

INDEX

# THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

## NEWSLETTER

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OFFICE BEARERS:

PRESIDENT: Doug Thomas, 17 Knaith Road, Ringwood East, 3135. Telephone 870 7229  
 VICE-PRESIDENTS: Albert Jenkins, 11 Morwell Avenue, Watsonia, 3087. Telephone 435 3863  
 Bill Taylor, 1 Princetown Road, Mt. Waverley, 3149. Telephone 277 4310  
 TREASURER: Jean Trudgeon, P.O. Box 45, Heidelberg West, 3081. Telephone 459 4859  
 SECRETARY: Keith Stubbs, 14 Afton Street, Essendon, 3040. Telephone 337 8284  
 BOOK SALES: Lorraine Goudey, Lot 8, Cozens Road, Lara, 3212. Telephone (052) 82 2154  
 PUBLICITY OFFICER: Albert Ward, 82 Grandview Grove, Rosanna, 3084. Telephone 459 4392  
 LIBRARIAN: Bernadette Blackstock, 65 Hobson Street, Newport, 3015. Telephone 391 5517  
 SPORE BANK MANAGER: Bill Bright, 520 Burke Road, Camberwell, 3124. Telephone 82 3589  
 ASSISTANT TREASURER: Roger Flynn, 74 Leamington Street, Reservoir, 3973.  
 EDITOR: Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove, Rosanna, 3084. Telephone 459 2997

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGETHE DECEMBER MEETING

The Spirit of Christmas - Giving, Receiving, Sharing and Joy were all in evidence at our wind up Christmas Meeting.

Coloured streamers decorated the walls of the Hall; several tables were laden with a magnificent display of Members' ferns, whilst other tables were piled with food donated by Members for our Special Supper. Donations of goods for the Christmas Hamper were so great that seven separate hampers had to be hastily prepared.

In addition, attendance was the highest ever for a Christmas meeting and our Fern Forum Panel Members had to work extremely hard for just over an hour to cope with a constant flow of Members' questions. I was delighted to see so many of our Members overcoming shyness in their enthusiasm to have their questions discussed. It was also splendid that many Members took the trouble to put their questions in writing. Compere Keith Stubbs used these so effectively that we did not have one single non-active moment. The material discussed in the session covered an extensive range of topics and it was amazing how the Panel Members were able to provide answers and helpful information on every issue.

To Harold Olney, Chris Goudey, Keith Hutchinson, Rod Hill and Keith Stubbs; our sincere thanks.

Presentation to Rod Hill: A decorative china plate, hand painted to depict a beautiful specimen of *Blechnum Cartilagineum* (Gristle Fern) was presented to Rod Hill. Both Chris Goudey and Harold Olney spoke of their personal association with Rod since the inception of the Fern Society and described the qualities in Rod which made him such an effective and popular first Spore Bank Manager.

The Plate and card were inscribed; "Presented to Rod Hill in appreciation of his services to the Fern Society of Victoria". Thank you, Rod.

The Winners: Our hearty congratulations go to the winners of our various competitions. The lucky people were:

- (a) Propagating Box - Jean Bedford
- (b) Book Voucher for Fern as Decoration - Albert Jenkins
- (c) Christmas Hampers:

1. Decorated Christmas Cake - Albert Jenkins
2. Hamper - Thelma Rivett
3. Hamper - Pam Montgomery
4. Hamper - Richard Rowe
5. Hamper - Lee Lees
6. Hamper - Gary Cook
7. Hamper - June Pritchard

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THE FIRST SPEAKER FOR THE YEAR WILL BE  
 OUR PRESIDENT, DOUG THOMAS, ON THE SUBJECT  
 "FERN GULLIES IN RAIN FORESTS"

We look forward to seeing you at Burnley,  
 on Thursday, 9th February, at 8 p.m.



The serving of a scrumptious supper came next; a supper which afforded Members the opportunity to chat, make friends and as always, to learn from one another. To the ladies who worked so hard to prepare the tables and to serve tea and coffee so efficiently, I offer sincere thanks on behalf of all present.

