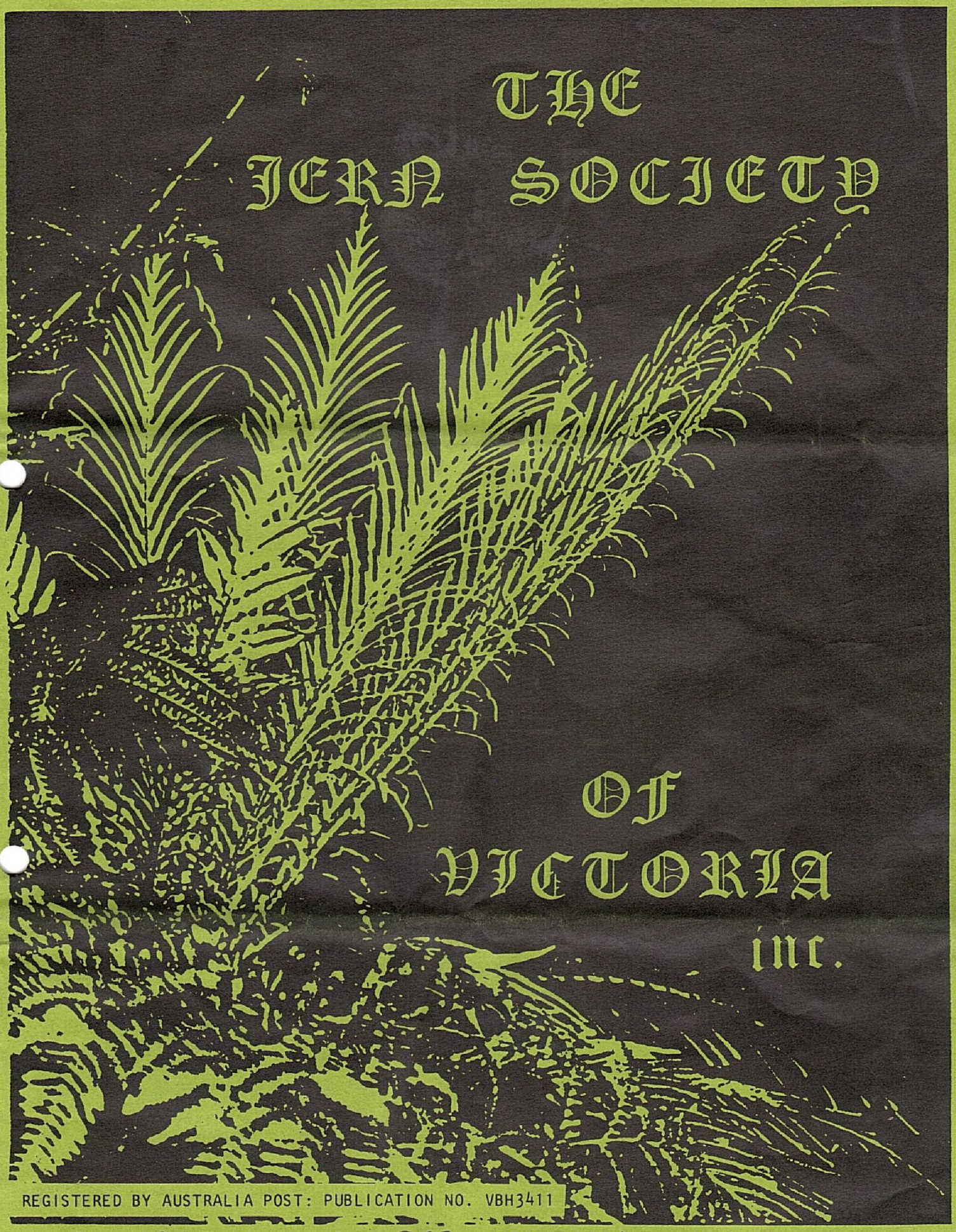

THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 3 APRIL 1986

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****

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE.

