THE FERN SOCIETY

OFVICTORIA

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENTS REPORT:

Our fern study night proved moderately successful and with some helpful suggestions for improvement we may have another later in the year. I thank both Betty Duncan and Chris Goudey for their support as group chairpersons.

It was very pleasing to see Alan Bone back with us after his sojourn in the United States.

We welcome the following new members to our society: Mr and Mrs F. Anderson of Ascot Vale, Victoria Mr. S. Harden of North Fitzroy, Victoria Mrs. M. Healy of Keysborough, Victoria Mr. M. Sibley of Glen Iris, Victoria Mr and Mrs D. Falconer of Kuranda North, Queensland

Doug Falconer writes that both he and his wife would welcome a visit from any members holidaying in the area. Kuranda is approximately 30 kms north of Cairns.

Our April Meeting Will take the form of a slide presentation by Chris Goudey. His subject is our society excursion to Lord Howe Island.

Our May Meeting - We are indeed fortunate to have Dr. J.H. Willis as our guest speaker on May 12th. Dr. Willis was Assistant Botanist at our Royal Botanical Gardens and is author of several books being noted for his excellent revision of N.A. Wakefield's book 'Ferns of Victoria and Tasmania'. We previously enjoyed an excellent evening with Dr. Willis for our July meeting in 1981 so be sure to be present for his talk on Ferns of Australia's National Parks with slide presentations on May 12th.

Special Effort Winners

1. Norma Hodges

2. Thelma Knight

Bernadette Blackstock 4. Ray Harrison

5. Doug Thomas

6. Terry Brennan

7. Jack Barrett 8. Edna Verhagen

9. Allison Whyteross - Congratulations all.

I would like to sincerely thank our Supper Hostess Jean Boucher for donating our special effort prizes.

"Thursday April 14 "

Welsh Presbyterian Church Hall 320 Latrobe st

Melbourne

SPEAKER - CHRIS GOUDEY

SUBJECT - SOCIETY EXCURSION TO LORD HOWE ISLAND INCLUDING SLIDE PRESENTATION

PROGRAMME - 7.30 - 8 p.m. FERN SALES

- 8 p.m. MEETING COMMENCES
- 9.30 p.m. PATHOLOGY TABLE & SPECIAL EFFORT
- 9.45 p.m. SUPPER
- 10 p.m. CLOSE

A NEW FERN

by

Christopher Goudey

A new fern has just recently been released. It is a very hardy and yet attractive fern which is suitable for a wide range of conditions. It grows to about 60cm with deep-green glossy fronds. When mature the fronds produce an abundance of tiny plantlets which are easily propagated.

At our nursery we specialize in introducing new hardy ferns from countries with a temperate climate. Species that will grow well in south-eastern Australia. We import ferns and fern spore for trials from many countries world-wide. We have a particular interest in New Zealand ferns because the climate in that country is similar to ours and they have a wealth of fern flora which has not yet been introduced into cultivation. This fascinating fact has led us on many a field trip to their magnificent rainforests in search of new fern species. We have a number of ferns on trial, and quite excited at the result of one fern in particular.

In June of 1981 whilst in New Zealand I was introduced to an elderly Maori lady, whom I was told was the daughter of a Maori Chief. She had a very large collection of New Zealand native ferns growing in a natural bushland setting in her large garden. She knew her ferns extremely well, and was enthusiastically showing us her treasures when we came across a most spectacular fern. It was a large strong-growing fern with attractively serrated foliage, the lower fronds of which were covered with tiny plantlets.

A scientific identification of specimens sent to the National Herberium of New Zealand in Wellington soon revealed its identity. It was a natural hybrid between the Hen and Chicken Fern Asplenium bulbiferum and the Shining Spleenwort Asplenium oblongifolium. The parents are both hardy species and the hybrid has proved to be equally as hardy not only in a fernery or sheltered garden position, but as a house plant.

