THE THE JERN SOCIETY

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE.

December Meeting.

Once again our Christmas breakup proved to be a very successful evening. The hall was beautifully decorated by our ladies and the ferns brought in for display were a delight to behold. It was very noticeable that members are not only gaining in their ability to grow many varieties of ferns to perfection but that the importance of grooming their ferns for display now takes a high priority. Congratulations to all who participated in this rewarding part of our Christmas meeting.

Special Effort. Jean, Kath, and Margaret were able to fill six hampers with the many donations from members, and Mavis Potter again supported us by baking her beautiful Christmas Cake. My thanks to all concerned, and congratulations to the following prize winners.

Chris Goudeys' Adiantum book - Otto Binder Door Prize Consolation Door prize - a fern - May Goschnick

Beulah Powell Hampers (1) John Heath

(4) (5) Derek Griffiths Os Cooper

(3)Jack Barret Jean Boucher

(1)Daryl Wilson Ferns

(2)Albert Ward

(3)Elaine Crellin

Fern Forum. Although we considered a change from this form of meeting may be due this year, our fern forum did give members a chance to gain further knowledge and advice from the experts. I believe that all members enjoyed the responses given by panel members to the host of questions posed. Sincere thanks to Harold Olney, Albert Jenkins, Barry Stagoll, Chris Goudey and Ian Broughton.

The delightful supper provided by members made our Christmas meeting very special. We gathered for a chat, the atmosphere was that of an extremely happy group of fern lovers, enjoying themselves. Thanks to all who helped make this meeting such a success.

Questionnaire. The final response to our questionnaire was excellent and I thank you all for your interest. Don Johnston produced a host of very constructive ideas and included a couple of interesting articles.

The two most common requests were: - More practical nights, and Group discussions (a leader and approximately 20 people discussing a particular topic) it appears we may look forward to yet another very interesting year.



SPEAKER FOR FEBRUARY MEETING

MISS CAROL CURTIS - ORNAMENTAL EXTENSION

OFFICER - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND

RURAL AFFAIRS. TOPIC :- "SOILS AIN'T SOILS"

Sponsor a New Member. As our membership numbers have slipped from above 500 members to less than 400 - our membership Secretary, Jean Trudgeon, suggests that we should make an effort to retrieve this situation by each sponsoring a new member - to build up our numbers again. Please give it a try. Finally I hope to see you all at our first meeting this year - be at Burnley Horticultural School on Thursday, February 13th at 8.00 p.m.

May every member and their ferns flourish in 1986.

Kindest Regards, Keith Hutchinson.

Meeting Report, 13th December, 1985.

Fern Forum.

Ian Broughton, Chris Goudey, Keith Hutchinson, Albert Jenkins, Harold Olney and Barry Stagoll comprised the Panel. Their task for the evening was to answer questions on fern culture put to them by Members.

Here are some of those questions together with answers as supplied by the Forum.

- Q.1. How much light should be aimed at to successfully grow ferns under shelter?
- A.1. If when you run your hand over the fern a shadow is cast, then you have too much light.

 In winter use as much of the sun as you can but insulate in the summer.

 If ferns are a nice healthy green colour, the light is right.

 If the ferns are yellow or white, you have too much light.
- Q.2. Can Pteris ferns be grown well indoors; can they take outdoor conditions and what is their natural environment?
- A.2. The cultivation requirements of Pteris ferns varies through the species. It is a good idea to find out the cultivation needs of individual species before planting. For example cultivars of the cretica species are fairly hardy and would grow well in a fernery. Because of their large size, Pteris Tremula, Pteris argyrea, Pteris comans and Pteris dentata would do best out in a sheltered garden.
- Q.3. What potting mix and cultural management are recommended for growing the Desert Palm fern, (Actiniopteris).
- A.3. Actiniopteris being a desert species is extremely difficult to grow in southern Victoria. It would need a non-humid situation with plenty of light. The potting mixture would need to be very well drained containing sand, gravel, a little leaf mould and a little sandy loam. This species will rot if placed in a humid atmosphere.

- 4 Fern Forum Cont'd
- Q.4. What is meant by the term "Xerophytic ferns" and what soil mixture is required to grow them successfully?
- A.4. Xerophytic ferns are those which grow naturally in dry arid areas. These ferns possess a thick coating of hairs on their fronds. This coating insulates the plant against moisture loss, especially in drought conditions. The silver elk (Platycerium veitchii) is a good example.

Many other genera are lumped together and called "resurrection" ferns. These have the facility to respond quickly to rainfall after long dry spells.

The soil mixture should be very open and free draining.