I would like to sincerely apologise for any inconvenience caused by the necessary change of date and venue for the March meeting. We had to move to the Herbarium because Garden Week was held at Burnley. However, all future meetings in 1986 will be at the Burnley Horticultural School Hall at 8.00 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

MARCH MEETING.

Chris Goudey presented a most interesting talk illustrated with excellent slides of a visit to Tasmania. The slides showed many of the fern areas we will visit during the Tasmanian Excursion in March, 1987.

I'm sure that any member considering this trip will now add their names to the list, which incidentally is almost filled.

Thankyou Chris for showing us the beauty of Tasmania, and the delightful range of ferns that grow in that state.

FERN SHOW.

The show Committee have worked very hard to prepare for this event in a new venue - do support Bob Lee and his team at the Nunawading Horticultural Centre on 12th and 13th April.

BOOK SALES.

Barry White will take over from Lorraine Goudey as Manager Book Sales. Thankyou Lorraine for a wonderful job over many years.

SPECIAL EFFORT.

Winners of Six excellent ferns were:-

1. Keith Vage
2. Noel Jeffery
3. Rod McConechie
4. Robert Dobson
5. Bill Forte
6. Anne Nicholson

Kind Regards,

Keith Hutchinson.

APRIL MEETING - 10TH APRIL- AT BURNLEY

A PRACTICAL NIGHT - ALBERT JENKINS
NEIL BAILLIE & KEITH HUTCHINSON.

****

THE FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

SIXTH ANNUAL FERN SHOW

at

Nunawading Horticultural Centre

83 Jolimont Road
Forest Hill
(Melway Ref. 62 F4)

Saturday,	12th April	10.00 am - 6.00 pm
Sunday	13th April	10.00 am - 5.00 pm

As this Newsletter will be received by most members a few days before the start of the Show there is still a little time to firm up on those good resolutions to take part in the activities and to give display plants a final grooming. Extra help will still be most welcome in all areas and offers can be made to any of the Sub-Committee members (phone numbers in February Newsletter).

Please continue your efforts to advertise the Show right up till the weekend. Advertising is particularly important this year because of the new venue.

Setting up of the display and the sales area will commence about noon on Friday, 11th April, after all the requisites are assembled. Display ferns will be welcome from mid-morning but we would prefer not to receive sale ferns until the afternoon so that the tables are set up ready to receive them and staff on hand to check them in. Don't forget to put your own name on all display ferns to ensure their safe return.

Members wishing to sell ferns at the Show are reminded that we need to know of their intention in advance - by phone to 836 1528 if not done already. We would be grateful if members could bring along to the Show any small cardboard boxes they have available that would be suitable for packing sold ferns.

● Michael Garrett

PTERIS QUADRIAURITA AND CULTIVARS. BY MR. MICHAEL GARRETT.

From the family Pteridaceae, this is one of the better tongue-twisters of the 250 or so species of Pteris. These occur mainly in the tropics and sub-tropics, P. quadriaurita itself being very widespread in the tropics of both Old and New Worlds. Actually it embraces a rather large and complex polymorphic group of ferns, including such species as P. biaurita, P. nemeralis, P. longipinnula and P. asperula.

In the wild, P. quadriaurita can grow to 2m tall from a short stocky rhizome, and is somewhat cold-sensitive. The very popular Pteris quadriaurita 'Argyrea' or Silver Brake only grows to about 1 metre and being native to high altitudes in the mountains of India, is much more cold hardy. This is an extremely striking fern, where from a very early age it has broad bands of white running down the cnetre of its pinnae. It is probably the most attractive and distinct of all the variegated ferns.

Another variety, P. quadriaurita 'Tricolor', is almost as distinct in its own way, with new fronds emerging deep red and remaining that colour for a while before changing to deep green. Older fronds still maintain contrasting deep red stipes and main veins. This fern is not as cold hardy as P. 'Argyrea' and overall not as easy to grow.

Both are easily raised and come true to colour from spore. Old plants may also be carefully divided. P. 'Argyrea' in particular does well as a contrast plant in mixed plantings, or because of its size and speed of growth, as a specimen plant. Unfortunately, as with most other Pteris species, they make great tucker for scale insects, but if these are carefully removed when first seen, can be kept at bay.

