



THE  
FERN SOCIETY

OF  
VICTORIA  
inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 5, JUNE, 1987.

PRESIDENT: Keith Hutchinson, 17 Grandview Grove, Rosanna	3084
Telephone:	45 2997
TREASURER: Albert Ward, 82 Grandview Grove, Rosanna	3084
Telephone:	459 4392
SECRETARY: Derek Griffiths, 8 Susan Court, East Keilor	
Telephone:	336 3157
BOOK SALES: Barry White, 24 Ruby Street, West Essendon	3040
Telephone:	337 9793
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Jean Trudgeon P.O. Box 45, Heidelberg West	3081
Telephone:	459 4859
EDITOR: Mac Gregory, 93 Mountainview Parade, Rosanna	3084
Telephone:.	458 2819
SPORE BANK: Joel Macher, 31 Anora Crescent, Mulgrave.	3170

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## PRESIDENTS REPORT.

It was very pleasing to see 87 members in attendance for the slide presentation of our Tasmanian excursion and even more to see Lyn and Barry Hubbard all the way from Parkes, N.S.W.

The slides supplied by several members proved the magnificence of the ferns we saw. In particular the Lime fern, *Neumatopteris pennigera* at Copper Creek and the *Hymenophyllums* at Milkshakes reserve, not forgetting those showing members during activities aboard the ship, coach and camps etc.

To conclude the slides a selection showing the superb quality of display ferns at our seventh Annual show were presented for those unable to attend. These left no doubt that this was our best show yet in both quality and variety. The display setting was well thought out and walkways were accessible. The comprehensive and diverse display of *Aspleniums* all individually labelled and grown to perfection by Chris Goudey would in all probability be the rarest collection of this Genus in the world today. I'm sure every fern enthusiast would be proud of this collection.

As Neil Baillie was unable to attend, our efforts to divide the large elk were made difficult by not having the correct tools, but four shields were separated, backed, and purchased by Members.

Our June meeting will again be at the Herbarium but on the third Thursday June 18th.

Chris Goudey will give an illustrated talk on Ferns of Stewart Island; an island at the southern tip of New Zealand well endowed with ferns so please be sure to note the date.

With our August Annual General Meeting fast approaching, the future of our Executive Committee and possibly our Society depends on serious consideration of positions becoming vacant.

Our secretary Derek Griffiths retires after two years of excellent service and with several bookings of speakers for the ensuing year.

Peter Goschnick retires as Senior Vice President but will continue as our slide bank Manager.

Albert Ward would appreciate a rest from the position of Treasurer as he is extremely busy with his workload.

# THURSDAY

## .. JUNE 18 ..

### the herbarium

CHRIS GOUDEY

FERNS OF STEWART IS.

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As I have one more year of my term as President my hope is that our Committee and our Society can continue to function effectively I am extremely proud of our many accomplishments in just seven years and I hope you are also proud to be members.

Special Effort Winners.

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Joy Horman        | 6. Mavis Potter   |
| 2. Allison Whytcross | 7. Thelma Knight  |
| 3. Jenny Balding     | 8. Keith Crellin  |
| 4. Val Monkevitch    | 9. Jack Wilkinson |
| 5. June Pritchard    |                   |

Congratulations all.

Several members were disappointed that we did not have fern sales at our last meeting but I can assure you that ferns will be on sale at our June meeting.

Finally I would like to thank all members for their expressions of concern for my wife during her time in hospital.

Kind Regards,

Keith Hutchinson.

"LETTER FROM CURATOR OF BOTANY - NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF NEW ZEALAND."

NATIONAL  
MUSEUM  
OF NEW ZEALAND

Private Bag Wellington New Zealand Director J C Yaldwyn MSc PhD  
Telephone (04) 859-609 (Main Building) 846-019 (Natural History Unit)

1 April 1987

Mr. M. Gregory  
93 Mountain View Parade  
Rosanna  
Victoria 3084  
AUSTRALIA

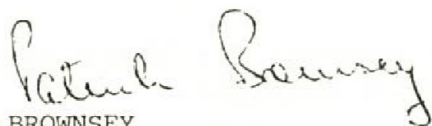
Dear Mr Gregory,

I read with interest the report in your Fern Society of Victoria newsletter of the trip by Barry and Gay Staggoll to New Zealand. I noted that they were disappointed with the ferns in the Botanic Gardens at Wellington.