- Q.5. Why is it that fan ferns (Sticherus) are not found in nurseries?

 A.5. Fan ferns are not easy to grow in an artificial situation. It is possible to succeed with them if they can be planted out in a warm, wet and sunny spot in the garden. They have a very long creeping rhyzome which is very easily broken or damaged should the plant be disturbed.

 In short, fan ferns are not a commercial proposition for nurseries.
- Q.6. Should fern spore be collected only in late summer or can it be collected at other times?
- A.6. Collect spore when it is ripe regardless of the time of year. The Panel advised that any spore which is green coloured should be sown fresh.
- Q.7. Is Lygodium macrophylla procurable in Victoria and can it be successfully grown here without heat?
- A.7. Lygodium macrophylla should be available in Melbourne. It would need conditions similar to those used for growing Lygodium Japonica. L. japonica grows quite well through a Melbourne winter in an unheated glasshouse situation.
- Q.8. What fertilizer should be used on a well established King fern (Todea barbara) and how should it be applied?
- A.8. Partially rotted compost or leaf mould piled around the root area to a depth of two inches is considered adequate.
- Q.9. How important is charcoal in a potting mix?
- A.9. Although some Members of the Panel admitted that they do not use charcoal, others felt that they found it useful in providing potash to a mixture and that it is capable of holding toxins.
- Q.10. Why are English oak leaves considered by many writers to be important in cultivating ferns?
- A.10. English oak leaves provide potash for a mixture and remain flakey for long periods. They do not mulch very well when processed in a dry condition but if left standing in the open for a month or two they mulch much more evenly.

 Other deciduous leaves such as pin oak, liquid amber and claret ash are preferred by some Members.
- Q.11. Does chopped sphagnum moss improve a potting mix?
- A.11. Sphagnum moss is hard to mix with other ingredients and is expensive having regard to the fact that it's main function is to hold moisture. Other less expensive ingredients can be used for the same purpose. However, Sphagnum moss has many specialist uses apart from the above.

 Mixed with minced tree fern fibre and leaf mould, it is excellent for growing caterpiller ferns, elks and their pups, and staghorns. Sick ferns can often be revived by planting them into an almost total component of sphagnum.

Unlike most other garden plants, ferns have no tlowers and do not produce seeds which contain embryos as a result of the fertilisation of the female plant cells (or ovules) by the male plant cells (or pollen grains). Instead, ferns produce spores, generally formed on the backs of mature fronds in rounded capsules or spore-holders, called sporangia.

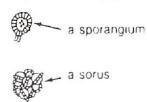
Ferns produce nearly microscopic reproductive cells called spores. \rightarrow %

Spores develop inside spore cases called sporangla

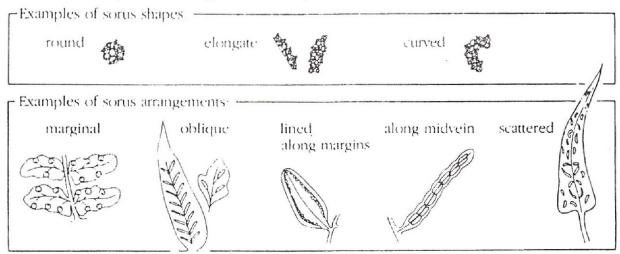
A fern frond with sporangia is a fertile frond.

A fern frond without sporangia is a sterile frond

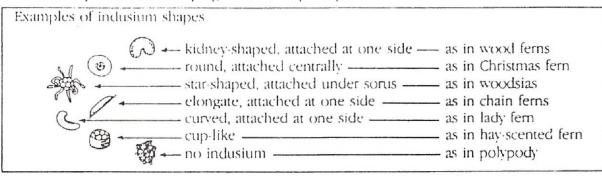
Sporangia are usually grouped into clusters called **sorl** (singular sorus) or fruit dots on the backs of the blades.



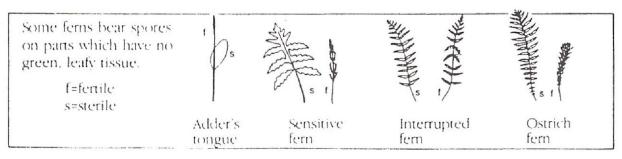
Each fern species has a typical sorus shape and arrangement.



A thin layer of cells, an **indusium**, usually covers the sorus while the spores are developing inside the sporangia.



As spores ripen, the indusium pulls back, shrivels, and often disappears, exposing the sporangia. When spores are fully ripe, the sporangia burst open and spores spill out.