Pteris quadriaurita 'Argyrea'

ANSWER TO MARCH **'CAN YOU NAME THIS FERN QUERY'**

CYATHEA COOPERI

From Queensland and New South Wales, this species has a trunk to over 10 m high at maturity. Fronds are large and grow quickly to make a very attractive fern. Readily available, quick growing and handsome, this tree fern is not difficult to keep in cultivation.

SPORE LIST

(*) INDICATES SPECIES IN SHORT SUPPLY
(N) INDICATES NATIVE AUSTRALIAN SPECIES

N	ADIANTUM AETHIOPICUM(5-84)	COMMON MAIDENHAIR
N*	CAPILLUS-VENERIS(12-83)	VENUS-HAIR FERN
	CAUDATUM(3-85)	TRAILING MAIDENHAIR
N	FORMOSUM(7-84)	BLACK STEM
N*	HISPIDULUM(3-84)	ROUGH MAIDENHAIR
	PATENS(10-83)	
	PERUVIANUM(3-84)	SILVER DOLLAR
	RADDIANUM 'CRESTED MAJUS'(6-84)	
*	RADDIANUM 'FRITZ LUTH'(6-84)	
	RADDIANUM 'GRACILLIMUM'(3-84)	
	RADDIANUM 'LEGRAND MORGAN'(3-85)	
	RADDIANUM 'MICROPINNULUM'(3-85)	
*	RADDIANUM 'OLD LACE'(2-84)	
	RADDIANUM 'PACIFIC MAID'(3-85)	
*	RADDIANUM 'TRIUMPH'(10-84)	
	RADDIANUM 'VICTORIA S ELEGANS'(3-85)	
*	RADDIANUM 'WEIGANDII'(10-84)	
*	TENERUM 'GLORIOSUM GREEN'(3-84)	
	TENERUM 'PINK FERGUSSONII'(3-85)	
*	TENERUM 'PINK SLEEPING BEAUTY'(4-84)	
	TENERUM 'SLEEPING BEAUTY'(4-84)	
*	TRAPEZIFORME 'BRASILIENSE'(3-84)	DIAMOND MAIDENHAIR
N	SP.(AFF. WHITEI/S.E.QLD)(3-85)	
N	AMPHINEURON OPULENTUM(2-84)	
	ANEMIA MEXICANA(12-83)	FLOWERING HOLLY-FERN
	PHYLLITIDIS(?)	
N	ARACHNIODES ARISTATA(3-85)	PRICKLY SHIELD-FERN
*	ARISTATA VARIEGATA(2-84)	
*	SIMPLICIOR(?)	
N	ASPLENIUM BULBIFERUM(NATIVE)(2-85)	MOTHER SPLEENWORT
N*	FLABELLIFOLIUM(3-84)	NECKLACE FERN
N	TRICHOMANES(1-86)	COMMON SPLEENWORT
	ATHYRIUM FELIX-FEMINA(2-84)	LADY-FERN
N	BLECHNUM CARTILAGINEUM(12-83)	GRISTLE FERN
N*	CARTILAGINEUM 'TROPICUM'(2-85)	GRISTLE FERN
N	CHAMBERSII(3-85)	LANCE WATER-FERN
*	DISCOLOR(1-85)	CROWN FERN
N	FLUVIATILE(4-84)	RAY WATER-FERN
	GIBBUM(4-84)	DWARF TREE-FERN
N	INDICUM(2-85)	SWAMP WATER-FERN
N	MINUS(2-84)	SOFT WATER-FERN
N	NUDUM(1-84)	FISHBONE WATER-FERN
N	NUDUM 'PULCHERRIMUM'(8-85)	
*	OCCIDENTALE(3-84)	HAMMOCK FERN
N*	PATERSONII(5-84)	STRAP WATER-FERN
*	REVOLUTUM(?)	
*	TABULARE(?)	
N*	VULCANICUM(4-84)	WEDGE WATER-FERN
N	WATTSII(2-85)	HARD WATER-FERN
N	WURUNURAN(9-84)	
N	CHEILANTHES SIEBERI(1-86)	MULGA FERN
N	CHRISTELLA DENTATA(2-85)	BINUNG
N	PARASITICA(1-84)	
N*	COLYSIS SAYERI(2-84)	
	CONIOGRAMME JAPONICA 'VARIEGATA'(2-85)	

