

THE FERA SOCIETY

OF
VICTORIA

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST: PUBLICATION NO. VBH3411

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 2 MARCH, 1985

OFFICE BEARERS

PRESIDENT: Doug Thomas, 17 Knaith Road, Ringwood East 3135 Telephone: 870 7229

TREASURER: Jean Trudgeon, P.O. Box 45, Heidelberg West 3081 Telephone: 459 4859

SECRETARY: Bernadette Blackstock, 65 Hobson Street, Newport 3015 Telephone: 391 5517

BOOK SALES: Lorraine Goudy, R.M.B. 1175, Lara 3212

EDITOR: Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove, Rosanna 3084 Telephone: 45 2997

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:The February Meeting:

The General Meeting held at Burnley on 14th February, launched the Fern Society into activities for 1985. Attendance of Members were very good and all of the usual meeting services were resumed.

Ferns offered for sale by vendor-members were plentiful, in excellent condition and of varied species. Some quite unusual.

Our book stall was as usual well stocked. Chris showed Members a new book; one which covered cultivation and maintenance of both ferns and palms. The cost is very reasonable.

Brisk business was also done at the Society library and the Spore Bank. Seven prizes were available for the Special Effort Competition. Six beautiful potted ferns of various species and a tin of shortbread, baked and donated by Mavis Potter.

Congratulations to the winners who were:

1. Peg Holland
2. Bruce Smiles
3. Lloyd Mackrody
4. Doug Nisbet
5. Dona Nisbet
6. David Thompson
7. Beulah Powell

Next Meeting:

As you will note from the special announcement on page 3, both the DATE and VENUE of the MARCH MEETING have been CHANGED - to Tuesday, 12th March, 1985 in the Herbarium, Burwood Avenue, South Yarra at 8.00 p.m.

The evening will be highlighted by a dual speaker presentation. Bill Taylor and Neil Baillie will speak on "Davallias and Epiphytes".

Both Bill and Neil are outstandingly successful fern growers. They are practical men who are very capable in passing on helpful information to Members. We can expect an extremely interesting and educational session.

Fern Society Fern Show:

Last month I appealed to each Member to make a strong personal effort to contribute in some way to the staging and eventual success of the Fern Show.

This month the need has not lessened; the Society needs "YOU".

Special Thanks:

Thank you, Bill Taylor, for your work in preparing a display of ferns at the Fellowes Group Flower Show on 16th and 17th February. Your efforts on behalf of this Society are very much appreciated.

Continued on next page

**** MARCH MEETING

3

Tuesday, March 12th, 1985 at 8.00 p.m.

Bill Taylor & Neil Baillie
will speak on
"EPIPHYTES & DAVALLIAS"

at

Herbarium
Burwood Avenue
South Yarra

Continued from previous page

Spore Bank Manager:

The need has arisen for the appointment of a new Spore Bank Manager or Manageress. A change in the nature of Bill Bright's employment will take him overseas at regular intervals. It is not possible for Bill to continue with the Spore Bank.

A volunteer would be most welcome. If you feel that you can help with this important service, please contact either myself on 870 7229 or any Committee Member.

Ripponlea Fernery:

Work is proceeding with the re-establishment of the huge historic fern house at "Ripponlea Mansion". Chris Goudey has undertaken the work of liaison between ourselves and the Ripponlea organisation. He has asked Members to let him have a list of any ferns that they would be prepared to donate to this project.

With kindest regards
DOUG THOMAS

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Singles:	\$12.00
Family:	\$15.00
Pensioner Single:	\$ 8.00
Pensioner Married:	\$10.00

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Hutchinson,

In a public building the other day the plight of a sorry looking *Asplenium Bulbiferum* made me burst into verse.

THE POTTED FERN

I'm glad I'm not a potted fern
growing in a gilded urn.
Fondled by each passing hand.
By the draughty breezes fanned.
Roots beneath the shells of nuts..
chewing gum, and smoker's butts.
How GLAD I am I'm not a fern
growing in a gilded urn.

Yours sincerely,
E. Johnston

Maxicrop

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

Maxicrop plant food is safe, easy and versatile - because nature does it best.

Maxicrop plant and soil nutrient is available in six different sizes and is sold by nurseries and other places where garden products are sold.



Maxicrop

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

APPEAL FOR SPORE

Bill Bright and Rod Hill have been trying to build up stocks of spore in preparation for the March show. While they already have spore of a number of the more common native ferns and treeferns, a lot more variety would be desirable to set up the "Beginners Kits", which have proven so popular in the past.

If any members are able to bring suitable spore along to the March meeting, this will certainly be appreciated. What is needed is spore of fairly hardy species (both indoor and outdoor, but not hothouse) and in reasonable quantities (at least about half a gelatine capsule full, as used by the spore bank, is desirable).

Any queries with regard to suitable species could be directed to Bill or Rod.

THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

5

FIFTH ANNUAL DISPLAY OF FERNS

at

The Herbarium
Royal Botanic Gardens

Saturday, 23rd March 10.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Sunday, 24th March 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

The Show will be open to the public at the times above. For us, however, the action begins with setting-up on Friday, 22nd March (from 7.00 a.m. through till approximately 10.00 p.m.) and ends with dismantling and cleaning up on Sunday after the Show has finished.

Everyone will have read the President's Message from Doug Thomas in the February 'Newsletter' pointing out the need for the involvement of members in the Show and the importance of its success, so as to further both the public image of the Society and its finances. We also want to make it a social success, with members enjoying the mutual participation in a worthwhile and satisfying activity. So please make a commitment to join in and let us know how you can help.

PUBLICITY is needed to get the public to attend the Show and everyone can help here by promoting the event as widely as possible at every opportunity. A leaflet advertising the Show has been included with all Victorian copies of this Newsletter. Please try to have it displayed at some appropriate public place in your locality. We have also put a lot of effort into organising publicity for the Show through newspapers, magazines, radio, T.V., nurseries and garden clubs, but every little bit extra will help.

FERNS FOR DISPLAY are needed in large numbers and covering as wide a range of species as possible to make an impressive general display. A smaller number of plants will be organised into family groups as already mentioned. Some of the co-ordinators for these groups are having trouble getting the ferns they need and would like to hear from you if you can offer ferns in their groups. Names of groups and their co-ordinators - with phone numbers - were listed in the December "Newsletter". Don't forget to put your own name on your ferns to ensure their safe return.

HELP is needed in many areas - setting up and dismantling the displays, assisting with fern sales and attending in the display area to help the public and answer their queries. As Doug has pointed out, do not be deterred by the thought that you may not have sufficient knowledge to answer all visitors' questions; there will always be plenty of expert help available.

Continued overleaf

It is most important that all members who wish to offer ferns for sale at the Show notify me (phone: (03) 836 1528) of their intention in advance. As advised last month, we have had to impose some limitations in this area.

We should be grateful if members could bring to the Show any small cardboard boxes they have available that would be suitable for packing sold ferns.

Finally, we do hope some of our country members will be able to visit the Show. If you come, please make yourself known at the door and meet your fellow fern devotees.

BOB LEE

Concluding Rain Forests and Fern Gullies:

MOUNT WORTH STATE PARK (Strzelecki Ranges - Victoria)

This is a new State Park which is a pleasant surprise to fern enthusiasts and people who enjoy a lovely walk in magnificent surroundings.

Mount Worth is a ferns-all-the-way State Park. The walks have only recently been made and cover a distance of almost two kilometres. They are well graded and follow the course of a very pretty creek.

Many of the fern species to be seen here are typical of species normally found throughout West Gippsland but there are two species of plants which are of special interest. Along the creek banks in protected places look for *Selaginella Kraussiana*, a fern ally which has colonised here from South Africa. In summer the white bell creeper flowers beautifully. It can often be found growing on the trunks of soft tree ferns close to the creek. It is a delightful sight.

This Park is well worth a visit; picnic facilities are well set up and the picnic area clean and well maintained. Native birds are plentiful here with possibly the most attractive being the pink robin, the golden whistler and the olive whistler.

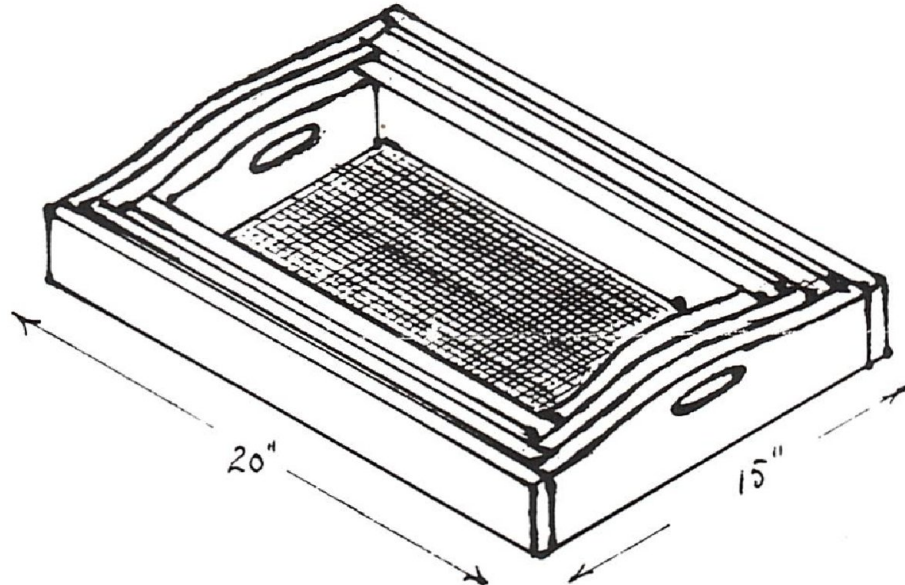
To reach the Park travel to Warrugal then turn south into the Korumburra Road. Look for a turn to the left to Seaview then join the Grand Ridge Road into the Strzelecki Ranges. Along the way the Park Ranger's residence will be seen on the right and should you need directions, he is the person to assist you. In any event the entrance to the Park is about ten kilometres past the Ranger's residence and is located on the south side of the mountain range.