The correct name for this fern is Asplenium bulbiferum X oblongifolium but we have named it 'Maori Princess' in honour of the Maori lady who gave us our first plant. Many plants hybridize in the wild, and ferns are no exception, the only problem for the horticulturist is that most hybrids are sterile.

We have a keen interest in the Spleenworts, particularly species that hybridize with the Hen and Chicken Fern, because these ferns can be propagated easily by removing the little bulbils as they appear on the fronds. The bulbils can be easily struck under hygenic nursery conditions and are usually more hardy than the parent species and faster growing.

Fern hybrids are extremely rare in the wild and can only be found where two species of the one genus grow together. They are usually overlooked by the casual observer.

At our nursery we have a large number of hybrids from southeastern Australia as well as New Zealand, but unfortunately most of these ferns can not be propagated by conventional methods. A small number of plants do produce bulbils but they are not all suitable for horticulture. We have a few cultivars that are, showing promise, but none more so, than the 'Maori Princess'.

During our October 1987 Meeting, Geoff Connellen, whilst speaking on Solar Heating, emphasized the fact that bottom heat was superior to forced warm air.

He used the slide reproduced below to illustrate his point.

Editor



BOTTOM HEATING

FORCED WARM AIR

As we have no speaker report of last meeting I have reprinted the Fern Forum of 1982.

EDITOR.

Not only did members enjoy social conviviality around an excellent Christmas supper and inspect a wide array of members' favourite ferns, they were also treated to an hour's forum where experts tossed around questions and gave assistance to members.

Panellists were Chris Goudey, Albert Jenkins, Harold Olney, Keith Hutchinson and Rod Hill, with Keith Stubbs acting as moderator.

Once again, answers by the panel demonstrated the varying practices and beliefs of experienced fern growers. Often there was lively debate amongst the panel as some recommendations were hotly contested by other panel members.

"Fern Forum" was a success with the audience. Several members commented to the Secretary that it was the best meeting they had attended since joining the Society.

Here is a selection of questions and some answers given by the Panel.

- Q. "I have a nice gold fern which I kept in a pot. When I transferred it into a basket, using the same mixture, it lost its gold. Why did the leaves lose their gold?"
- A. Most gold ferns lose gold according to one panellist by overhead or hose watering. But another panel member felt that as the gold fern is tropical, too much light or being too close to the glass could cause this problem. Loss of gold varies from plant to plant. A point to remember is that they need a warm position in winter and need to be kept fairly dry in winter.
- Q. "I have a birdsnest fern with 18 leaves. It looks healthy but the leaves are becoming pale and variegated."
- A. One panellist siad that the fern was not receiving enough nutrient from the soil, that there was some chemical lacking and a light dose may help every 5 to 6 weeks. The popular practice of "feeding" banana skins was not enough in these circumstances.

Another member agreed, saying that iron was lacking and that chelated iron should be fed to the fern.

- Q. "I have a birdsnest which has grown to 3 feet tall. When the fronds are about halfway out, they become deformed. Also, I am getting burn marks on stags and elks and something is eating them. What is my problem?"
- A. Having established that the member is occasionally feeding his stags slow release fertiliser to the fern, the point was made that these stimulants should not be allowed between the leaves, but must be put in the centre of the fern. Plenty of drainage was essential for healthy growth. Health growth also attracts caterpillars and small snails which could provide the condition discribed. The birdsnest problem could be due to some malfunction underground or to excessive heat.

FERN FORUM (Cont'd.)

- Q. "How do I get rid of aphis from my outdoor maidenhair ferns?"
- A. There are many proprietary lines on the market. Due to the considerable difference of opinion regarding the safety and effectiveness of these, we dare not publish panellists' comments for fear of a libel suit!