*	CTENITIS SLOANEI(3-84)	FLORIDA TREEFERN
N	CYATHEA AUSTRALIS(3-85)	ROUGH TREE-FERN
	BROWNII(2-85)	
N	COOPERI(3-85)	COIN-SPOT TREE-FERN
N	COOPERI (BLACK SCALES)(3-85)	COIN-SPOT TREE-FERN
N	CUNNINGHAMII(2-84)	SLENDER TREE-FERN
	DEALBATA(2-85)	SILVER TREE-FERN
N	LEICHHARDTIANA(3-85)	PRICKLY TREE-FERN
N	MARCESCENS (CUNNINGHAMII/AUSTRALIS MIX)(3-84)	
	MEDULLARIS(2-85)	BLACK TREE-FERN
	SMITHII(4-84)	SOFT TREEFERN
N*	WOOLLSIANA(3-85)	
	SP.(NEW GUINEA)(3-85)	
N	CYCLOSORUS TRUNCATUS(3-84)	
	CYRTOMIUM FALCATUM(3-84)	HOLLY FERN
N	DAVALLIA PYXIDATA(3-85)	HARE'S-FOOT FERN
*	SOLIDA 'RUFFLED ORNATA'(3-84)	
N*	DENNSTAEDTIA DAVALLIOIDES(3-84)	LACY GROUND-FERN
N	DICKSONIA ANTARCTICA(2-85)	SOFT TREE-FERN
	SQUARROSA(3-84)	WHEKI
N	YOUNGIAE(S.QLD FORM)(6-85)	BRISTLY TREE-FERN
N	DIPLAZIUM AUSTRALE(3-85)	AUSTRAL LADY-FERN
N	DOODIA ASPERA(2-85)	PRICKLY RASP-FERN
N*	CAUDATA 'LAMINOSA'(1-85)	
N	MAXIMA(5-84)	
N	MEDIA(1-85)	COMMON RASP-FERN
*	DORYOPTERIS PEDATA(10-83)	HAND FERN
	DRYOPTERIS ATRATA(3-84)	SHAGGY SHIELD-FERN
*	CARTHUSIANA(2-85)	NARROW BUCKLER-FERN
	ERYTHROSORA(4-84)	AUTUMN FERN
	GYMNOSORA 'ANGUSTATA'(4-85)	
	SIEBOLDI(3-85)	
	SP.(FILIX-MAS?)(3-84)	(MALE FERN?)
*	SP-2(2-84)	
	HUMATA GRIFFITHIANA(5-84)	
N	HYPOLEPIS PUNCTATA(3-84)	DOWNY GROUND-FERN
N	LASTREOPSIS ACUMINATA(3-85)	SHINY SHIELD-FERN
N*	HISPIDA(11-84)	BRISTLY SHIELD-FERN
N	MICROSORA(10-84)	CREEPING SHIELD-FERN
N	MUNITA(10-84)	
N*	LUNATHYRIUM JAPONICUM(5-84)	JAPANESE LADY-FERN
N	LYGODIUM MICROPHYLLUM(5-84)	CLIMBING MAIDENHAIR
	MICROSORIUM COMMUTATUM(10-84)	
N	DIVERSIFOLIUM(3-85)	KANGAROO FERN
	PARKSII(3-85)	
	NEPHROLEPIS CORDIFOLIA 'PLUMOSA'(10-83)	
*	SP.(EASTERN ZIMBABWE GIANT)(?)	
N	OPHIOGLOSSUM PENDULUM(3-85)	RIBBON FERN
N	PELLAEA FALCATA(3-85)	SICKLE FERN
N	FALCATA NANA(11-83)	DWARF SICKLE-FERN
N	PARADOXA(11-83)	
	ROTUNDIFOLIA(11-84)	BUTTON FERN
*	PHYLLITIS SCOLOPENDRIUM(3-84)	HART'S-TONGUE FERN
*	PLATYCERIUM GRANDE(10-85)	
	HOLTTUMII(4-84)	
	MENTELOSII(10-85)	
	RIDLEYII(11-85)	
N*	SUPERBUM(2-84)	STAGHORN FERN
*	POLYPODIUM ANGUSTIFOLIUM(4-84)	NARROW-LEAF STRAP FERN
	DECUMANUM(10-85)	
*	FORMOSANUM(12-83)	GRUB FERN
	POLYSTICHUM ACROSTICHOIDES(3-85)	CHRISTMAS FERN
N	AUSTRALIENSE(3-85)	
N	FORMOSUM(1-86)	BROAD SHIELD-FERN
	LENTUM(3-85)	
N	PROLIFERUM(3-85)	MOTHER SHIELD-FERN