Thank you also to the following members: Those who decorated the Hall, set up the furniture, made up hampers and organized the various competitions. Those who brought, in such an abundance, of magnificent ferns for decoration. Those who donated so generously to the hamper appeal and to the appeal for a plate of food for supper.

The combined efforts of all of you made the meeting an outstanding function. It was just great!

Slide Bank: Bernard and Bernadette Coleman are working hard to establish a Photographic Slide Bank for the Society. Their task is a massive one in which they plan to sort slides into the many different categories relative to the cultivation of ferns. A few examples of these could well be; Fern Identification, Raising Spore-lings, Potting Mixtures, Insect Pests, Soil Testing, Oddities, etc.

However, before Bernard and Bernadette can make a success of their task, they must have slides to work with. Would you help in this enterprise by lending some of your fern slides? The Colemans' address is 609 Burke Road, Camberwell, 3124. Telephone: 82 2169. Your slides will be returned to you promptly. Duplication only is required.

So that you may see the system of Slide Bank usage in operation, Bernard and Bernadette hope to present a screening at the Annual Fern Show in March, 1984.

Next Meeting: The next General Meeting of the Society is scheduled for Thursday, 9th February, 1984 in the Burnley Horticultural College Hall commencing at 8.00 p.m. We expect all of the regular features to be resumed and I hope to present, by medium of colour slides, a description of some of the most beautiful places on earth. Places where ferns abound, "Rain Forests and Fern Gullies".

Coming Events:

1. Public Garden Display:

This Society will take part in this exhibition later in February. Organized by the Royal Horticultural Society, the venue is the National Herbarium in Birdwood Avenue.

2. Annual Fern Show:

To be organized and presented by this Society. To be held in late March, 1984; also in the National Herbarium.

3. Overseas Guest Speaker:

The Committee has invited a leading New Zealand Fern Authority to speak at one of our General Meetings later this year. Not confirmed at this stage, but highly likely.

4. Fern Society Booklet:

The Committee expects that the publication of the Society's first fern booklet will be effected in March, 1984.

Continued overleaf

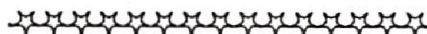
5. A Society Commemorative Spoon has been designed and is expected to be available to Members, to mark the Fifth Anniversary of the Society, March Meeting, 1984.

The Minyon Falls Gorge was to be the topic for this month's discussion on

"Rain Forests and Fern Gullies" but I have already exceeded my space allowance for February Newsletter so will hold this over until March.

With kindest regards,

DOUG THOMAS  
President



#### SUCCESSFUL FERN FORUM

The Society's third Fern Forum, held in conjunction with the Christmas meeting, proved highly informative and successful, thanks to the contributions of the panel -- Harold Olney, Chris Goudey, Rod Hill, Keith Hutchinson and Keith Stubbs as Moderator.

Here is an edited report on some of the questions and answers.

Q When repotting, should all the old soil be removed from the root system?

A Most fern species respond positively if the roots are teased away from the old potting medium and placed in a fresh mixture. When repotting, the mixture should be reasonably dry in the "old" pot.

Q What is the best spray to use on thrip?

A The most effective may be the most dangerous (healthwise). Pyrethrum (safe) is most effective every seven days.

Q What is a good spray to use for the fungus gnat?

A Carbaryl. But make sure that you use oil with distilled water with it. Fungus gnat is no problem to mature ferns but is a real problem for spore.

Q There is a fine green moss-like plant smothering all my sporelings. What is it and how can I get rid of it?

A It depends how fine a green - be careful it is not the prothalis growing. It may look like a green algae. If it is an algae try another sowing, as most likely treatment will adversely damage the crop of new prothalis. Keep the area reasonably light but no direct sunlight as this will also discourage algae growth.

Q Is slow release nitrogen harmful for ferns - if not, would it be best mixed in with potting mix or placed around the top of the plant?

