

THE
FERA SOCIETY

OF
VICTORIA
INC.

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NEWSLETTER

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OFFICE BEARERS:

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 308
Telephone: 459 4859
EDITOR: Mac Gregory, 93 Mountainview Parade, Rosanna 3084
Telephone: 458 2819
SPORE BANK: Joel Macher, 31 Anora Crescent, Mulgrave. 3170

PRESIDENTS REPORT.

It was very pleasing to see almost eighty members brave the adverse weather conditions to attend our July Meeting including Lloyd and Nita Frost who travelled from Mt. Gambier. We also welcomed new members Janet McLennon of Warrenwood and Jean Rohde of North Ringwood.

Society Glasses.

Our first consignment of glasses with our Society name and fern motif- Adiantum Capillus-veneris proved very popular with over half being sold immediately. Future orders will have different ferns so be sure not to miss this first one.

Life Membership.

On behalf of our executive committee I was priveleged to present Doug Thomas with Life Membership of our Society. Doug is a presidents dream, always ready to assist, guide, and encourage. He is extremely talented and uses these talents at every opportunity to benefit our Society. His fern talks have proved so popular they have encouraged invitations from societies throughout Victoria. His book "What to do about ferns" has completely sold out its first printing of 500 copies.

These are just two of the ways Doug has fostered and promoted our Society.

Sincerest congratulations Doug.

Committee 1987-88.

As yet we have no nominations for a secretary and the three vacant positions on our committee. I again encourage all members to seriously consider these positions, if our society is to continue to improve we do need a full and active committee.

Proud Members.

Two members of our Society, June and Clem Pritchard are very proud of their daughter Robyn as she has been awarded The Sir William Kilpatrick Chruchill Fellowship to study People with irreversible dementia with emphasis on Residential Shelters and providing external care services. Robyn will study in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, The U.K. and U.S.A. We congratulate June and Clem and in particular Robyn on her outstanding achievement.

Special Effort Winners.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Betty Allgood | 5. Derek Griffiths |
| 2. Joel Macher | 6. Anne Bryant |
| 3. Jean Boucher | 7. John Boucher |
| 4. Terry Turney | 8. Thelma Knight |

Congratulations all.

TUESDAY

.. August 11 ..

the herbarium

BIRDWOOD AVENUE, SOUTH YARRA.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SPEAKER : DOUG THOMAS

SUBJECT: "What to do about ferns" The Booklet Illustrated.

August Meeting.

Our A.G.M. takes place on Tuesday August the 11th at the Herbarium and as Doug Thomas is our Speaker an excellent evening is assured. I hope you will come along.

Kind Regards,

Keith Hutchinson.

FERN SOCIETY TOUR HORSHAM.

On Sunday 13th September, 1987 the Moreland Bus Company coach will depart for Horsham from outside the Gas and Fuel offices Flinders Street at 8.00 a.m. (Please do not belate as we intend to leave on time).

The first stop will be Gibbons Wholesale and Retail fern Nursery, Bacchus Marsh. This is a large well set out nursery well worth a visit, and ferns may be purchased.

We then proceed to Mount Cole Rorest Reserve - although I have not visited this area, Doug Thomas recommends it. There have been 20 different ferns recorded from this reserve, including one very interesting Blechnum.

At the Reserve, we will enjoy a B.B.Q. lunch provided by the Bus Company. We then continue to Horsham, and visit Sylvia Marsh's Pine Haven Nursery.

After this visit, we head for home. Cost per head for this tour is \$20.00 which includes lunch. Everyone is welcome, so include your friends.

Please, please don't wait until the last minute to book your place, or you will miss out.

Bookings must be finalised by the end of August.

Chris Goudey.

Speaker Report - General Meeting, 16th July, 1987.

SPEAKER: Mr. Bill Fahey. TITLE: "Timber Selection and Methods of Constructing Ferneries and Shadehouses".

Mr. Fahey described himself as a former carpenter and timber man who after forty years of timber industry work is now a Consultant with the Timber Merchants Association (T.M.A.)