Continued on Page 10.

HE EXAMINER, Thursday, January 23, 1986 — 29

New fern made in Hobart

Something strange happened in a test tube in Laura van der Staay's laboratory in Hobart.

The result is a fern with scented leaves, possibly the first ever.

Westlands sub-manager Michael Garrett found a compact little fern called nephrolepis cordifolia which he thought would make a good house plant.

He gave it to Laura who began a process of tissue culture with it so that in the end she could have thousands of the fern's progeny.

But in the chemical soup in which the microscopic pieces of the fern had been placed, the fern's genes somehow altered.

The first of the nephrolepis's offspring had scented leaves.

It was called Mystique, or botanically nephrolepis cordifolia garrettii, after Michael Garrett.

It has now been nominated as a national house plant of the year.

Laura's laboratory technicians now have the expertise to produce tens of thousands and within a few years this mystery Australian fern is expected to be decorating and scenting houses throughout the world.

THE AGE, Wednesday 19 March 1986 —3

New bushfire fears as bracken fern takes over in the paddocks

By FIONA HARARI

SYDNEY. — The deadly bracken fern is rapidly taking over many Australian pastures.

This aggressive survivor fuels bushfires and kills cattle, sheep and native plants. It also has been linked to cancer in humans.

Now researchers are saying it is able to overcome chemical controls — the only known method of countering its spread — by rapid mutation.

This ability, say the University of Sydney researchers, has enabled the fern to achieve big increases in the areas it covers, which are now creating the potential for major bushfires in south-eastern Australia.

According to Professor John Thomson, from the university's school of biological sciences, bracken fern can withstand fire and drought, and its trunk, which is protected underground, can survive for three to five years without food.

It slowly reduces the variety of plants in woodland areas, and, in areas prone to bushfires, it shades out other plants and retards their growth. Highly flammable, it helped fuel the Ash Wednesday fires around Mount Macedon in Victoria and in South Australia and ended up being more populous in south-east Australia after those fires.

"We have also discovered that toxins from the bracken inhibit the growth of some other plants, giving the bracken a further head start. The scene is set for a worse bushfire next time," Professor Thomson said.

"It is simplifying the variety of plants and woodland communities that burn frequently.

"The result is that bracken fern may have an inbuilt protection against attack. Some parts of a bracken clump may be affected or killed off, but others may regenerate and take their place."

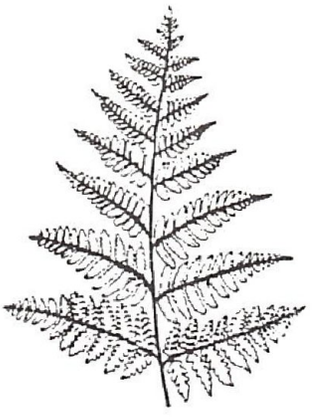
Professor Thomson said bracken fern also produced a soluble chemical which, when washed onto other plants, inhibited their growth.

He said: "It either kills them, stops them germinating or slows them down."

While bracken would not start a fire, its rapid regrowth would make any fire worse. He said it was "an aggressive invader" of grassland in many parts of Australia, and, by spreading into pasture, deprived many animals of food.