 Care should be taken if aerosol sprays are used, to avoid burning tips of ferns. A very light "puff" is all that is required one member wipes the fronds 10 minutes after application. If pest strips are to be used, one recommended way to use them is to place the fern and the pest strip in a plastic bag and close the bag for a few hours or put the fern and pest strip under an upturned plastic bucket.
- Q. "When I grow ferns from spore, my prothalis brown off. What am I doing wrong?"
- A. Prothalis browning off is usually due to too much sunlight or the mixture drying out. Members were advised to use a good medium which will not collect water on top and avoid direct sunlight as the two most important points to observe if growing ferns from spore.
- Q. "My tree fern fronds are 'forking'. Why?"
- A. This was considered not to be unusual for the odd "crest" to be produced. However, if this problem was the rule rather than the exception, then probably something was having a nibble at the fern.
- Q. "I've tried to grow Boston Ferns outdoors without success. What should I do to avoid them dying?"
- A. Soil was considered to be the most important factor by one panellist. Organic soil should be used, not mountain soil. These ferns like light, aerated soil.
 - All Exaltata varieties are tropical; one panellist suggested that it is almost impossible to grow outdoors in Victoria, as they will not take cold conditions. But Cordifolia varieties will grow well in Victoria without artificial heat.
 - Q. "My Fandancer is going brown on the edges. Why?"
 - A. Again, as this is a tropical fern, excess light or being put too close to the glass will cause this problem. The Fandancer will tolerate drying out and a soak in water will restore the fern and bring back the colour.

The panel was asked to nominate their favourite ferns and reasons for their selection. ALBERT JENKINS selected the Necklace fern, primarily because at last, after 4 - 5 years, he's had some success in growing them. (He uses tree fern fibre as a medium with a little leaf mould and not too much water with not too much light.) HAROLD OLNEY grows a few of everything.

ROD HILL nominated the New Zealand Black Tree Fern because of its grandeur and size (fronds up to thirty feet long). The Prince of Wales Plumes was CHRIS GOUDEY's selection (a real challenge to grow, needing humid conditions). KEITH HUTCHINSON nominated the Button Fern and the New Zealand Black Tree Fern.

Their answers to Moderator Keith Stubbs' question was as diverse and as interesting as most answers to the floor members on their ferns and fern growing problems.

SURVEY OF OVERSEAS FERN SOCIETIES

For those members who might care to join other fern societies, we conducted a survey of overseas societies late last year. Some details are given below:

1. New Zealand. Nelson Fern Society - founded 1933.

Activities: Newsletter - three times per year

Monthly meetings, excursions

Spore bank

Subscription: (1988) Aust. \$10 per calendar year.

Address: Mrs. J. Bonnington,
Nelson Fern Society,
9 Bay View Road.

9 Bay View Road. Atawahi, Nelson,

NEW ZEALAND

2. Great Britain. British Pteridological Society - founded 1891.

Activities: Newsletter - Bulletin (society news),

British Fern Gazette (scientific journal), The Pteridologist (for the amateur enthusiast) Meetings, excursions, special publications,

sale of out-of-print books.

Spore bank

Subscription: (1988) UK£10 per calendar year + £3.50 airmail

postage (includes subs. to Gazette).

Address: Miss A.M. Paul

Assistant Secretary (Membership), British Pteridological Society,

c/o British Museum (Natural History),

Cromwell Road,

London SW7 5BD

ENGLAND

3. United States American Fern Society - founded 1893.

Activities: Newsletter - Fiddlehead Forum (society news,

6/yr), American Fern Journal (scientific

journal, 4/yr).

Meetings, excursions, special publications,

herbarium, library.

Spore bank

Subscription: (1988) US\$10 per calendar year includes subs

to both journal and newsletter) + \$15 for

airmail postage or \$4 surface.

Address: Dr. D. Barrington,

Records Treasurer, American Fern Society,

Botany Dept.,

University of Vermont,

Burlington, Vermont, 05405,

U.S.A.

SURVEY OF OVERSEAS FERN SOCIETIES (cont.)

4. United States Los Angeles International Fern Society

founded - 1958.