The T.M.A. provides a free Advisory Service to the public. It has also installed a fine showroom where people seeking information about timbers and up-to-date timber structures, can see practical examples of these on display. It is relative to this service that Mr. Fahey is occupied. Upwards of 2500 people a month avail themselves of these facilities. The service is open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and 1.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Sunday.

Planning.

When contemplating the erection of a fernery, carport, pergola etc, a permit to build is required by your local City Council. Three sets of plans must be prepared and submitted with each copy describing a plan view, one elevation and two vertical cross sections.

Distances from the proposed building to such facilities as storm-water drains, sewerage drains and to a fence or surveyed boundary should be disclosed. Soil type is also important.

Selection of Timbers.

Durable timbers in common usage are: Red Gum, Cypress Pine, Murbau, Jarrah and treated Radiata Pine. Durable timbers are those which can be used in the soil as stumps, posts, streets and sole plates.

Non-durable timbers such as Oregon and seasoned hardwood are used above ground level only and for long life should be coated with the preservative L.O.S.P. or Caprinol. The preservative resists fungal attack. All of the timbers classified as "durable" can also be used above ground level.

Galvanized stirrups should be used in the ground and set in concrete. The concrete must be allowed to set for at least four days before inserting drilling and bolting posts to these stirrups.

Spans and Relative Timber Sizes.

If timber beams or rafters are used in an unsupported situation, the timber size or section size has to be sufficient to safely support the weight of the building and to prevent sagging. For example a span between posts measuring three metres (10 feet) would require a beam of 200^{mm} X 38^{mm} (8" x 1½") placed on edge for greatest strength. Any increase of span-length increases the section size of the beam: e.g. 200^{mm} x 50^{mm} (8" x 2") 225^{mm} x 38^{mm} (9" x 1½") etc. Post sizes rise from 100^{mm} x 100^{mm} (4" x 4") and would increase in section size according to the weight of the structure. Rafter material is 100^{mm} x 38^{mm} (4" x 1½") and can be supported by collar ties of the same size. For a fernery, rafters should be spaced at a maximum of 0.9 metre (3 feet). Roof battens to support corrugated fibreglass are 75^{mm} x 38^{mm} (3" x 1½") spaced 0.9 metres (3 feet) apart and ridge material is 150^{mm} x 25^{mm} (6" x 1"). Corrugated fibreglass should be held down with 38^{mm} (1½") galvanised round head screws fitted with rubber washers.

Setting out the Building.

A builders line should be strung parallel to a fence or surveyed boundary and secured to hurdles. The hurdles are made from sawn hardwood 70^{mm} x 25^{mm} (2" x 1") and when placed in position look something like an inverted 'U'. They should be positioned clear of the proposed building area so that they do not get in the way of excavations or excavation material.

Hurdles have a clear advantage over stakes because the builders line can be more easily adjusted and moved to accord width pencil marks made on the crossbar.

To make certain that the foundations are set out squarely, Mr. Fahey illustrated the use of a large right angled triangle which could also be made from 50^{mm} x 25^{mm} (2" x 1") hardwood. This triangle is made up with a base measurement of 4 units of measurement i.e. feet or metres etc., a perpendicular of 3 units which when joined by a hypotenuse of 5 units will always make a perfect rightangle. When the three pieces are nailed together and the frame laid with its base along the first builders line at one end of the building, successive lines can be strung parallel to it but running in the opposite direction.

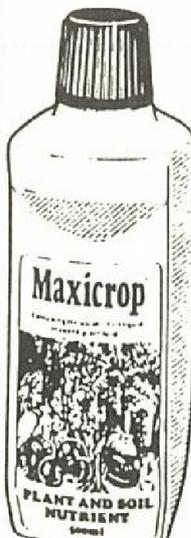
Holes are dug then and filled with concrete into which the galvanised stirrups are placed, lined up and allowed to set for at least four days.

Mr. Fahey showed illustrations of various timber connectors and joiners but felt that members should contact the Timber Merchants Advisory Service for more detailed information. The telephone number is 03 877 2000.

Mr. Albert Ward moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Fahey and presented him with one of the new Society embossed drinking glasses. Members endorsed his remarks by their acclamation.

REMINDER.

As Membership subscriptions are now overdue; it is important that your renewal is sent to our Membership secretary- Jean Trudgeon P.O. Box 45, Heidelberg West. 3081 by early August to ensure continuity of receipt of our Newsletter.