The Japanese import large quantities of the poisonous plant from Siberia and eat its unfurled head as a snack, dipped in soy sauce. Professor Thomson said this correlated with a high incidence of bowel cancer.

He said research overseas had shown that the plant caused bright blindness (degeneration of the retina) in sheep, staggers in horses and malignant cancers in the mouths of cattle.

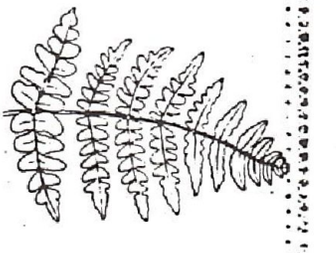


Professor Thomson and his team have started defining the extent of bracken — which is found on at least four continents — in Australia. At present, the plant can be controlled only by the costly spraying of large amounts of chemicals.

He said researchers at the University of Glasgow had found that 96 per cent of cattle over the age of seven in bracken areas of Scotland had malignant growths, usually in their mouths and gullets. A high incidence of cancer of the lower bowel among humans in some areas of Wales was thought to be caused by the release of a soluble chemical that entered cows' milk.

"We thought this was a very conservative plant, that has been around for 60 to 100 million years. It looks the same all over the world," Professor Thomson said.

"But we found that is not true. It can change very quickly."

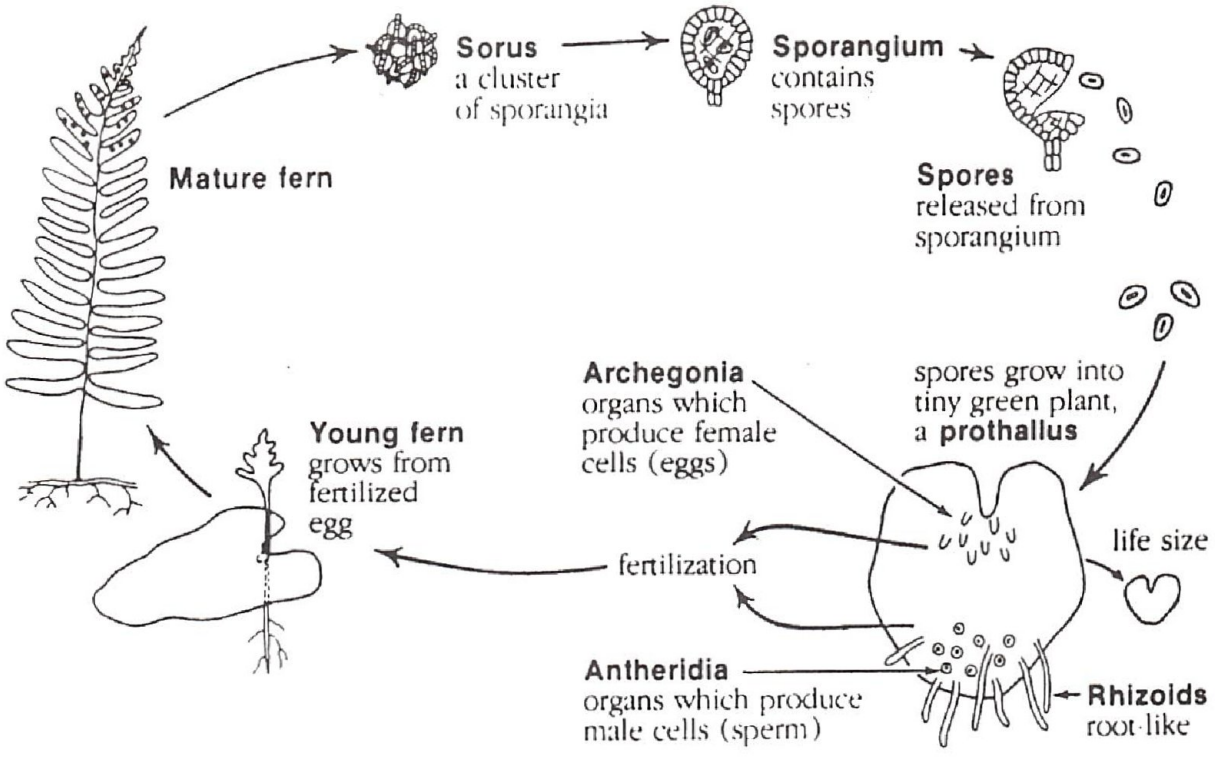


BEGINNERS PAGE

The fern and the way it reproduced was, until the middle of the last century, one of the great botanical mysteries. Nothing was known at all of its life cycle, though it was assumed that, like all other known plants, it went through the normal processes of fertilisation and development of a seed and thence, regeneration. But the seed (if there was such a thing) was invisible. It was thus surrounded by superstition and credited with supernatural properties because of this seemingly magical ability to re-create itself.

Magical it is not but fascinating it is. The life cycle of the fern is one of the most interesting and intriguing of the plant world. It is a most ancient and primitive process which happens in a very low key way, and unless the observer knows what to look for the whole show can be missed.

The diagram below shows the various stages of the life cycle of the fern.



TERMS FREQUENTLY USED IN DESCRIBING FERNS

crenata - krē nā' tȧ. Crenate; toothed, with the teeth rounded.

crested. Having appendages resembling a crest.

crown. The growing end of the rootstock or caudex.

crozier. The young uncoiling fern frond; fiddlehead.

deciduous. Losing the leaves after the growing season.

dentata - den tā' tȧ. Toothed along the margin.

dimorpha - dī mor' fȧ. Dimorphous, having fronds of two kinds, usually barren and fertile.

Reprinted with agreement of Fern Society of South Australia.

Tassie finds new methods

Tasmania leads the world in important methods of tissue culture — the growing of thousands of plants from microscopic pieces of the parent plant.