A Nitrogen, when overused, can be harmful so be sparing. Nitrogen is good for plants but low doses rather than the manufacturers' recommendation should be used.

Continued on next page



- Q What is the correct method of management for a piece of equipment such as the Propagating Box?
- A Keep the condensation down to a reasonable level. A lid on the box is essential to keep in humidity. Water should be kept at a constant temperature. Grow the spore in sealed containers and in sand which is an excellent conductor of heat. Internal temperature should be about 70°-75°F.
- Q How do I prevent scale from forming on my plants?
- A One method is to use a fairly sterile mix such as Peat Moss, and, fern fibre and little trouble should be experienced with scale. Using mix which has a heavy concentration of leaf mould will often produce a lot of scale but this is not prevalent when a sandy mix is used. In March and September look for and spray against scale.
- Q If spore is kept too wet, will it rot or just die in germination?
- A It is doubtful that germination will be stopped because the spore is too wet. The major problem would be that wet spore will promote fungus which will kill the spore as it germinates.
- Q When fixing Stags and Elks to boards is it O.K. to use galvanised wire?
- A It is recommended to use plastic coated electrical wire. An alternative is old car tubes, which are quite rigid but stretch as the stag or elk establishes. Another useful material is synthetic bags. The latter should be cut out into a round pad and wrapped around the elk with a cut in the centre to allow the fronds and rhizome to protrude. As they make their new next fronds they will make these fronds over the bag.
- Q Why must shade cloth be fixed outside the walls of a shadehouse or glasshouse.
- A Shade cloth inside a glasshouse will not reduce the temperature but the light will be reduced according to the strength of the cloth used. To obtain both reduction in temperature and light inside the house, the cloth should be at least four inches from the glass.
- Q Should lime be used in a potting mix for Maidenhairs?
- A Yes, however, lime is not recommended for all ferns, particularly those native ferns which grow in natural surroundings and in some cases require quite acid soil.





' INN-FERNERY ' FERN NURSERY
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CLOSING DOWN SALE .....

Due to the onset of health problems, the proprietors of the Inn-Fernery will, regretfully, be unable to continue running the nursery.

Overseas commitments necessitate the IMMEDIATE SALE OF ALL STOCK. The nursery will remain open only until this is achieved. All prices are wholesale, or lower. Reasonable offers will not be refused.

We extend thanks to all those members of the Fern Society, who have patronised the nursery during the time we have been in business.

I would like, also, to personally apologise to those people who volunteered to take part in an experiment on planetary influences. This experiment will have to be postponed for a while.

PHIL SHERIDAN  
INN-FERNERY FERN NURSERY  
MONBULK ROAD  
MONBULK  
(MELWAY MAP 124, F 1)



bankcard welcome here



**NEW MEMBERS**

Gwendolyn (Betty) O. Newman, 5 Railway Parade, Bayswater 3153  
 Postal Address: P.O. Box 77, Bayswater 3153  
 Mr. Kevin J. O'Hara, 9 Rede Street, Gosnells, 6110  
 Mrs. G.H. (Margaret) Webber, 60 Gladstone Street, Orbost, 3888  
 Peter Puglisi, 13 Kinross Street, Pascoe Vale South, 3044  
 Russell Wallace, 14 Shady Grove, Nunawading 3131  
 Debra A. Williams, 21 Manorvale Parade, Werribee 3030  
 Mr. G. W. Millie, 144 Delany Avenue, Bright 3741  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Hughes, 1546 Del Rio Drive, Fort Myers,  
 Florida 33901  
 Keith & Elaine Crellin, 53 Milne Street, Templestowe 3106

We are delighted to extend a warm welcome to the above new members, who joined the ranks of the Fern Society of Victoria over the past month.

**FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA - SUBSCRIPTION FEES - 1983-84**

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP	: \$ 8.50	FAMILY MEMBERSHIP	: \$10.50
SINGLE PENSIONER	: \$ 5.50	FULL-TIME STUDENT	: \$ 5.50
OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIP	: \$12.00	2 MARRIED PENSIONERS	: \$ 7.50



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 P.O. Box 302, Bayswater, Victoria, 3153



### BEGINNERS' PAGE

Almost all the problems I am confronted with each day at my nursery relate to the soil in which the plant is growing or the potting mix if a potted plant is the concern. I am often amazed at the "soil" some people try to grow plants in. On one occasion I left a small sample brought in by a customer in the sun, later I dropped it and it shattered into several small fragments. I'm sure it would have been a good substitute for the clay used to make fine bone china. Therefore, to commence 1984, I feel we should look again at the materials available to base a potting mix or due to the fact that good soil is very scarce these days we now call it a soil-less growing medium.

Composted Pine Bark: A good base material provided it has a balance of fine and also  $\frac{1}{4}$ " minus and has been weathered for at least 3 months. At this stage it holds plant nutrients and moisture in available form releasing them as the plant requires them. Readily available and cheap.

Lignite or ligna peat: Has a very good moisture holding capacity but should never be more than 10% of any medium. Also readily available and cheap.

Scoria or Sponge Rock: Quite good to aerate a medium, is quite light and seems to promote good growth in many plants but at times can be very alkaline so a pH test is necessary from time to time. It is also important to use  $\frac{1}{4}$ " minus, never the fine. Readily available and cheap.

Vermiculite: This material has limited use in Melbourne as it holds large amounts of moisture and can cause a medium to become soggy. Could be useful in warmer, dryer climates. Freely available but expensive.

Coarse washed sand: A small amount helps to provide air space in a medium. Its main disadvantage is its weight, being very heavy thus 5% is plenty in any medium. Readily available and cheap.

Perlite: Manufactured in Queensland from volcanic rock, is my preference to coarse sand. It is very light and by far the best material to ventilate a medium. I find the winter temperature of the medium much warmer so should be excellent for subtropicals or tropical ferns. Readily available and reasonably priced.

Peanut Shells: If composted and put through a shredder a small amount, perhaps 5%, could be advantageous. Has a high potash content and can hold quite a lot of moisture. Readily available but expensive.

German Sphagnum Peat Moss: Easily the world's best material for holding nutrients and moisture in available form. Also contains some nutrients but has become so expensive it is now only used for intensive propagation. A small amount is always a bonus for any medium. Other types of peat moss (Canadian and New Zealand) don't measure up in texture or quality with consistency.

Continued on next page



Tree fern fibre: Has been used as a substitute for peat moss; quite a good material but also expensive unless it can be shredded by the user. Available but expensive.

These are the main materials I use in my growing medium but I feel sure there are others. If any member has found a useful product we would be pleased to hear from them.

#### GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY (Cont.)

FALCATE	Sickle-shaped
FIBROSA	Fibrous, consisting of fibres
FIDDLEHEAD	Crozier
FIMBRIATA	Fringed, cut in shreds
FLABELLATA	Fan shaped
FLACCIDA	Limp, Flabby
FLAVIDA	Yellowish
FLUVIATUS	Growing in Streams
FORMOSA	Beautiful Handsome
FRAGILIS	Brittle weak
FURCANS	Forked

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#### ADVERTISING RATES:

One-eighth of a page	: \$5.00 per issue
One-quarter of a page	: \$10.00 per issue
One-half of a page	: \$17.50 per issue
Full page advertisement	: \$30.00 per issue



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### 1984 ANNUAL FERN SHOW

Our application for use of the Herbarium for our Fourth Annual Fern Show has been approved and details can now be confirmed as follows:

Venue: National Herbarium  
Royal Botanic Gardens  
Birdwood Avenue  
South Yarra

Times: Saturday, March 24th  
10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Saturday, March 25th  
10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

The show is thus only a little over six weeks away and our preparations must go into top gear.