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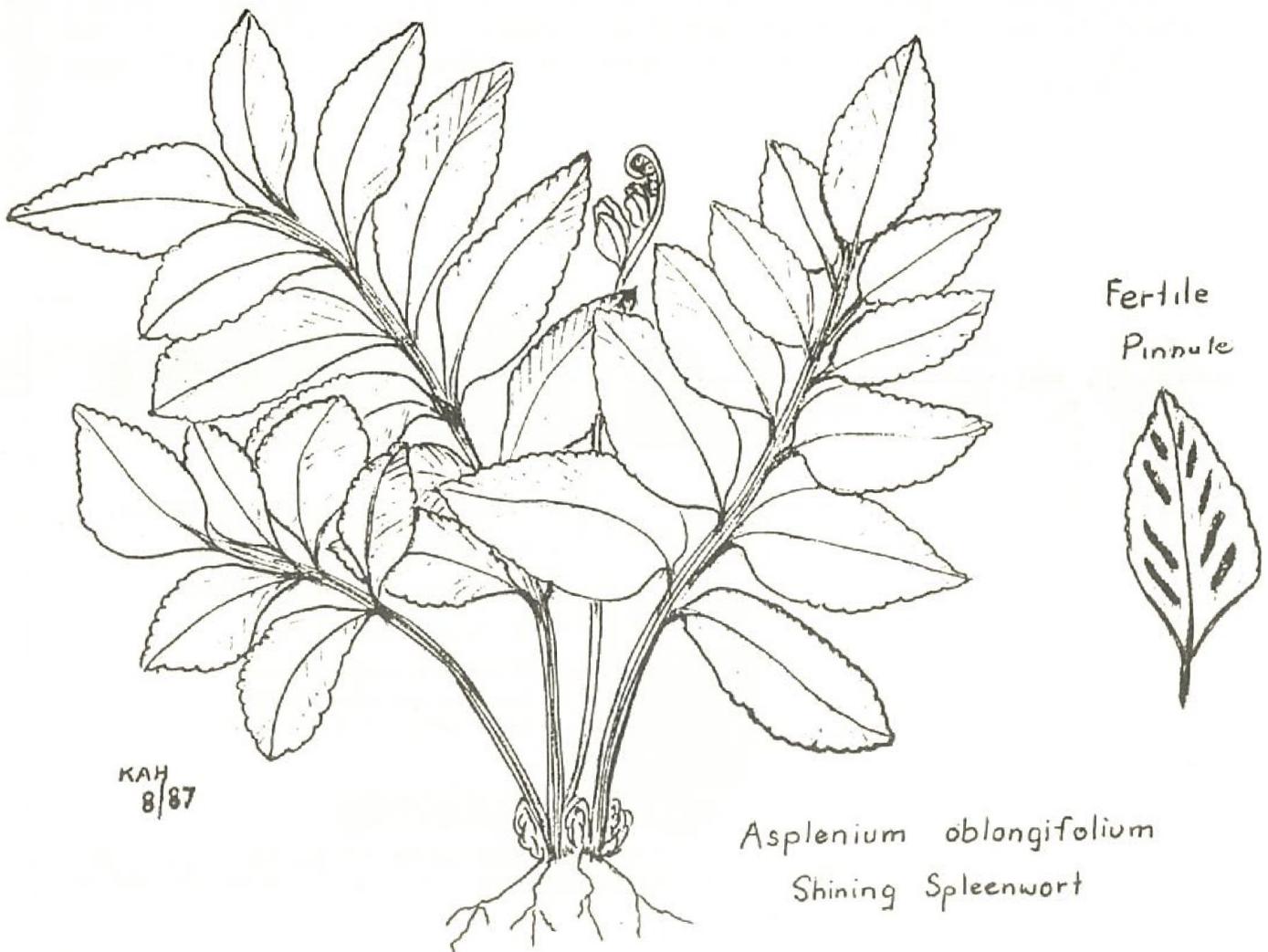
ASPENIUM OBLONGIFOLIUM.

The Shining spleenwort is native to New Zealand and was formerly known as *Asplenium lucidum*.

