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PRESIDENTS REPORT.

As our opening meeting for 1987 drew near, difficulties with our venue were causing great concern but thanks to the efforts of Derek Griffiths we were able to meet in the Repco Training Centre. This proved to be a delightful setting but at this stage will not be available for future meetings so the Herbarium will be our home for the present. As the second Thursday each month has been the field naturalists' meeting night for many years ours will be the third thursday when available and twice we will have to meet on a Tuesday. Please take careful note of each meeting date in the newsletter.

FEBRUARY MEETING.

Over 80 members enjoyed an excellent talk and slide presentation by Barry Stagoll. An impressive array of magnificent ferns were brought in by members for display and with the Doodia family well **pepresented** Chris Goudey gave us a brief outline on their culture and showed us several quite rare Doodia species. Sincere thanks to both Barry and Chris.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP.

I had great pleasure in presenting Life memberships to Jean Trudgeon and Albert Jenkins during our meeting. Jean has been a leading member of our newsletter team, treasurer, and now membership secretary while Albert was involved with the formation of our society and our first Senior Vice-President. Both sterling workers for many years. Congratulations Jean and Albert.

TASSIE TRIP AND FERN SHOW.

The excursion to Tasmania takes place early March followed by our meeting on Thursday March 19th. Together with our show at Nunawading on April 4th & 5th the society calendar is indeed a busy one over this period. Publicity for our show is of the utmost importance so please make the effort to display the poster enclosed with this newsletter, in a prominent place in your local Nursery, Supermarket, or Milkbar.

DOOR PRIZE.

Our door prize (a Drip system) was won by Derek Griffiths our hardworking secretary and a very worthy member.

SPECIAL EFFORT WINNERS.

- 1. J. Adams
- 2. Anne Bryant
- 3. Peter Goschnick
- 4. Betty Allgood

- 5. Peter Goschnick
- 6. Joy Horman
- 7. Terry Tierney

THURSDAY 19TH MARCH - 8.00 P.M.

AT THE HERBARIUM

Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

** PLEASE NOTE: THIS DATE IS THE THIRD THURSDAY.

SPEAKERS: BILL TAYLOR

"GROWING FERNS FROM SPORE USING AFRICAN VIOLET MIX"

JOEL MACHER.

"UTILIZING THE SPORE BANK"

FERN OF THE MONTH.

I would like to thank all members who brought in ferns for display at our February meeting. Hypolepis is to be the fern of the month for March, so if you have one bring it along for identification or cultural requirements.

Kind Regards,

Keith Hutchinson.

A FERN ENTERPRISE - VISITED.

Members who travelled to Cozens Road, Lara on Sunday, 15th February, 1987 were treated to a fern lovers spectacular. The visit was at the invitation of Chris and Lorraine Goudey and their daughters Carolyn and Yvonne.

At least 150 members responded to the invitation and although most were bewildered by the size and scope of the property, they thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality and appreciated the opportunity to see at first hand some unheard-of specimens of exotic ferns.

Because of the high cost of glasshouse heating, only one of the many huge glasshouses and igloo type structures is heated, and this by gas. It is in this building that the choicest of the Goudey family collection is housed.

The igloos are covered in a heavy plastic material overhead whilst the more conventional gable roofed buildings are covered on roof and walls by corregated fibreglass. Each has an extensive system of ventilators which can be regulated to provide the fresh air needed by the ferns. The light available in each enclosure was fairly bright.

Among the unusual ferns were several introduced Platyceriums (elkhorns), an ant fern from the Pacific Islands and some spectacular specimens of New Zealands Leptopteris superba. The Leptopteris were housed in a very humid enclosure; an enclosure which closely resembled a huge terrarium.

The afternoon was a delight and greatly appreciated by those who attended. The thanks of members is accorded to the Goudey family - and to John Hodges for supplying the Urn.

The Fern Society of Victoria Inc.