As one who is very interested in ferns myself, I thought I might point out through your newsletter for the benefit of future visitors, that the Wellington Botanic Gardens is primarily devoted to exotic plants. Visitors wishing to see native plants should go to Otari Native Plant Museum, 160 Wilton Road, Wellington. There you will find a piece of native bush reserve, as well as more formal gardens with a large number of well-labelled native plants. There is a good fernery in one of the shadier areas, as well as a profusion of ferns in the bush reserve. The labels there are regularly updated and I think you will find few redundant names.

Unfortunately the distinction between the Botanic Gardens and Otari is not always clear, and I am sorry that the Staggoll's came away with a poor impression. I hope that this note might ensure that future visitors from your area get to the right place!

Yours sincerely,



P.J. BROWNSEY

CURATOR OF BOTANY

VICTORIAN FERN SOCIETY BOOK SALES

AUTHOR	TITLE	PRICE NON- MEMBERS	PRICE MEMBERS	P.& P. CODE
BEST, RAY	GROWING FERNS 1st Edit.	3.95	3.20	C
BEST, RAY	GROWING FERNS 2nd Edit.	5.95	4.60	C
BROOKLYN B.G.	HANDBOOK ON FERNS (U.S.A.)	5.95	4.80	B
CHINNOCK	COMMON FERNS & FERN ALLIES (N.Z.)	7.95	6.00	B
CSIRO	WHATS WRONG WITH MY SOIL	1.95	1.60	A
CSIRO	ORGANIC MATTER AND SOILS	3.95	3.20	B
CSIRO	COMPOSTING	1.95	1.60	A
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CSIRO	POTTING MIXES	3.00	2.40	B
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DUNK, GILLIAN	FERNS FOR THE HOME & GARDEN	12.95	10.00	C
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ELLIOT & JONES	ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF AUSTRALIAN PLANTS Vol. 2	50.00	40.00	D
ELLIOT & JONES	ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF AUSTRALIAN PLANTS Vol. 3	50.00	40.00	D
ELLIOT & JONES	ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF AUSTRALIAN PLANTS Vol. 4	70.00	50.00	D
ELLIOT, GWEN	AUSTRALIAN PLANTS FOR SMALL GARDENS	17.95	14.00	D
ELLIOT, GWEN	GARDENERS GUIDE TO AUSTRALIAN PLANTS	24.95	19.00	D
FORESTS COMM.	POSTERS	2.00	1.80	
GICK	FERNS FROM MOTHER NATURE	5.95	4.80	B
GOUDEY, CHRIS	MAIDENHAIR FERNS IN CULTIVATION	59.95	43.00	D
GOUGH	PALMS AND FERNS	6.95	5.60	C
GULLAN & WALSH	FERNS & FERN ALLIES OF THE UPPER YARRA ETC	5.00	4.50	C
HOSHIZAKI	FERN GROWERS MANUAL	24.95	20.00	D
JONES & CLEMESHA	AUSTRALIAN FERNS AND FERN ALLIES	19.95	15.60	D
JONES & GOUDEY	FERNS IN AUSTRALIA, COMMON, RARE & EXOTIC	12.95	10.30	D
JONES & GOUDEY	EXOTIC FERNS IN AUSTRALIA	9.95	9.95	C
JONES, DAVID	FERNS IN COLOUR	9.95	7.80	C
JONES, DAVID	ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF FERNS	100.00	75.00	D
MARTIN R W	FERNS FOR FERNERIES (N.Z.)	13.00	12.00	B
MOLYNEAUX W	AUSTRALFLORA HANDBOOK	6.95	5.50	B
RUSH	A GUIDE TO HARDY FERNS (U.K.)	5.50	5.00	B
S.G.A.P.	FERN STUDY GROUP BOOKLET	2.50	2.00	A
THOMAS, DOUG	WHAT TO DO ABOUT FERNS	1.50	1.50	A
V.F.S.	AUSTRALIAN FERN JOURNAL Vol 1 No 1	2.00	1.50	A

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 & IT IS A "MUST" FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN THE FERNS OF S. E. AUSTRALIA  
 GET IT NOW BEFORE THE PRICE INCREASE

P.S. THE BOOKLET BY DOUG THOMAS IS AN EXCELLENT INTRODUCTORY BOOK  
 FOR GIVING TO ANY EMBRYONIC FERN ENTHUSIAST

**Finger Fern *Grammitis magellanica* subsp. *nothofageti*  
Parris (Grammitidaceae) — a New Record for the Australian  
Mainland**

BY PAUL BARNETT AND SUE BEATTIE

**Introduction**

Until recently the Fern *Grammitis magellanica* subspecies *nothofageti* was only known to occur in New Zealand, where it is widespread, and in two localities in Tasmania — Hastings Cave and Mt. Field National Park. It was therefore of great interest to discover the species on the Australian mainland in the Otway Ranges, Victoria.

