stage area with Victorian native ferns in their natural habitat. Again there were many varieties from a wide range of families, some of them quite difficult to establish, let alone keep growing to such a standard as were a large number of the exhibits.

Our sales areas outside was again very popular, as was seen by the results, the same being for Rod Hill's spore sales. An amazing effort (no wonder our T.V. star is going on holidays). Book sales were remarkable (sold out), the same goes to the tireless task at the front door.

We doubled everything from the previous year - the number of people attending the show, the amount of spore sold, books and plants that were sold. Quite a mean effort.

So congratulations and thanks to the Sub-Committee and all of those members and non-members who came along and helped with the setting up, general running and dismantling.

Thanks must also go to those members who brought along their prized possessions and lent them, so that we could make such a successful exhibition.

Next year we would like more of our members to bring along a fern or ferns to make an even better display. This will make things easier for your Sub-Committee, so start planning now to become part of your show by making our next effort on even bigger and better show.

Thanks must also go to Aztec Glasshouses for their loan of six glasshouses.

BILL TAYLOR Chairman Fern Show Sub-Committee

### DAVALLIA DIVARACATA

Davallia divaracata is a tropical highland species distributed from Malaysia to Southern China. This haresfoot is found between 2,000 and 5,000 feet altitude in primitive temperature. It is quite common on the Main Ridge of Peninsular Malaysia growing on tree stumps and rotting logs, usually in well lit situations.

It is rather an attractive plant baring numerous fronds. The young fronds range in colour from pink to maroon depending on light. The rhizome is approximately lcm thick covered with chocolate brown hairs bearing fronds a couple of centimetres apart. It can grow rather large in its natural habitat; fronds (including stipe) over 1 metre long are quite common.

It seems easy to cultivate and does well in a large basket. Hothouse conditions are preferred but it would tolerate shade cloth temperatures provided it was kept frost free.

In Australia, this species is subject to a lot of confusion. It bares a close resemblance to Davallia embolestegia which is common in fern collections in Australia (especially Queenland). It can be distinguished from that species by larger sori and darker, less rhizome scales; the fronds may be slightly coarser. To further confuse the issue, the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne have a specimen of Davallia solida cv --- named as this species. Young plants incorrectly named have been sold by various nurseries.

Further reading: Flora of Malaya Vol II Hol Hum Thanks to Richard Hartland for this excellent drawing.



ADVERTISING RATES

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1/4	page	\$10.00	per	issue	
1/2	page	\$17.50	per	issue	
Full	page	\$30.00	per	issue	

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#### EDITORIAL

Without doubt our Fern Society became of age March, 1983, Herbarium, Victoria. Some of the comments I received were: "A magnificent display of amazing variety". "The best ferns I have seen". "The best 50 cents I have ever spent." "Without doubt a fantastic show."

The superb effort of Bill Taylor as leader, a very enthusiastic team and the many who brought ferns in prime condition for show, plus the natural bush setting by Greg Bunting and the extremely precise set up of the Spore Bank will not be forgotten quickly. I and all who had the opportunity to view this spectacular show must say "well done" - a truly great achievement.

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We all have difficulty in recognising and identifying ferns.

Rod Hill has given us a very simple formula. This will be used at our Annual Fern Show (and at our Monthly Meetings) to help our members and public alike, in helping them when purchasing their ferns as to where they can be grown.

<u>PLEASE</u> use this code below, on the name tag of each plant, before bringing in any ferns for sale. When we get used to it, it will save a lot of questions.

### LETTER CODES

(a)	hardiness	e.g.	O G H	 <pre>outdoor (hardy) glasshouse (unheated) hothouse (or T = tropical   requiring heated hothouse)</pre>
(b)	distribution	e.g.	N E	native exotic <u>OR</u> actually list countries that ferns are native to.
(c)	availability	e.g.	F R C S	 frequently available commercially rarely available collectors item only spore available from Spore Bank

#### NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following members of The Fern Society of Victoria.

Mr. & Mrs. M.W. & D.C. Clarke, 184 Tarneit Road, Werribee, 3030 G.A. & M.F. Crisp, 51 Livingstone Road, Eltham, 3095 Mrs. Alison Robinson, 233 Pitt Street, Eltham, 3095 Mr. Keith Cook, 37 Hawtin Street, Templetowe, 3106 Mr. J. Davis, 10 Maralee Place, Doncaster, 3108 Mr. & Mrs. C.A. Knight, 19 Crellin Grove, Camberwell, 3124 Mr. Ross Floyed, 196 Dorking Road, Box Hill North, 3129 Mr. G.J. Philp, 4 Magna Court, Mt. Waverley, 3149 Mr. W.J. & Mrs. B. Gail, 3 Warren Road, Cheltenham, 3192 Mr. Peter L. Ryan, Unit 4, 9 Pascoe Avenue, Bentleigh, 3204 Mr. John Mawson, P.O. Box 211, Ararat, 3377 N.B.S. Hutchinson, P.O. Box 651, Mildura, 3500 Mr. R.J. Ashton, 2 Woodmason Road, Boronia, 3155 Miss Elaine Barnard-Brown, 14 Highmoor Avenue, Bayswater, 3153 Mr. John C. Beere, 19 Harley Street, Dingley, 3172 Mr. N.A. Clarke, 53 Madeline Street, Burwood, 3125 K. & J. Ebbage, P.O. Box 37, Goombungee, 4354 A.M. B.J. Frik, 4 Graeme Street, Mooroopna, 3629 Mr. Kevin Gilchrist, 17 Hyslop Street, Hoppers Crossing, 3030 Peter & Julie Goschwick, 13 Vitis Avenue, Noble Park, 3174 Mr. Steven Hodges, 118 Loongana, 3046 Mrs. B. Kalma, 23 Ardgower Road, Noble Park, 3174 Mr. Ian Kirwan, C/- 228 Koornang Road, Carnegie, 3163 P.J. & A.C. Mathews, 212 Whitehorse Road, Mt. Clear, Ballarat, 3350 Mr. Peter Miller, 359 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne, 3205 Mr. Andrew Miov, 96 Gavan Street, Bright, 3741 Mrs. Shirley May Owen-Holmes, 40 Suffolk Road, Maidstone, 3012 Miss Karen Prentice, 19 Sandy Street, Nunawading, 3131 Mr. C.E. Pritchard, 90 Cremorne Street, Richmond, 3121 Mrs. M.I. Quick, 8 Donaghy Street, Geelong West, 3218 Michael & Barbara Sibley, 17 Viva Street, Malvern, 3144 Mr. John Ian Steward, 17 Fromer Street, Moorabbin, 3189 G. & M. Themilis, Box 125, Shepparton, 3630 Mr. Lyle R. Timms, 195 Dorking Road, Box Hill North, 3129 Miss Marilyn White, P.O. Box 136, Collins Street, Melbourne, 3001 Dr. P.A. Young, 11 Sybil Street, Moorabbin, 3189

The Earthworm springs from the family name Annelida, derived from the Latin word annulus meaning a ring, and if you have ever studied an earthworm you will realise that this description is aptly named, as the body is formed by a series of from two to four hundred muscular rings closely woven together to form a tube of great strength. The earthworm is a digestive tube alone, and does not have any external encumbrances to hinder its operation. They can crawl backwards as well as forwards and by the aid of their affixed tails can retreat with extraordinary rapidity into their burrows. The mouth is situated at the anterior end of the body and is provided with a little projection which is used for holding on. Internally, behind the mouth is a strong pharynx which is pushed forward when the animal eats. This pharynx leads into the oesophagus, where three pairs of large glands secrete a surprising amount of carbonate of lime which exerts its neutralizing action upon the acids of the materials passing through the alimentary cana. These calciferous glands are truly remarkable, for nothing like them exists in any other animal. In most species the oesophagus is enlarged into a crop in front of the gizzard where trituration of the food takes place. Worms have no teeth or jaws of any kind and rely on the muscular action and secretions to digest the food. Small grains of sand and stones are generally found in the gizzard and intestines. Worms breathe by their skin and do not possess any respiratory organs. The two sexes are in the same individual but two must pair together for reproduction. Also they have a fairly well developed nervous system.

The worm gathers its own nutrition from the matter passing through and finally the material is ejected as castings - the ultimate in humus. It is understood that the life span of the earthworm is but a year or two, but the decaying bodies of the worms also furnish an excellent form of fertilizer.

The earthworm is nature's plough, it burrows into the soil and keeps it well aerated, a condition which encourages the right microbes to multiply thus keeping the soil texture in good condition. Moisture retention is greatly increased and the tunnelled earth permits the water to penetrate more rapidly. They actually produce topsoil. Charles Darwin estimated that on a fertile soil an average of 1/5 of an inch in thickness of topsoil per year is added to the surface by worm castings.

К.Н.

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

Accommodation is available within walking distance of The Big Pineapple and Nursery in overnite vans or brick veneer cabins (5 persons) from \$15 - write to Box 65, Woombye, 4559 or phone (071) 42 1621 (WOOMBYE CARAVAN PARK) Interstate bus will stop at Nursery or Caravan Park.

#### BUYERS GUIDE TO FERN NURSERIES

# QUEENSLAND

MORANS HIGHWAY NURSERY lkm north of Big Pineapple Turn right into Keil Road, Woombye Wholesale & Retail (079) 42 1613 See advertisement page

### VICTORIA

"Fern Glen" Garfield, North Victoria Sporlings both Retail & Wholesale (056) 29 2375

MULCORINA FERN NURSERY Freshwater Road, Kilmany via Sale, Victoria Wholesale (051) 49 2231

FERN FROND 7 391 - 393 Maroondah Highway 2 Doors from Kentucky Chicken Retail

AUGOOD PLANTS & FERNS Rain Road, Emerald, Victoria Closed Mondays A.H. (059) 68 4858 Retail

WAYNE LONG FERN NURSERY
63 Athol Road, Noble Park, Victoria
546 5383

# DIARY DATES

THURSDAY MAY 12TH:

THURSDAY JUNE 9TH: NEW MEMBERS Beginners and Gadget Night

MARY FFROST Native Ferns of North East Victoria

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



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