Newsletter - LAIFS Journal (6/yr). Activities:

Meetings, excursions, book sales, "round

robin" chain letters.

Spore bank

(Oct '87 to Sept '88) US\$19 surface or \$23 Subscription:

airmail.

The Secretary, Address:

Los Angeles International Fern Society,

P.O. Box 90943,

Fasadena, California, 91109.

U.S.A.

5. Switzerland. Die Schweizerische Vereinigung der Farnfreunde

founded - 1977.

Activities: Publication - Farnblätter (2/yr, in German).

> Meetings, excursions, No spore bank at present.

Subscription:

(1988) SF25 per year. Address: Prof. K.U. Kramer,

Schweizerische Vereiningung der Farnfreunde,

Inst. für Botanik, Zollikerstrasse 107. CH-3008, Zürich,

SWITZERLAND

6. India. Indian Fern Society, founded - 1984.

Activities: Publication - Indian Fern Journal.

Meetings.

Spore bank - unknown.

Subscription: (1988) US\$15 per calender year.

Prof. S.S. Bir, Address:

Sec-Treasurer, Indian Fern Society,

Dept. of Botany, Punjabi University, Patiala - 147002,

INDIA

CURRENT APPLICATION FORMS FOR THESE SOCIETIES ARE AVAILABLE AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS.

There appeared to be at one time fern societies in Japan (Nippon Fernist Club and Japanese Pteridological Society) and in The Phillipines and South Africa. If any member has current information about these or any other active overseas society please contact Terry Turney.

DRYNARIA RIGIDULA LACINIATA

Rod Pattison



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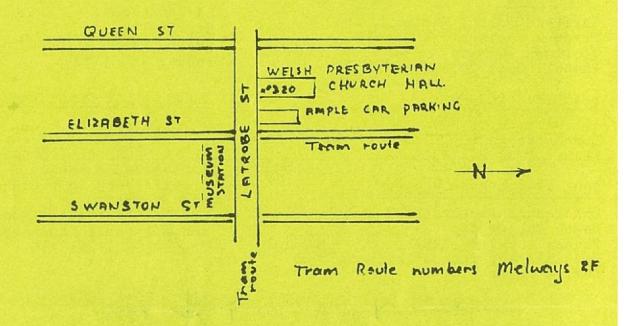
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Turn right into Kell Road, Woombye
Wholesale & Retail
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MARLEY'S FERNS.

5 Seaview Street Mt. Kuring-gai 2080 Phone: (02) 457 9168

DIARY DATES.

VENUE - WELSH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL - 320 LATROBE ST. MELBOURNE

APRIL	14	SEPTEMBER	8
MAY	12	OCTOBER	13
JUNE	9	NOVEMBER	10
JULY	14	DECEMBER	8
AUGUST	11		

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.

VICTORIA.

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62 Walker Road, Seville. 3139
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300m east of Seville Shopping Centre)
(closed Tuesdays except Public Holidays)

AUSTRAL FERNS.

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Specialising in supplying retail
nurseries with a wide range of hardy
ferns - no tubes. Phone: (052) 823084

VICTORIA.

MT. EVELYN FERN CENTRE.

6% York Road, Mt. Evelyn (Mail orders welcome) Phone: 736 1729

ALLANS FLAT PLANT FARM.

Tomkins Lane.
Allans Flat.
(25km south of Wodonga on the Yackandandah Road)
Specialising in ferns and indoor plants.
Open daily (except Wednesday) and all public holidays.
Phone (060) 27 1375

RIDGE ROAD FERNERY.

WEEAPROINAH. 3237

Specialising in Otway Native Ferns Wholesale and Retail Phone: (052) 359 383

NORMA'S FERNERY - CARBOUR.

52km south east of Wangaratta off the Milawa Rd. Specialising in rare ferns. Retail- closed Fridays only 057 295 516

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main road Kinglake West
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Specialising in Stag's, Elk's &
Birdsnest ferns, also native
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