SEVENTH ANNUAL FERN SHOW

at

Nunawading Horticultural Centre

82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill (Melway Ref. 62 F4)

Saturday,	4th	April	10.00	am	-	6.00	pm
Sunday,	5th	April	10.00	am	-	5.00	pm

With the Show now only a little over three weeks away, the Show Sub-Committee is anxious to finalize arrangements as soon as possible. We should particularly like to receive firm offers for specific times from members who plan to come and participate in the Show activities - setting up and later dismantling of the display, staffing it during opening hours to answer visitor's questions, selling and restocking in the sales area, demonstrations, the tea and coffee service (much appreciated at its introduction last year), etc. Lack of a vast knowledge of ferns should not be a drawback to joining in and enjoying the Show; you can always ask someone else if you get asked a "curly one" and learn from the answer.

Setting up the display hall and preparing and stocking the sales area will be done on Friday, 3rd April, beginning at about noon, after the necessary accessories have been assembled. We should like to receive display ferns as early in the afternoon and evening as possible (a limited number could be accommodated in the late morning but advance notice would be appreciated).

The general needs for the display have been mentioned in the last two Newsletters and we look forward to receiving a good selection of well-groomed, healthy ferns from a wide spread of our members. Remember that quality of the display specimens is more important than large size, and do please have all ferns adequately labelled (with both their names and yours).

Would members wishing to sell ferns at the Show who have not already advised their intention, please do so at the March meeting or by phone to 836 1528. If offering very small plants for sale, please also bring along a specimen of each type of a reasonable size for display in the sales area so as to give customers a better idea of what the more mature fern will look like. As there will be some emphasis on hardy ferns in the display and this may influence customer expectations of sale ferns, any which require hot-house conditions should be clearly marked to this effect to avoid customer disappointment. We would prefer not to receive any sale ferns before about 1 p.m., to give us time to get benches in the sales area properly organised.

We should be grateful if members coming to the Show would bring with them any smallish cardboard boxes they may have that could be used for packing sold ferns.

Our publicity efforts should continue right up till the time of the Show. An advertising leaflet for the Show is included with your Newsletter and extras will be available at the March meeting. Please try to have them displayed prominently at suitable public places in your neighbourhood (nurseries, florists, libraries, etc) to attract the attention of potential visitors to the Show.

Limited public transport is available to the Horticultural Centre. Bus 765 which runs from Nunawading Station to Mitcham Station goes along Jolimont Road but it does not operate on Sundays. Departures from Nunawading Station are every half hour on week days and Saturday morning and hourly after 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Please contact a Member of the Show Sub-Committee (names and phone numbers in February Newsletter) with offers of ferns or help, any queries, etc.

Bob Lee

SPEAKER REPORT: GENERAL MEETING 12th FEBRUARY, 1987. GUEST SPEAKER: BARRY STAGOLL. TITLE: A TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND.

Barry and Gay made their journey to New Zealand in August 1986 and although visits to fern growing areas were high on the agenda of activities, these visits were somewhat restricted by demand on Barry's time by his employer.

However, Barry explained that in the vicinity of Lake Tekapo on the South island, colonies of Blechnum penna marina and Polystichum Vestitum were found covered in snow. The odd thing was that the plants appeared unaffected by their refrigerated environment.

Further searches along the West coast revealed Blechnum discolour whose very attrative colour variations were nicer in nature than we usually see in an artificial environment. Closer to Ross many varieties of ferns were found growing in great profusion. Among the species were: Blechnum discolour, Fluviatile (Ray fern), Penna marina (Alpine water fern), and filmy ferns including large colonies of Trichomanes reniforme which is similar in appearance to Adiantum reniforme.

At Wellington, Gay and Barry visited the Botanic Gardens but were disappointed that such little recognition had been given to the naming and origin of ferns; and this in a country where ferns grow in such profusion and diversity of species.

Another cause for disappointment was the obvious lack of interest in keeping the fern names up to date. At best the fern identification was very limited with redundant names still evident. However the fern plantings, particularly those in the outdoors were most interesting, representative and decorative.

Barry screened a selection of excellent colour slides which described a splendid rose garden (1850 varieties), a begonia house where a superb specimen of Dicksonia squarrosa was well established. Growing among the ferns here were Sago palms, Cyclamens and Cycads which contributed to the overall beauty of the collection.