**Description**

*G. magellanica* ssp. *nothofageti* is a small solitary epiphytic fern growing on the trunks of the Musk Daisy bush, *Olearia argophylla*, from 1-2 m above ground level. (Fig. 1).

It has finger-like fronds over 80 mm long and less than 5 mm wide. Venation is forked with the vein apices terminating well inside the frond margin and sori occurring on each side of the midrib (Fig. 1b).

**Locality**

*G. magellanica* ssp. *nothofageti* has so far been found in one locality in the Otways, near the Little Aire Falls, off Phillips Track, approx. 8 km south west Beech Forest Township.

Grid reference 143° 30' 45" Long., 38° 39' 59" Lat. Collected 29 Jan. 1985 by P. Barnett. Collections have been lodged at the State Herbarium of South Australia and the National Herbarium of Victoria.

**Habitat**

The fern grows on the trunks of the Musk Daisy-bush, *Olearia argophylla* where it gains moisture from the trunk, and probably feeds off the breakdown of lichens and mosses growing on the tree.

In this locality *O. argophylla* forms an understorey to Mountain Ash, *Eucalyptus regnans*, which show no signs of a bush-fire since being logged some 40 or 50 years ago.

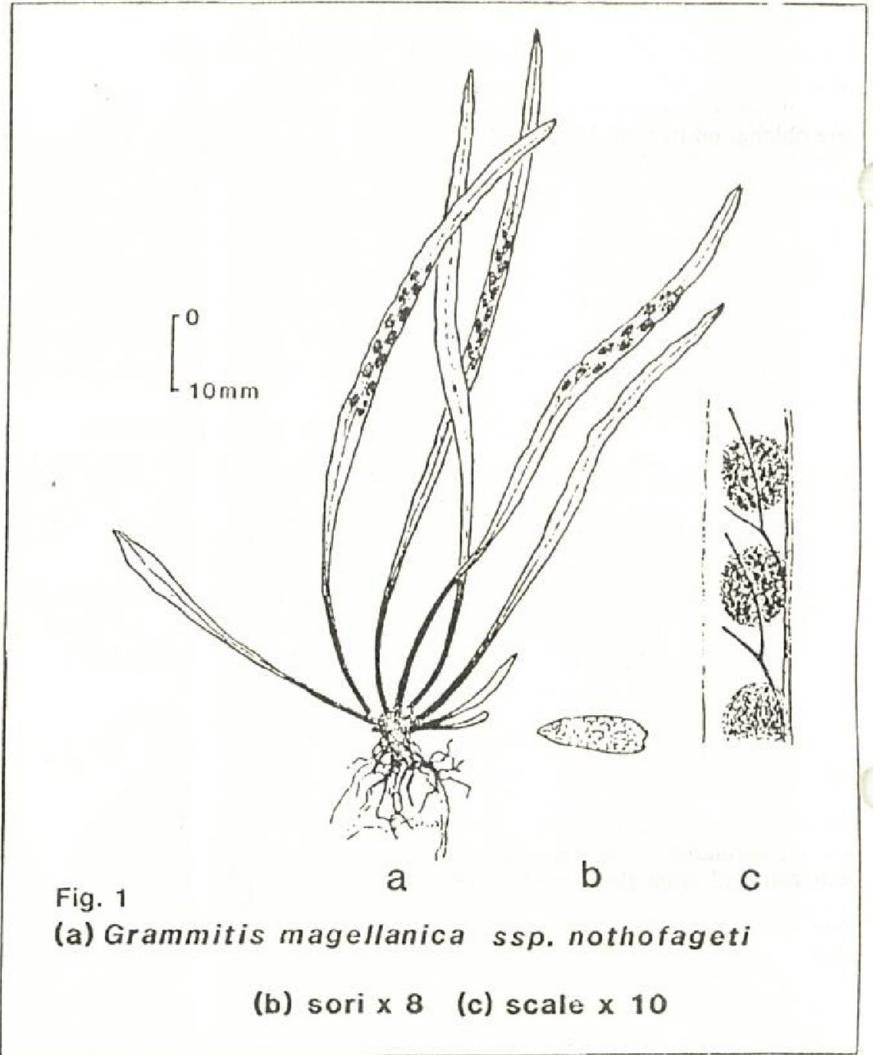
The Aire Valley is one of the wettest parts of the State with more than 200 rainy days per year. Rainfall varies from