This has led to a new industry in which statewide firm Westlands is now exporting to the mainland, New Zealand, America, Japan, Israel and the Arab state of Abu Dabai.

And to meet the enormous American demand, Westlands now has ideas of licensing an American laboratory to use its secret and very effective methods to produce plants.

The new industry can be traced to a romance between a Tasmanian and an American girl student at the University of California.

Robert van der Staay, of Westlands Nursery, obtained his bachelor and masters degrees in biology at the American university and while there met a fellow student, Laura, who also gained her degree.

They married and built a house on Westland's property in Pottery Rd, Hobart.

They have two young sons, but in between being a wife and mother Laura became interested in the relatively new science of meristem culture, the mass cloning of plants.

With help from Robert, she began scientific research in a few small rooms in Pottery Rd.

She had the theory from her university work but her training had not been specifically related to this field of plant reproduction.

Laura gathered supplies of micro formation, or trace elements, macro elements, auxins, which promote root formation, cytokinins, which foster shooting, some growth factors, sugar and agar.

Months of trial and error followed.

Each type of plant needed different treatment and as several years passed she developed both the correct "soup" and the methods needed to make each plant grow from a piece the size of a pinhead or less into small lumpy masses that could be divided under a microscope into many more pieces.

The three stages of development of the first tiny piece can each take anything from four weeks to two years, but at the final stage the growing segment can be divided 15 to 20 times, and each of these pieces after two to four months can again be divided 15 to 20 times.

Extend that a few times and you're talking of tens of thousands.

Laura could not cope with a large production so she and Robert recruited staff and extended the laboratory, adding the latest equipment.

Now 15 work in this area, trained by Laura to produce tens of thousands of plants a week of a quality that has gained buyers in many countries.

Room after room has been added to the laboratory to cope with the blossoming demand.

White-clad staff walk through a shallow tray of chemical solution each time they enter the rooms so that no earth-borne bacteria can enter the highly sterile area.

Individual stainless steel benches each carry strong lights, strong magnifying glasses and surgical knives, tweezers and probes.

The air that passes over the benches is cleaned before it reaches the plant tissue and solution.

About 50 pieces of the lumpy little mass grown from the tip of a fern finally go into the jelly-like "soup" in the bottom of each 10cm plastic container.

Thousands of these jars stay in a temperature and light-controlled room for about 10 weeks before the new plants are large enough for planting out.