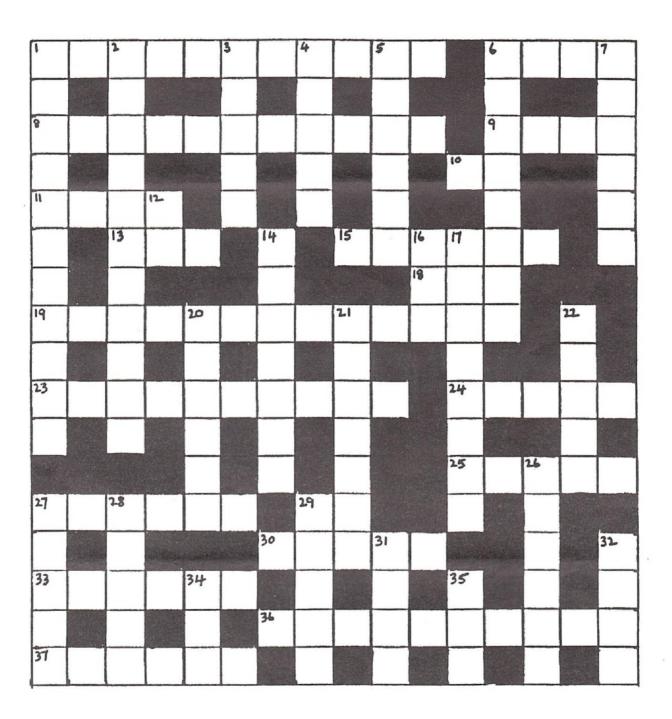


FERN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

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1. Treefern family name (11)
6. Pyrrosia rupestris; common name, the Rock ---- Fern (4)
8. The Bristle Fern; bot. name, --- boschianum (11)
9. Clusters of sporangia (4)
10. Indication of acidity of soil (2)
11. Paesia scaberula, a fern for the finger perhaps (4)
13. Type of root system (3)
15. Marsilea drummondii. Common ---- (6)
18. Vase (3)
19. Clubmoss family name (13)
23. To unite to form a network (of veins etc.) (10)
24. Having joints on stem from which fronds grow (5)
25. Botrychium simplex. The Simple ---- Fern (5)
27. Ophioglossum pendulum, a fern to be worn in the hair perhaps (6)
29. The Silver Cloak Fern, bot, name initials (2)
30. Polystichum lonchitis, a fern for Christmas decorations (5)
33. Annually (6)
36. Delicate-looking but hardy fern often grown in hanging baskets (10)
37. Blechnum spicant, a fern used by all builders (6)
                DOWN
   Polypodium formosanum, The Grut or --- Fern (11)
   Maidenhair family name (11)
   Asplenium platyneuron, The ---- Spleenwort (5)
   Woodwardia fern for hanging around the neck perhaps (5)
   Terrestrial fern which sounds like it has a blood disorder (6)
5.
   Nephrolepsis cordifolia, The Herringbone or ---- Fern (8)
6.
   Belvisia mucronata, The Needle or --- Fern (6)
12. The Dwarf Coral Fern, bot. name initials (2)
14. Growing only in a given region (7)
16. You will wish you hadn't eaten this evergreen bitter-leaved shrub (3)
17. Essential for healthy fern growth (8)
20. Marattia salicina, a fern to be served with the Sunday roast perhaps (6)
21. Pilularia novae-hollandiae, The ---- Pillwort (7)
22. Wet, marshy stretch of ground liked by Lorinseria ferns (5)
26. Plant living only a year (6)
27. Osmunda regalis, certainly a majestic fern (5)
28. Platyzoma microphyllum, could be used in same way as 27 across (5)
29. Fern belonging to the genus Gleichenia (5)
31. Athyrium filix-femina, certainly not a masculine fern (4)
32. From the Psilotaceae family, this fern will be found on most dining tables (4)
34. Alkaline solution (3
35. Lecanopteris sinuosa, a fern which wouldn't like insecticides (3)
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FERN CROSSWORD



CROSSWORD SOLUTION WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF OUR MAGAZINE

ANSWER TO DECEMBER 'CAN YOU NAME THIS FERN QUERY'

THE ILLUSTRATED FERN IS Hermionitis arifolia.

A small delicate fern from Malaysia and the Philippines, where it is often found growing on limestone rocks. Enjoys high humidity and makes a good terrarium plant. Can be easily propagated from the plantlets which form on the fronds.

THE FEBRUARY 'CAN YOU NAME THIS FERN?' IŞ ILLUSTRATED BELOW (ANSWER IN MARCH NEWSLETTER).