conditions were noted, the presence of specimens being mostly suspected by the cracking of a thin crust of the surface soil. When soil was moistened the puffball would be pushed above the surface by expansion of its gelatinous stem; upon drying it would again retract into a cup-shaped cavity in the soil. Specimens were

often seen to be crowded, many with multiple heads from thickened stems.

**REFERENCES**

Cunningham, G.H. (1942). *Gasteromycetes of Australia & New Zealand*. Dunedin.  
Masse, G. (1888). Monograph of Genus *Calostoma*. *Annals of Botany* 2(5): 25-46.



1525 mm (60") to more than 2000 mm (79") per annum mostly in the winter months. Summer temperatures are mild; average maximum temperature in February being 20° C.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank Dr. R. J. Chinnock of the South Australian State Herbarium for identifying the Fern, and John Al-derman for preparation of the illustrations.

**REFERENCES**

Beaglehole, A.C. (1980). *The Distribution and Conservation of Vascular Plants in the Corangamite — Otway area, Victoria*. Western Victoria Field. Nats. Clubs Assoc., Portland.  
Jones, D.L. and S.C. Clemesha (1976). *Australian Ferns and Fern Allies*. A.W. Reed, Sydney.  
Parris, B.S. and D.R. Given (1976). A taxonomic revision of the genus *Grammitis* Sw. (Grammitidaceae: Filicales) in New Zealand. *New Zealand J. Bot.* 14: 85-111.

The Swamp fern *Thelypteris confluens* (Thelypteridaceae),  
a New Species Record for Victoria

By J. G. GREEN AND N. G. WALSH

We report the discovery of the Swamp Fern *Thelypteris confluens* (Thunb.) Morton from a subalpine bog near Tawonga, northeast Victoria. This is the first record in Victoria and apparently only the fourth in Australia of this largely tropical fern.

**Description of the fern**

The fronds of *T. confluens* are normally twice pinnate and narrow-triangular in outline, up to 80 cm long and are usually held stiffly erect. The stem is mostly smooth and pale straw coloured, with the base purplish or nearly black and usually bearing a few small brown scales. The leafy part of the frond occupies only the upper 1/2-2/3 of the stem and the pinnae (frond-branches) are more closely spaced near the apex than the base. The pinnae are oblong, up to 5 cm long and about 1 cm broad, with 10-25 narrow-triangular lobes (pinnules), which are incised almost to the midvein of the pinnae. The margins of the pinnules are usually slightly recurved or pronouncedly so in fertile specimens. The lower surfaces usually have a few oval scales near the midvein (see Fig. 1b). The sori (spore masses) occur near the margins on the lower surfaces of the pinnules. Each sorus is protected by a centrally attached, fringed, circular scale or indusium, which becomes almost hidden as the dark brown sporangia open to release their spores. The rhizome is long-creeping, usually just below the surface of the sphagnum bed. Like the bases of the stems, the rhizome is dark brown and sparsely covered with small scales. The lateral rootlets from the rhizome are usually covered by fine, rust-coloured hairs.

In Victoria the family Thelypteridaceae is also represented by *Christella dentata* and *Pneumatopteris pennigera*, both rare ferns inhabiting limestone tracts. In Australia, *Thelypteris confluens* is the only representative of the genus. It has been collected from three localities in

southeast Queensland on Stradbroke Island and near Gympie (Ross, Queensland Herbarium, pers. comm.). Otherwise the species occurs in South America, Africa, India, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

**Habitat**

The community in which the fern was found is based upon a deep, peaty substrate of living and dead *Sphagnum cristatum*. Dominant shrubs include the Alpine Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*), Swamp Heath (*Epacris paludosa*) and Mountain Baeckea (*Baeckea utilis*). These species are characteristic members of wet heathlands and swamp margins throughout the Victorian alps, typically at altitudes above 1000 m. Their occurrence at the Tawonga site is remarkable as the altitude is only 300 m. Other, more widespread species include the Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), a rush (*Juncus sarophorus*) and the Austral Crane's-bill (*Geranium solanderi*). The bog is

bordered on one side by cattle-grazed pasture and on the other by a reedy fen. A few common weed species are frequent in these areas and have invaded the bog to some extent. Rowe (1968) gives a fuller, contemporary account of this interesting community. Kershaw and Green (1983) have documented the history of the site for the past 8000 years.