Laura now is pressuring the family company for an even larger set-up to cope with the growing overseas demand for plants.

Most of the demand is for house plants for which mass production by the system she has developed is most suited.

Her ambition is to develop the laboratory to the stage where it can comfortably meet world demand, and then delegate supervision of the project.

This would leave her free for more purely scientific research into this field fo which she has proven a remarkable aptitude.

Reprinted with agreement of The Launceston Examiner.

COMPLETION OF SPORE LIST.

*	SETIFERUM(2-84)	SOFT SHIELD-FERN
*	TSUS-SIMENSE(4-84)	TSUS-SIMA HOLLY-FERN
N	PTERIS COMANS(2-85)	NETTED BRAKE
	CRETICA(2-85)	CRETAN BRAKE
	CRETICA 'ALBOLINEATA'(10-84)	RIBBON BRAKE
	HENDERSONII(2-84)	
	MACILENTA(4-84)	N.Z. BRAKE
*	MULTIFIDA(2-84)	SPIDER BRAKE
	SEMIPINNATA(2-84)	
N	TREMULA(2-85)	TENDER BRAKE
N	UMBROSA(10-83)	JUNGLE BRAKE
N	VITTATA(3-85)	CHINESE BRAKE
	QUERCEFILIX ZEYELINICA(10-85)	OAK FERN
	RUMOHRA ADIANTIFORMIS(CAPE FORM)(3-85)	LEATHER FERN
N	ADIANTIFORMIS(NATIVE)(3-85)	LEATHERY SHIELD-FERN
*	SCYPHULARIA PENTAPHYLLA(4-84)	BLACK CATERPILLAR FERN
*	THELYPTERIS PATENS 'LEPIDA'(?)	
N	TODEA BARBARA(3-85)	KING FERN

FAMILY - Schizaeceae.

GENUS - Lygodium Swartz.

(LĪ gō'di um)

There are forty species of this genus found in all continents, four have been found in Australia. These ferns are terrestrial with short or long creeping underground rhizomes, found in tropical and sub tropical areas.

These are true climbing ferns which are unique in having a frond or stem which can twist and climb around and over other plants, fallen tree trunks and up rainforest trees, sometimes to the very top. The main rhachis or stem of the frond extends from the rhizome to the growing tip and can be of indefinite length.

Other so-called climbing ferns (microsorum, arthropteris, davallia) clamber and climb over rocks and tree trunks by means of a long creeping rhizome which attach to the host by the roots and not a climbing stem.

The sterile and fertile pinnules are produced on the same frond with the fertile ones usually at the growing tip. The fertile pinnules are smaller with projected lobes around the margin which bear the two rows of sporangia covered by an indusium. The ferns are propagated from spore.

These ferns can be grown in a basket, but are usually grown in the ground and trained over trellis, fence or around posts and trees. Will tolerate bright filtered or indirect sunlight provided the roots are kept moist but not soggy.

The old fronds should be removed in the spring to allow the new growth to develop.

The stems of these ferns are very strong and tough and are used in some countries as a substitue for string and rope.

Lygodium japonicum

This species has a long creeping rhizome. The pinnules are pinnate with the lobes deeply cut and toothed, the terminal lobes longer than the others. The fertile pinnules are similiar but smaller.

This species will hybridize with L. flexuosum, variations can occur which can create difficulties in the actual identification. Will grow in a shady sheltered frost free location in a well drained mixture. It is being grown in the ground and also in hanging baskets in the Sydney area.

The fern is a native of eastern Asia, found also in south eastern Asia, India, China, North Queensland, North Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Lygodium japonicum (Actual size)

D I A R Y D A T E S .

APRIL - PRACTICAL NIGHT - 3 MEMBER SPEAKERS
MAY - BEGINNERS NIGHT - DOUG THOMAS.

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

BUYERS' GUIDE TO FERN NURSERIES.

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Melway map 256 T6 open 7 days

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62 Walker Road, Seville, 3139
Phone: (059) 64 4680
(look for sign on Warburton Highway 300 m east of Seville Shopping Centre)
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(Wholesale propagators)
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