Barry showed slides of Asplenium oblongifolium, Cyathea medullaris, Marratia selicina and Cyathea dealbata. In days long gone; according to tradition, the Maori people would cover their pathways with fronds of Cyathea dealbata so that if they had to return by night, the "silver" of dealbata's fronds would show their way.

At Tongariro National Park in Central North island, abundant stands of Blechnum fluviatile were seen. Barry said that the Maori name for this plant is "Kiwi Kiwi" and that specimens were slightly different in pinnae - shape to those of its Australian counterparts. The locals being square on the ends as compared to ours which is well rounded.

Other plants from this area were : Leptopteris superba (Crepe fern) Dicksonia fibrosa (local name Wheki Ponga) and a lovely fern similar to our fragrant fern. High up in the trees growing in great abundance were the lovely epiphytes - Aspleniums polyodon and flaccidum.

A slide of a huge Cyathea smithii was also screened. At a point about two thirds of the way up Mount Ruapehu in the park, beech trees became evident but were not well foliaged. In the West of the Park lovely alpine meadows were found in which the lovely swamp umbrella fern Gleichenia dicarpa var. Alpina thrived. Unfortunately some specimens were for some reason, skeletonized. In areas where a little more forest was established, Gleichenia cunninghamii (Umbrella fern) had firmly adapted.

A total of fifty nine species of ferns were listed by Barry and Gay for their trip.

<u>RIPPONLEA</u>: Barry completed his talk by showing slides illustrating the various stages in the re-establishment of plantings in the massive fern house. Two groups of slides were taken with an interval of a little over a year between them - one in October, 1985 whilst replanting was incomplete, and the second on the afternoon of the December, 1986 Fern Society meeting at Ripponlea. They illustrated the remarkable speed with which the new collection has adapted to the very congenial environment provided by the Fern House.

Vote of Thanks: Derek Griffiths ably moved a vote of thanks to Barry on behalf of Members.

DOUG THOMAS

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A large genus of more than two hundred species, mostly distributed throughout the Tropics and Sub-tropics, with a large proportion in South America.

Eight species are known to occur in Australia, most of which are found along the east coast, with one species

(Continued from previous page) The name Adiantum is derived from the Greek word "adiantos", meaning dry or unwetted, for water runs off the pinnules without wetting them, even after the whole plant is immersed.

All the Australian species are hardy in cultivation, as far south as Victoria, with the exception of A. philippense, which is a deciduous fern, that requires a heated glasshouse outside its tropical environment.

If container grown, Maidenhair Ferns prefer a good open soil mix, with plenty of humus, and a small amount of lime added. They like a welllighted position, but not direct sunlight, with an occasional application of fertilizer, preferably at half strength. If planting in a Fernery, it is essential to provide good drainage; this can be achieved by raising the soil beds, if there is no natural slope.

Adiantum aethiopicum Linn (Common Maidenhair Fern)

A most attractive species, with a wide range. The Common Maidenhair Fern is native to all States of Australia, as well as New Zealand and Tropical Africa. Named after the African State of Ethiopa, this fern varies considerably throughout its range. North Queensland forms have tall erect fronds, whereas the Southern form has short fronds, with a weeping habit. Two cultivars of this plant are reported to be in cultivation, a created form and a variegated form. I have seen plants of the former in cultivation. A. aethiopicum is a hardy species that will tolerate extremes of temperature and full sun, if provided with sufficient moisture.

Adiantum capillus venerus Linn (European Maidenhair Fern)

Cosmopolitan in distribution, this species occurs throughout the Tropics and Sub-tropics of both hemispheres, as far north as Britain and Canada, and south to Australia, where it has extending as far south as Tasmania. One species only, is endemic, with two others occurring in New Zealand; the remaining five species occur over a wide area, one of which has a world-wide distribution.

been found growing in the Carnarvon Gorge in Central Queensland and the Hammersly Ranges in Western Australia

The European Maidenhair Fern usually grows in limestone crevices, where there is sufficient moisture.

Many horticultural cultivars have originated from this fern, some of which are most attractive.