**Acknowledgements**

We thank Bob Chinnock for assistance with the identification of the specimens and Anita Podwyszynski for drawing the figures.

**REFERENCES**

Allan, H. H. (1961). *Flora of New Zealand*. N.Z. Govt. Printer, Wellington.  
Kershaw, A. P. and Green, J. G. (1983). Tawonga Bog Revisited: The History of a Low Altitude Peat Deposit. *Victorian Nat.* 100: 256-259.  
Rowe, R. K. (1968). Rare Bog Community at Tawonga. *Victorian Nat.* 85: 123-124.  
Tryon, R. M. and Tryon, A. F. (1982). *Ferns and Allied Plants*. Springer-Verlag, New York.

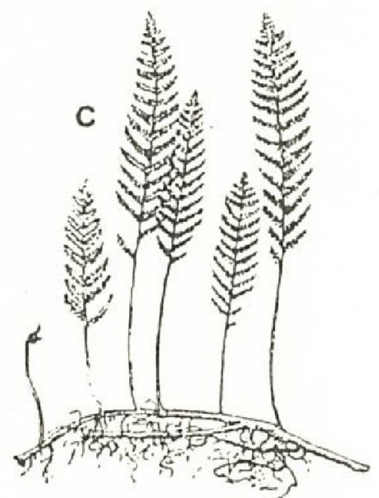
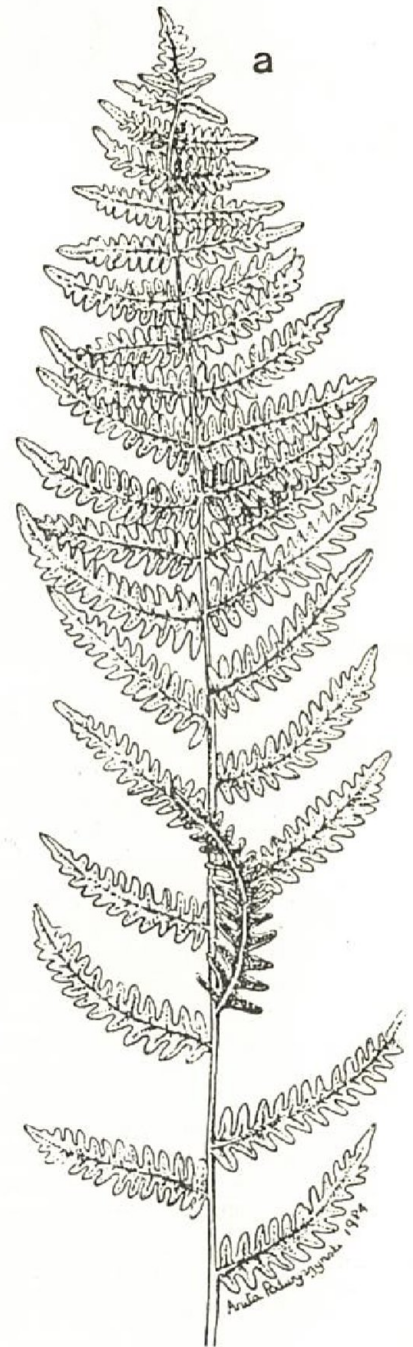
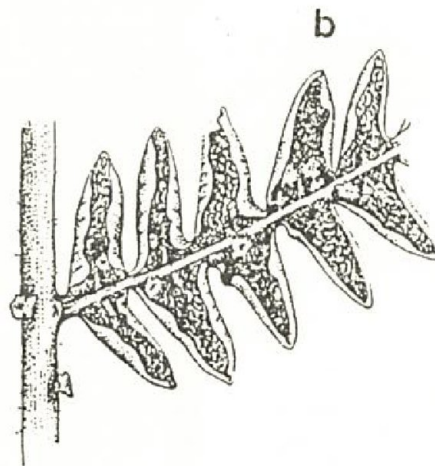