If you have been too busy holidaying or otherwise in January to start selecting your ferns for the display, please give this matter your consideration soon. We need lots of ferns to fill the hall, especially ones in pots. Remember that ferns do not need to be large or unusual to merit a place in the display. Even modest size specimens of most ferns can look spectacular when well grown and groomed. The important thing is to have as many members as possible represented in the display - it is your Show. When you have chosen the ferns you wish to exhibit, please list them on the form included in the December 1983 Newsletter (plenty of spare copies available!) and pass it on to a member of the Show Sub-Committee.

If the experience of past years is a guide, there will again be a large demand for sale ferns, so please consider if you wish to contribute in this area. Remember that ferns can be accepted for sale only from members who have provided ferns for display and that sales will be restricted to ferns that have been grown on by members for at least 12 months, i.e. they are sold as products of members of the Society not those of an outside commercial supplier.

Selection of ferns is the only action needed at present, but later on as many volunteers as possible will be needed to help with the setting up and running of the Show. Please try to allocate time for some involvement and let a member of the Sub-Committee know as soon as possible if you can help.

If you have any queries regarding the Show, please telephone one of the following:

Bob Lee	836 1528
Bernadette Blackstock	391 5517
Bill Taylor	277 4310



Spore samples may be purchased at monthly meetings, or by sending a list of your requirements with 20 cents for each species requested plus 50 cents for packaging and postage to Mr. W. Bright, 520 Burke Road, Camberwell, 3126.

Payment for orders may be made by postage stamps (30 cent stamps preferred where possible) or by cheque (payable to "Fern Society of Victoria").

Many species are still available from the list published in the newsletter, but if ordering from this list, please include a supplementary list in case supplies of some species are depleted.

Instructions on propagation from spore are also still available for an extra 5 cents.

(\*) INDICATES SPECIES IN SHORT SUPPLY

(N) INDICATES NATIVE AUSTRALIAN SPECIES

N	ADIANTUM AETHIOPICUM(12-83)	COMMON MAIDENHAIR
*	ANCEPS(12-83)	
N	CAPILLUS-VENERIS(12-83)	VENUS-HAIR FERN
*	CONCINNUM:EDWINII:(11-83)	
	EXCISUM :LEGRAND MORGAN:(12-83)	
N	FORMOSUM(2-83)	BLACK STEM
	PATENS(10-83)	
	RADDIANUM(3-83)	DELTA MAIDENHAIR
	RADDIANUM :ELEGANS:(3-83)	
N*	SILVATICUM(10-83)	
N*	SP:(S:E:QLD)(12-83)	
	ANEMIA MEXICANA(12-83)	FLOWERING HOLLY-FERN
N	ARACHNIODES ARISTATA(3-83)	PRICKLY SHIELD-FERN
	ASPLENIUM DIMORPHUM(10-83)	THREE IN ONE FERN
N*	OBTUSATUM(11-83)	
*	ROBINSONI(11-83)	
N*	TRICHOMANES(3-83)	COMMON SPLEENWORT
N*	BLECHNUM AMBIGUUM(1-83)	
N	CARTILAGINEUM(12-83)	GRISTLE FERN
N	FLUVIATILE(2-83)	RAY WATER-FERN
N	GREGSONII(1-83)	
N	NUDUM :FURCANS:(6-83)	
N*	PENNA-MARINA(3-83)	ALPINE WATER-FERN
N	WATTSII(5-82)	HARD WATER-FERN
N	CHEILANTHES TENUIFOLIA(3-83)	ROCK FERN
N	CHRISTELLA DENTATA(3-83)	BINUNG
N	CULCITA DUBIA(3-83)	COMMON GROUND-FERN
N	CYATHEA AUSTRALIS(3-83)	ROUGH TREE-FERN
	BROWNII(3-83)	
N	COOPERI(11-83)	COIN-SPOT TREE-FERN
	DEALBATA(11-83)	SILVER TREE-FERN
N	LEICHHARDTIANA(9-82)	PRICKLY TREE-FERN
*	SP:(CAMERON HIGHLANDS/MALAYSIA)(7-83)	
	SP:(LARGE/MALAYSIA)(10-82)	
N*	CYSTOPTERIS FILIX-FRAGILIS(2-83)	BRITTLE BLADDER-FERN
N	DICKSONIA ANTARCTICA(11-83)	SOFT TREE-FERN
	FIBROSA(11-83)	WHEKI-PONGA
	LANATA(10-83)	
N	YOUNGIAE(S:QLD FORM)(12-83)	BRISTLY TREE-FERN
N	DIPLAZIUM ASSIMILE(10-83)	
N	AUSTRALE(2-83)	AUSTRAL LADY-FERN
N*	DOODIA ASPERA(5-83)	PRICKLY RASP-FERN
N	MEDIA(2-83)	COMMON RASP-FERN