A. capillus-venerus is a semideciduous fern, and it requires protection from extreme cold in Southern Australia.

Adiantum cunninghamii Hook (Northern Maidenhair Fern)

This fern is restricted to the mountains of north-eastern Queensland, and is the only endemic species.

It usually grows in the deep shade of rain-forests, which is quite unusual, as most Adiantums prefer a more open forest.

Young specimens of this fern can be confused with some forms of A. hispidulum, but there can be no mistaking the two once the new fronds of mature plants are observed. They are a beautiful deep pink in colour. This fern is hardy as far south as Victoria, but will not tolerate being pot-bound.

Adiantum diaphannum Blume

(Filmy Maidenhair Fern) A small delicate fern, native to the three Eastern States of Australia, as well as New Guinea, Tropical Asia, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Commonly known as the Filmy Maidenhair Fern, A. diaphannum usually grows on wet rock or clay banks beneath waterfalls, where it can colonise large areas.

A smaller, less branched form of this fern occurs in New Zealand and is known as A. Diaphannum var. Polymorphum (Col.) Cheesem.

A. diaphannum is a hardy species to plant in a fernery, as far south as Melbourne. Once established, it spreads rapidly by underground rhizomes to form a large clump. Adiantum formosum R. Br. (Black Stem or Giant Maidenhair Fern) Commonly known as the Black Stem or Giant Maidenhair Fern, A. formosum is native to the three Eastern States of Australia, as well as New Zealand. A most attractive species that can attain a height of up to five feet, if grown in ideal conditions. Formosum means beautiful or handsome.

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This fern can be difficult to transplant as it has a long branching underground rhizome, but once established in a Fernery, it takes over. It is better suited to a large tub or separate bed.

The fronds of A. formosum are sold commercially after drying and colouring for dried floral arrangements.

Adiantum hispidulum Swartz (Rough Maidenhair Fern) The Rough Maidenhair Fern is almost cosmopolitan in its distribution; it ranges from South Africa through India, Malaya and Indonesia to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. It has also become naturalised in the south-eastern United States of America. In Australia it occurs in the three Eastern States, as well as Central Australia.

Adiantum hispidulum is a very hardy and extremely variable fern throughout its range. Some forms are tall and straggly in appearance whereas others often have compact fronds with large overlapping pinnules. It also varies considerably in the colour of new frond growth, ranging from an attractive red to a pale green.

Often sold in the trade as A. pubescens, this fern is easy to cultivate and makes an attractive specimen in a Fernery.

Adiantum philippense Linn

A pantropical species that occurs across the top of Australia, usually in open forest, where it seems to favour rocky places or steep earth banks.

Formerly known as A. lunulatum Burm., possibly because of its moon-shaped pinnules.

A.philippense is usually decidous; however, there are plants in cultivation that are not. Plants of this fern in the wild occasionally proliferate, i.e. they have the ability to produce plantlets on the tips of each rachis. The cultivated form always proliferates, possibly because it is grown under more ideal conditions.

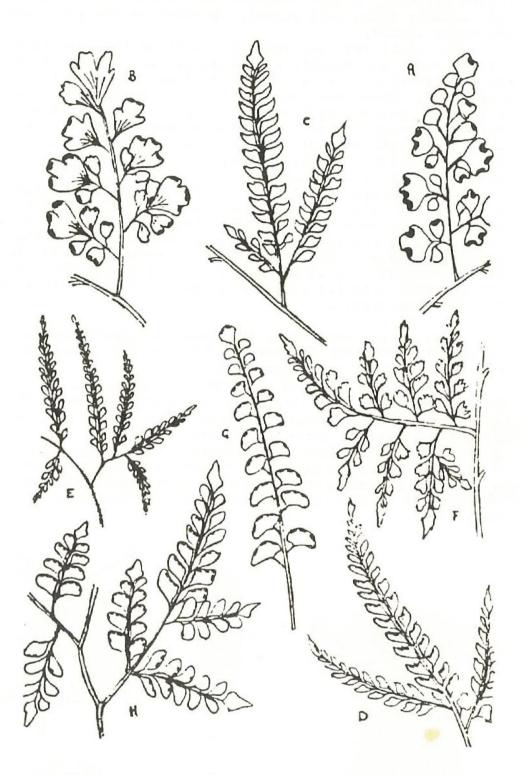
This fern is not difficult to grow in a glasshouse, with a temperature above $50^{\circ}F$ ($10^{\circ}C$).