Fig. 1a. Upper section of frond of *Thelypteris confluens*. (x1)  
Fig. 1b. Underside of fertile frond showing sporangia, indusia and scales. (x10)  
Fig. 1c. Habit sketch. (x1/10)

# A Growing Delight:

## RIPPON LEA'S GARDEN

**O**n 22 May 1984, operations commenced on the restoration of the great fernery at Rippon Lea, and this work has remained the main thrust of the efforts of the garden staff to this date. At the time of writing, completion of the work seems likely to be realized by mid-December of the current year.

Major tasks associated with the restoration of the fernery have been the replacement of the wooden laths over the roof of the structure, the replacement of all securing pins tying in the metal component, the waterproofing and stabilising of the supporting iron columns, the painting of the entire wooden-work of the fernery, the total restitution of all the rock features within the interior, the establishment of an in-ground irrigation network as well as providing an overhead water system, the rejuvenation of exterior garden beds and paths to the east and west of the fernery and, of course, the replanting of the ferns themselves. It is worth noting here the outstanding contribution made by the Fern Society of Victoria, without whose help the acquisition of the fern plants would have been exceedingly difficult and expensive.

A fully comprehensive report on the completed fernery project will appear at a later date.

One of the very important facets of the restoration of the fernery and one of the real success stories has been the re-establishment of the rock feature within the fernery itself. As the visitor will perceive, the rock feature is the medium against which the display of ferns is set. It is used also to provide a method by which the use of water may be manifest, e.g. the waterfalls, providing habitat for special ferns and mosses, and it also provides the internal continuity required

throughout the rather long length of the structure. It binds the whole together.

A large part of the success of this part of the work may be traced to the skills of one John Stevenson, who has been a gardener at Rippon Lea since 1974 and so has had the opportunity of contributing to the improvement of these gardens from approximately the time the National Trust took up responsibility for them. Immediately prior to starting at Rippon Lea, John worked briefly at Como.

John studied part-time at Oakleigh Technical School from 1970 to 1975 first gaining his Trade Gardening Certificate and then continuing on with higher level studies in propagation, landscape construction and landscape design. His practical experience includes working as a groundsman as well as a gardener and he has been employed by local councils and by schools in both capacities.

Originally from Wales, John's younger days were spent mainly in agriculture, except for 2½ years in the British Army, most of which was served on the Rock of Gibraltar. While employed on farms in Wales and South England, John enjoyed the beautiful countryside, and particularly recalls the peaceful lifestyle of the Wye Valley at a time when horses were still used for ploughing and milking was still done by hand.

During the past 11 years, John has been involved with all the projects undertaken by the National Trust at the Rippon Lea gardens, the two most significant being the re-construction of the lookout tower and the fernery.

John now lives within close walking distance of Rippon Lea with his wife and 15 year old son, Justin, who is a student at nearby Caulfield Grammar.

John's interests and hobbies include all aspects of gardens and gardening, an appreciation of music, and enjoying the spectacle of the Poms beating the Aussies at Test Cricket.



9

"WHAT TO DO ABOUT FERNS" a new 16 page booklet  
produced by our Fern Society.

Written in simple language it is designed to give practical help in the areas of potting, potting mixtures, hardy fern species, hanging baskets, housing, maintenance, fern garden creation, insect pests and terrarium culture.

Illustrations are by clear black and white drawings, the type and layout is of professional quality and the cover, in gold and black, is semi-hard.

The booklets are available to Society Members and the general public at \$1.50 each (personal shopping) or \$2.00 posted in Australia.

Contact Barry Whyte, Society Book Stall, 24 Ruby Street, West Essendon, 3040. Telephone 337-9793.

IMPATIENTS - NATURE'S MOISTURE GAUGE

by Peter Goschnick

During the winter months when it's cold and windy outside and the days are growing shorter, it is easy to lose track of when the last shower of rain actually fell.

The frosts and drying winds continually rob moisture from the soil and what seems to be cold and rainy winter weather can actually be a cold drought for your fernery with periods of a week or more between showers.

The ferns most at risk are those planted in protected positions at the base of tree ferns or under the eaves of nearby buildings, where they are sheltered from the occasional light shower of rain. These ferns can quickly perish unnoticed.