	DRYOPTERIS CARTHUSIANA(7-82)	NARROW BUCKLER-FERN
	ERYTHROSORA(2-83)	AUTUMN FERN
	GYMNOSORUS(3-83)	
	PEDATA(10-83)	HAND FERN
	SP:(FILIX-MAS)(8-82)	(MALE FERN)
	SP:(MIXED)(3-83)	
N	LASTREOPSIS MICROSORA(8-83)	CREEPING SHIELD-FERN
N	MUNITA(8-83)	
N*	SMITHIANA(2-83)	
N	SP:(3 DIFFERENT SPECIES)(8-83)	
N	SP:(6-UNKNOWN SPECIES)(8-83)	
	LYGODIUM SP:A(MALAYSIA)(10-82)	
	SP:B(CIRCINNATUM/MALAYSIA)(10-82)	
	MARATTIA SP:(SALICIFOLIA)(6-83)	
*	OSMUNDA CINNAMOMEA(12-6-83)	CINNAMON FERN
*	CLAYTONIANA(5-6-83)	INTERRUPTED FERN
N*	PELLAEA FALCATA(3-83)	SICKLE FERN
N	FALCATA NANA(11-83)	DWARF SICKLE-FERN
N	PARADOXA(11-83)	
	ROTUNDIFOLIA(3-83)	
	VIRIDIS(8-82)	BUTTON FERN
N	PLEUROSORUS RUTIFOLIUS(8-83)	BLANKET FERN
*	POLYPODIUM CRASSIFOLIUM(8-83)	
*	FORMOSANUM(12-83)	GRUB FERN
N	POLYSTICHUM AUSTRALIENSE(10-83)	
N	FORMOSUM(12-83)	BROAD SHIELD-FERN
N	PROLIFERUM(12-83)	MOTHER SHIELD-FERN
N	PSILOTUM NUDUM(7-82)	SKELETON FORK-FERN
N	PTERIS COMANS(9-83)	NETTED BRAKE
	CRETICA :ALBOLINEATA:(12-83)	RIBBON BRAKE
N*	ENSIFORMIS(10-83)	SLENDER BRAKE
	HENDERSONII(12-83)	
N	TREMULA(2-83)	TENDER BRAKE
N	UMBROSA(10-83)	JUNGLE BRAKE
N	VITTATA(2-83)	CHINESE BRAKE
N	RUMOHRA ADIANTIFORMIS(NATIVE)(12-83)	LEATHERY SHIELD-FERN
N	STENOCHLAENA PALUSTRIS(10-82)	CLIMBING SWAMP-FERN
N	TAENITIS BLECHNOIDES(10-82)	
N	TODEA BARBARA(12-83)	KING FERN
	GROUND-FERN(LARGE/BIPINNATIFID/MALAYSIA)(10-82)	

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#### NORMA'S FERNERY

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1 km north of Big Pineapple  
Turn right into Kell Road,  
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Phone: (079) 42 1613

### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### FERN NURSERY

6 Nelson Street,  
Thornleigh 2120  
Wholesale & Retail  
Phone: 84 2684

#### GREEN FROND NURSERY

39 Fisher Road  
Maraylya N.S.W. 2765  
Near Windsor, N.S.W.  
Wholesale Propagation Sporelings  
Phone: (045) 73 6207

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### VICTORIA

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(03) 221 1411 (A.H.)