Grown as a terrestrial or epiphyte it prefers a well drained sheltered position with plenty of leaf mould and adequate water in summer.

It closely resembles *Asplenium obtusatum* with mature fronds up to 1 metre in length; the main difference being that *A. obtusatum* has more obtuse pinnae.

Asplenium oblongifolium grows well in Victoria and makes a fine specimen in a large tub or a sheltered position in the garden.



DAVALLIA FEJEENSIS.

Arthur Greene.

Commonly known as Hares Foot Fern, there are about 40 species of Davallia, with a distribution from South West Europe, through tropical Asia and well into the Pacific region. They are all epiphytic ferns with exposed, scaly long creeping rhizomes (or 'feet'). Davallia is a highly evolved genus of ferns and is so well adapted to its epiphytic conditions that it can stand much more exposure than most other epiphytes. The genus is named after the Swiss botanist, Edmund Davall.

Davallia fejeensis is native to Fiji, where it grows on rocks and trees from sea level to at least 1000metres. Its fronds are even more attractive than the commonly grown Hares Foot Ferns in that they are very finely divided, so fine in fact, that a single indusium may cover the complete width of the ultimate segment. These fronds may grow to over a metre in length.

There are several cultivated forms of D. fejeensis. 'Dwarf Ripple' has a frond blade to only about 15cm long with the tips of the pinnae turned downwards. The ultimate segments are slightly longer than normal and seem even larger on the small frond, giving the surface a ripply texture. These characteristics create a very distinct appearance and is reportedly a very desirable fern for any collection. 'Major' is much more commonly grown, being a large robust form with more finely divided pinnules. Not as finely divided however as the very beautiful 'Plumosa' where the fronds also have a graceful pendulous habit. Just to make life more difficult, there is also 'False Plumosa' which is smaller, more erect and more sparsely foliaged.

In the past, some species of Davallia such as D. mariesii have been erroneously labelled and sold as D. fejeensis.

D. fejeensis, unlike some others in the genus, is not cold hardy and in Tasmania requires glasshouse conditions. Because of its size, spreading habit and epiphytic nature, it is best grown in a hanging basket. Normally growing over trees or rock, it is not hard to imagine that it would require only a thin layer of soil to grow in. When re-planting or splitting up, the rhizome should always remain exposed - the growing tips of 'feet' being the most critical parts. The soil mix should be extremely well drained, while being capable of holding some moisture between waterings. Too much water usually arising from a poorly drained mix, will result in the rhizomes rotting and the plant dying. Generally, especially if the fern is to be grown in a fairly cool place over Winter, plenty of water should be given over the warmer months when the plant is actively growing, and kept drier over the colder months.

Plants are easily divided or new ones started from 5 or 6cm of the growing tip of the rhizome. In fact it is not a bad idea to regularly 'prune' back the growing tips to produce more side rhizomes and create a bushier plant. Most davallia species are very long lived, and with regular small amounts of liquid fertilizer while the fern is in active growth, and pruning, Hares Foot Fern will last in the same basket for years.



Davallia fejeensis

"Reprinted from Tasmanian Newsletter Vol.17 DEC 1985."

NEW FORM OF *DOODIA CAUDATA TRILOBA*



ROD PATTISON FROM QLD. WRITES THAT A *DOODIA* RECENTLY DISCOVERED BY HIM NEAR MONTO QLD APPEARS TO BE A NEW FORM OF *DOODIA CAUDATA TRILOBA*. THE FORM, AS SHOWN IN THE ILLUSTRATION, HAS DIAMORPHIC FRONDS WITH ALL PINNAE LOBED AS COMPARED TO THE SPECIES WHICH HAS LOBING ONLY OF THE LOWER ONE THIRD OF THE PINNAE

AN ASPLENIUM HYBRID IN EXTREME SOUTH EAST TASMANIA.

M. Garrett.

About 10 years ago Reg Williams was called upon to rescue a bushwalker stuck on a ledge on a coastal cliff face near South East Cape in far S.E. Tasmania. Reg was dropped off by helicopter on a rocky shore platform and proceeded to make his way through the thick coastal scrub towards the top of the cliff. Luckily, Reg has a more than sound knowledge of the Tasmanian fern flora, and on the way he noticed an extremely large and unusual Asplenium. Now I can think of one or two other people who would have sung out to the bushwalker (who at this stage had been stranded for 17 hours) to hang on for a while so as the fern could be checked out, but Reg was content enough to grab a frond and study it later at home.