To help guard against the loss of these ferns nature has provided the 'IMPATIENTS' which makes an excellent moisture gauge for your fernery.

To make your moisture gauge simply pot up an IMPATIENTS in an open mixture that provides plenty of drainage, place the potted IMPATIENTS in the driest position in your fernery and check it every couple of days.

IMPATIENTS are very sensitive to drying out and will droop dramatically when they require water, fortunately they also recover quickly after watering, often within hours.

When you notice that your IMPATIENTS has wilted it is time to water your ferns to ensure that they don't suffer from a cold drought.

IMPATIENTS are inexpensive, easy to grow and will continue to guard your ferns throughout the year.

They will also provide you with a colourful display of flowers for most of the year. What more could you ask for?

ROD PATTISON

A member from Queensland writes  
 "A NEW DRYNARIA CULTIVAR"

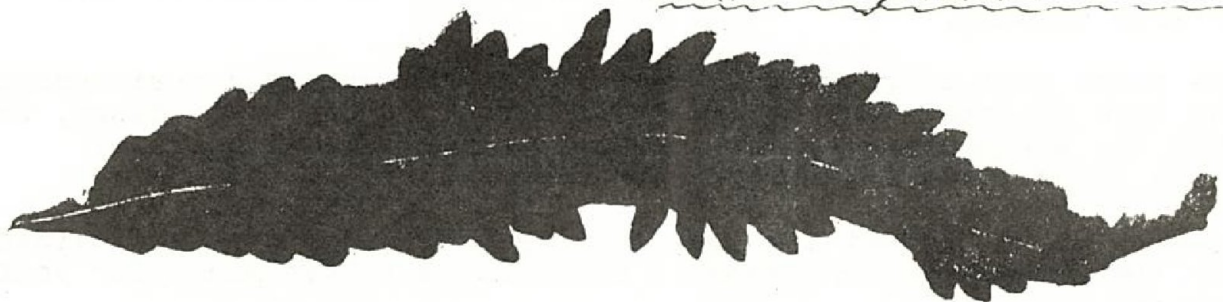
A new Drynaria cultivar to be named Drynaria rigidula cv. Pattisoni has been discovered in South East Queensland.

The cultivar, which is sterile, is distinguished from Drynaria Rigidula whitei and vidgeni by its coarse, blunter serrations and twisted pinna which greatly enhance the beauty of the fern. The illustrations below show the range of variation between pinnae.

Action is currently in train to register the plant.

Limited numbers of plants are presently available from Fleetwood Park Nursery, Kenilworth Road, Eumundi, Queensland. Phone (071) 470121.

NEW DRYNARIA DISCOVERED



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 RIGIDULA  
 CV PATTISONI  
 (STERILE)



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## Rare scented fern a winner

News "scoops" in the gardening world are even more rare than Australian Test wins.

But last year I did have a scoop when I visited Westlands cloning laboratories in Hobart and wrote about a rare, scented fern that one of their employees had found among the thousands that they were producing by tissue culture.

The laboratory was cloning

*nephrolepis cordifolia duffii* and something in the process triggered a change in the genes of one of the plants, causing it to be scented.

The fern, now called *Mystique*, has been chosen as the house plant of the year by the Australian Nurserymen's Association and will be released throughout Tasmania on February 1.

*Mystique*, with the new botanical name of *nephrolepis cordifolia garrettii*, exudes a gentle fragrance in early morning or late afternoon.

The popular Boston fern has a faint fragrance, but not nearly as strong as the new fern.

It is compact with rich, deep green semi-lobed fronds with little or no leaf drop.

The fronds weep gently to produce a mature plant about 30 cm in diameter and height.

One advantage is that the plant appears free of disease and insect attacks.

*Mystique* is such a novelty that it is certain to be marketed throughout the world in tens of thousands, proving a money-spinner for Westlands.

Reprinted from Launceston Examiner.

### BUYERS' GUIDE TO FERN NURSERIES.

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D I A R Y   D A T E S .

VENUE - HERBARIUM - BIRDWOOD AVENUE, STH. YARRA.

JUNE MEETING - THURSDAY 18TH - 8.00 P.M.

CHRIS GOUDEY - FERNS OF STEWART ISLAND.

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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VICTORIA.

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