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- Q.12. Do Maidenhair ferns benefit from a dressing of lime?
- A.12. Yes they do but with certain reservations. Many species do not need lime. Tenerum and its derivations are one such species, whereas the Raddianum species need it. It is a good idea to find out where species grow naturally. Those species which originate in leaf litter do not need lime; those which grow among rocks and boulders need a little lime.

 A simple method of applying lime is to sprinkle a pinch over the surface of the mixture in the pot and water this in.

It is not possible to include all questions discussed by the Panel in this report. The remainder may be included in some future issue of the Newsletter.

SEAWEED A GOOD BASKET LINER - by Don Johnston.

Some Maidenhair ferns (the first ferns I ever had) needed dividing, and since I had nothing to use for lining the baskets I resorted to my old favourite "mulch".

For years I have successfully used seaweed (sea grass) mulch on vegetables, natives and flower gardens. So I lined my baskets with 5 cm. of seaweed. That was six years ago - the baskets remain a mass of maidenhair from the sides, the bottom and the top. The seaweed remains unchanged - I don't wash it, and it it grows beautiful ferns.

CORRESPONDENCE ACROSS THE WORLD FROM TEXAS.

Harold Olney reports on his correspondence with Connie Timm from Texas, U.S.A. She recently travelled south to Ecuador - and this extract from her letter should allay the fears of any members planning to travel overseas, and take in Ecuador in their itinerary; as it is a haven for many choice ferns.

"Please tell the Members of your Society that Ecuador seems to be some what more stable than the other South American countries. We were very well escorted by Ecuadorian friends, and never had a moment of anxiety."

CORRECTION AND APOLOGY.

The attention of members is drawn to an error in the December, 1986 issue of the Newsletter. On Page 4 under the heading "A visit to Kew Gardens-Surrey, England" and the paragraph beginning "At Worcestershire" - the people involved "Rita and Roy Rodwell" should have read "Rita and Roy Coughlin" our apologies to Rita and Roy and our speaker Barry Stagoll.

SEASONS GREETINGS FROM ENGLAND.

Mr. A. R. Busby - our Member from Coventry, England has written "To wish all Members of the Society - All the best for the New Year" - a wish that we, in turn, reciprocate to Mr. Busby.

1986 ANNUAL FERN SHOW

As announced in the Newsletter for December, the Fern Show this year will be held on 12th and 13th April at a new venue, viz., Nunawading Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill.

The change in venue means that we will need to intensify our publicity campaign if we are to get a good attendance at the Show, and all members are asked to help with this. Supplies of leaflets advertising the Show will be available at the February and March meetings. Everyone attending is asked to take some of these and arrange to have them displayed in places where they are likely to attract the attention of potential visitors. The Show Sub-Committee will be endeavouring to arrange wide publicity through the media, but extra advertising by the leaflets and other means is most important.

If you have any ideas on how to improve our advertising (or any other aspect of the Show) please contact one of the members of the Show Sub-Committee, who are as follows:

Bob Lee (Chairman)	Phone	8361528
Julian Basser		5963132
Bernadette Blackstock		3915517
Ian Broughton	(059	646402
Peter Duell		5929968
Sue Gardner-Berry		8622595
Derek Griffiths		3363157
Peter Puglisi		3751748
Barry & Gay Stagoll		7292712
Bill Taylor		2774310

We do not plan to have a special theme for the display this year, as the new venue will provide element of novelty, but will aim to have a good general display of well-grown ferns. So please bring along your prize specimens and special favourites, particularly if they are of species not often seen. Ferns do not have to be large to merit a place in the display; their beauty comes from being well-grown and well-groomed.

The most important activity of the Show after the display is the sale of ferns grown by Society members. A number of people supply ferns regularly for the sale tables and we hope they will continue to do so, but we would like to remind you that this facility is open to all members who may have surplus ferns suitable for sale. The only requirements are that the plants must be healthy and that you tell us in advance of your intention so as to ease the administration.

It has been suggested that as the Horticultural Centre has good kitchen facilities we should consider providing a tea/coffee and biscuits service. Would anybody who would be willing to help with this please tell a Sub-Committee member soon so that we can decide whether such a move is feasible.

Finally - to repeat an old refrain - the success of the Show depends on the participation of as many members as possible and on a regular infusion of "new blood" to prevent it becoming stereotyped. So please "be in it" if you possibly can by supplying ferns and/or helping in the various activities during weekend.

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DIARY DATES.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY, 13th ... CAROL CURTIS "SOILS AIN'T SOILS".

Burnley Horticultural College Hall, Swan Street, Burnley, 8.00 p.m.

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

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