Adiantum sylvaticum Tindale

Sylvaticum means forest loving. This fern is restricted to Northern N.S.W. and Southern Queensland in Australia, and is an abundant fern in New Zealand and the Kermadec Islands. Formally known as A. affine Willd., A. sylvaticum can quite easily be confused with A. formosum, which is normally a much larger species. Like most other Adiantyms, this fern can vary quite a lot, plants can mature, dwarfed to an inch or two, growing in rock crevices.

This fern is seldom cultivated; possibly because it is uncommon. An attractive hardy fern, suitable for cultivation in a Fernery, as far south as Victoria.

Some delightful illustrations, done by Chris Goudey, can be seen on the following page.



FERNS ILLUSTRATED:

- A. Adiantum aethiopicum, part frond.
- B. Adiantum capillus venerus, part frond.
- C. Adiantum cunninghamii, part frond.
- D. Adiantum diaphannum, full frond without stipe.
- E. Adiantum hispidulum, part frond.
- F. Adiantum formosum, part frond.
- G. Adiantum philippense, full frond.
- H. Adiantum sylvaticum, part frond.

"Reprinted from Fern Society Newsletter February, 1980."

THE STAGHORN FERN BEETLE (Halticoreus platycerii)

Both the larvae and adults of the staghorn fern beetle seriously injure staghorn and elkhorn ferns, the insect usually being particularly abundant in the late summer and early autumn.

The adult beetles, which are more or less hemispherical in shape and measure approximately one-eighth of an inch in length are black with four orange spots on their wing covers. These beetles superficially resemble the beneficial steely-blue ladybirds of the genus ORCUS, and are therefore frequently left undisturbed when damage is occurring. The adults eat out regular oval cavities, usually in the upper surfaces of the fronds, but the more serious injury is caused by the larvae.

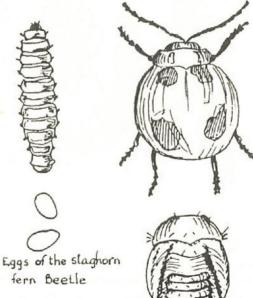
The eggs are inserted in the fronds and the beetle larvae tunnel with them. The outlines of the mining larvae can be clearly seen by holding the fronds up to the light. The tunnels of the larvae soon meet, and the insects then feed side by side, and eventually the greater part of the internal tissues may be devoured. The injured tissues become infected with rot organisms, and the fronds turn brown and fall prematurely.

The larva, when fully fed, measures approximately one-third of an inch in length, and is orange in colour, with the head and legs black.

The fully-fed larva constructs an oval cell in the broad sheath-like sterile fronds and there, pupates. The life cycle averages about ten weeks and a number of overlapping generations occur during the year.

In the past years the Stag-horn beetle was controlled by D.D.T., now unfavourably regarded. Suggested control is the poison Endosulfan, available under the trade name "Thiodan" or in a preparation retailed as "Hibiscus Spray".

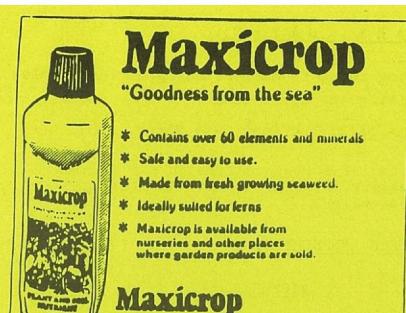






Pupa of the Staghorn fern Beetle

Reprinted from S.G.A.P. A selection of items from Newsletter July, 1984.



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We extend our sympathy to the family of Mr. J. Howlett of Wangaratta, an esteemed member of our Society, who recently passed away.

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DIARY DATES.

MARCH MEETING :- SPEAKERS <u>BILL TAYLOR</u> - "Growing ferns from spore using African Violet Mix" JOEL MACHER - "Utilizing the Spore Bank"

VENUE: The Herbarium - DATE: Thursday 19th March, 1987.

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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