Accommodation of all types is available at Warrugal.

DOUG THOMAS

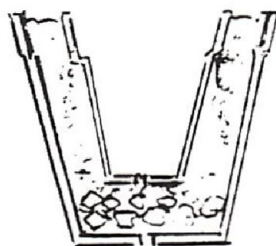
"DOING THE LITTLE THINGS"

Our President Doug Thomas commenced his talk assisted with slides illustrating a set of three sieves neatly designed to fit inside one another for ease of storage. The mesh was $1/2"$, $1/4"$ and $1/8"$.



Doug then showed us his repotting methods. He would place a layer of crock in the base of a pot and use the pot as a mould to form a recess by packing his potting mix firmly between the two pots. He would then remove the inside pot and place the fern into the mould. Doug believes knowledge of each fern's requirements is very important as some need the roots teased at the base while others, such as *Hemionitis arifolia* like to be rootbound. He always waters his repotted ferns with Maxicrop.

Hemionitis arifolia



Cross Section of Doug's Potting Method

Continued from previous page

Growing ferns from bulbils can be very interesting and successful as we found in the second segment of Doug's talk. Firstly a margarine container, with approximately 20 nail holes in the base, is partly filled with a mixture of sterilized Idaho Violet Mix. About 12 bulbils from *Polystichum setiferum*, *Polystichum proliferum*, *Asplenium bulbiferum* and *Woodwardia radicans* were placed into this mix, covering the top with Gladwrap. He then spread about 1" of moist *Sphagnum* moss in the base of a clear plastic refrigerator storage container, placed his pot of bulbils on this, finally replacing the lid. This method ensured the bulbils would not dry out as they could draw moisture through the holes in the base from the *Sphagnum* moss. A progression of slides over several months showed just how successful this method proved to be. Doug used the same method to grow spore using either the Violet mix or a mixture of Vermiculite, tree fern fibre and peat moss. The most important difference was to rub either media through the fine sieve and sterilize by pouring on boiled water.

Doug also grew Grub fern *Polypodium formosanum* by cleanly cutting off rhizomes with modules and roots and a good healthy growing tip, placing several in a basket of light mix and holding firmly in place with staples made from wire.

Another idea made by Doug was a Humidex box, a polystyrene fruit container with the top cut level and a sheet of glass cut neatly to cover the top. He liked to place all newly tubed sporelings or bulbils into this for their first few weeks.

Pests! Doug showed excellent slides of brown scale insects, the main type of scale to attack ferns and has had excellent results with carbaryl which also controls chewing insects.

Also the passion vine leaf hopper (with white fluffy tail) which is the larval stage of a small black moth with lacy wings. A spray such as pyrethrum or rogor will control these.

Finally Doug showed with progressive slides an area of poor clay soil and rubble completely transformed into a magnificent fern garden. He used the trenching method, filling the base of the first trench with rubble and covering with all types of green vegetable matter, straw, fowl manure and soil from the next trench mixed with 1/4" river gravel finally covering with a layer of leaf mould. After placing some rocks to form an access track he planted three small shade trees for protection from the western sun, then planted numerous ferns with a rhododendron and a few shrubs. To ensure the ferns were given every opportunity to become established, he made a frame covered with shade cloth, erected this on the northern aspect and awaited the result. A slide taken some months later delighted us all with its beauty and proved that a project well planned and executed must be successful, particularly if Doug Thomas is the planner.

VICTORIA

ALLGOOD PLANTS & FERNS

Main Road, Emerald, Victoria

Closed Mondays

A.H. (059) 68 4858

Retail

"FERN GLEN"

Garfield North, Victoria

Ferns - Wholesale & Retail

Visitors welcome

Phone: (056) 29 2375

BEASLEY'S NURSERY

195 Warrandyte Road

Doncaster East

Phone: (03) 844 3335

COOL WATERS FERN NURSERY

(Wholesale Propagators)

Beech Forest 3237

Phone: (052) 35 9250

Specializing in cool climate
native ferns.

NEW SOUTH WALES

FERN NURSERY

6 Nelson Street,

Thornleigh 2120

Wholesale & Retail

Phone: (02) 84 2684

MARLEY'S FERNS

5 Seaview Street

Mt. Kuring-gai 2080

Phone: (02) 457 9168

FERN NURSERY

108 King Street

Shortland 2307

Phone: (049) 51 1445

Retail

PLEASE SEE PAGE 3

DIARY DATES

**** Tuesday
March 12th

Bill Taylor & Neil Baillie
"Epiphytes & Davallias"

**** PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE AND VENUE

Thursday
April 11th

Beginners' Night
'Back to the Basics'

Burnley Horticultural School Hall, Burnley, 8 p.m.

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