The plant was later identified as a hybrid between Asplenium bulbiferum and A. obtusatum.

In November of this year, Mark Fountain, Chris Goudey from Victoria and myself were led back to the scene by Reg Williams, who also wanted to check out the mosses in the area. In the day of predominately rock-hopping around the shoreline from Cockle Creek, A. obtusatum was abundant. It particularly favoured sites amongst large boulders at the high storm water mark and occasional on the few cliff faces in that area. If the truth were known, it was probably also reasonably common in the thick belt of scrub immediately behind the shoreline. The Long Clubmoss, Lycopodium varium, was also regularly encountered (though never in great numbers), growing either on the margin of the scrub and the coast or farther inland.

After one or two false leads, Reg led us to his original discovery, some 30 metres above sea level in light scrub of predominately Bedfordia salicina. There was no creek, more of a water seepage area, but with extremely rich fertile soil. To our delight we counted at least 23 fully grown specimens of A. bulbiferum X obtusatum, not counting juvenile plants, as at the time they proved difficult to distinguish from either of the parents. Mature specimens of A. bulbiferum numbered about 60 and A. obtusatum about 30. These figures are quite amazing when you consider the small chance of a hybrid occurring. Apart from Polystichum proliferum, the only other fern in this small area (about 100 square metres) was Asplenium terrestre (about 40 plants) and for a moment we had ideas of this being one of the parents until rhizome scales and a few other characteristics discounted this theory.

This hybrid is also known from the extreme south of New Zealand where A. bulbiferum is of a different form to the Tasmanian spp. In New Zealand, hybrids both with and without bulbils have been recorded. In the Tasmanian population no hybrids were found with bulbils, and as is not uncommon in Tasmania, only a few plants of A. bulbiferum were located with a single bulbil on one frond. Had bulbils been present on the hybrid, this may have explained their presence in such a large number.

Maybe one of the hybrids was capable of producing fertile spore, and we were witnessing plant history in the making, with the evolution of a new fern species. In order to discount this theory and bring us back down to earth, several ripe fronds from different plants were collected and at the time of writing, these had not dried enough to shed spore.

So far I have failed to mention the magnificence of this plant. It grew larger than either of its parents (in that location at least) with plants growing 1 metre high by 1 metre wide either on rock or in soil. Fronds were shiny dark green, resembling more a long narrow deeply toothed A. obtusatum but with a texture between the two parents. Magnificent!

An Asplenium Hybrid in Extreme South East Tasmania. cont.

I should also mention other ferns that were found not far from the southernmost tip of Tasmania. At one stage we headed inland to cut off extra walking around a small headland. Here behind the shelter of the thick coastal scrub was a large population of the Rough Treefern, Cyathea australis - the southern most recorded occurrence of this fern in Australia. Being a certified treefern freak myself, this was just as exciting as the Asplenium hybrid.

Other ferns hidden here were:

Blechnum nudum	Hymenophyllum australe
Blechnum Wattsii	H. cupressiforme
Ctenopteris heterophylla	H. flabellatum
Dicksonia antarctica	H. rarum
Gleichenia microphylla	Hypolepis rugosula
Grammitis billardieri	Polyphlebium venosum
Histiopteris incisa	Tmesipteris billardieri

Microsorium diversifolium and Rumohra adiantiformis creeping through the scrub and onto the rocky shore were the only tell-tale signs that such a place existed.

Also frequently encountered in open wet areas were:

Gleichenia dicarpa	Pteridium esculentum
Lindsaea linearis	Sellaginella uliginosa
Lycopodium deuterodensum	

"REPRINTED FROM TASMANIAN NEWSLETTER VOL. 17 DECEMBER, 1985."

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DIARY DATES.

VENUE: Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

AUGUST MEETING: Tuesday 11th. 8.00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Thursday, 17th.

OCTOBER MEETING: Thursday, 15th.

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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