## THE FERN SOCIETY

OFVICTORIA

Inc.

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# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 11, Number 4, April 1989

#### FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 45,

Heidelberg West, Victoria, Australia, 3081

#### OFFICE BEARERS:

President: Robert Lee Ph. - 836 1528 Immed. Past Pres.: Keith Hutchinson - 45 2997 Vice-Presidents: John Oliver - 879 1976 Terry Turney - 211 8169 Albert Ward - 459 4392 Secretary: Bernadette Blackstock - 391 5517 Spore Bank Manager: Barry White - 337 9793 Membership Secretary: John Oliver - 879 1976 Editor: Terry Turney - 211 8169

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#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

I'm afraid there has to be another episode in the "serial" on our planned move to the Herbarium for our monthly meetings. The hall will now not be available until July and even then our meeting will have to be the second <u>Tuesday</u> of that month (11th July). The hall will be required on that Thursday night to prepare for a major exhibition of paintings of Banksia by Celia Rosser being mounted by The Friends of The Botanic Gardens. We will revert to Thursday nights from August (see Society News on page 34).

We are still keen to receive suggestions for special items to include in the programme for our 10th birthday celebration after the Annual General Meeting in August. Please contact any member of the Committee with your ideas. A look at the early record books of the Society shows that the inaugural meeting at which the Society was officially founded and the first Executive Committee elected, was held at Burnley Horticultural College on 3rd May, 1979. The first general meeting was held at the Herbarium on 26th May.

I hope that a lot of members who can't make it to our regular meeting will be able to come to the Fern Show. I'm sure we are all looking forward to renewing old acquaintances and making new ones.

Best regards,

Bob Lee



### NEXT MEETING at 7.30 p.m.,

Thursday, 13th April at the Welsh Presbyterian Church 320 LaTrobe St., Melbourne. A Talk by Chris Goudey on his recent trip to Thailand

#### 

## Speaker Report March General Meeting "Grooming of Ferns for Exhibition" by Gay Stagoll

As our scheduled speaker, Betty Allgood, was unavailable for the meeting, Gay Stagoll presented a informative talk on

preparing and grooming ferns for display at shows.

Approximately a month before the show, Gay takes her best ferns out of their pots to check their root systems and if necessary, re-pots into a slightly larger container. She treats them each week with quarter-strength liquid fertilizer, continually looking for pests. Her method for eradicating these is to place the plant, together with a pest strip, in a garbage bin with a tightly fitting lid.

Other important points to remember when preparing your

plants are:

i) regular turning of the pot towards the light to ensure an even balance of fronds.

ii) careful cleaning of pots and correct naming of the fern.

iii) firmly and clearly attaching your name to the pot, facilitating its return to you at the end of the Show.

iv) just prior to bringing your ferns to the Show, trim off any imperfect fronds, check for pests and soak each pot or basket in water to the top of the soil.

Gay also mentioned an idea of a friend of using Selley's fertilizer spikes in baskets as these do not leach out as do soluble fertilizers and do not burn the fronds. They are particularly useful in old baskets of fern like Davallia, which can have heavily intertwined rhizomes, where other fertilizers

are hard to apply.

Gay also demonstrated an interesting technique, evolved by a member, Ed Veldman, for growing ferns with long-creeping surface rhizomes (such as Davallia) in plastic hanging baskets. A piece of coconut fibre matting is spread over the outside of a basket right up to the outside of the rim and "stitched" in place with nylon fishing line through a series of holes drilled in around the rim. The saucer is left in place around the plastic basket, under the coconut fibre and acts as a reservoir for water to keep the fibre moist.

Bob Lee thanked Gay for sharing her knowledge of the subject with the audience and presenting the talk on such short notice.

After the talk and question time, Keith Hutchinson, showed a number of slides, taken at previous Fern Shows. these revived many pleasant memories and some not as agreeable (remember the fuss about wear and damage to the herbarium lawn, where it was used as our sales area).

## A Short Excursion Through Melbourne's North East Ranges

by Keith Hutchinson

We departed Rosanna at 9.30 a.m., travelled through Eltham, Research, Smith's Gully and St. Andrews, arriving at Kinglake at 10.20 a.m. After turning right along Kinglake Road, we entered the National Park via Parkland Road. After morning tea in Jehosaphat Gully (temperature at least 10° cooler than Rosanna's 35°C) we walked the fern areas, finding many huge Cyathea and Dicksonia, sheltering Blechnum and Polystichum species.

Our lunch stop was west along Kinglake Road, down Parkland Road to Masson Falls. We were quite surprised to find a very good volume of water flowing over the 42 meter falls and many beautiful ferns growing along the banks of the stream. They included a magnificent stand of Sticherus tener, about 2 metres in circumference. After lunch a short distance along the lyrebird walk, I was delighted to discover my first lyrebird only about two metres away from me. It completely ignored my keen interest and I was able to admire its beauty for about five minutes.

Our next call was Fern Acres Nursery, on the main road opposite the Kinglake West Primary School. Society members, Kevin and Gloria Tinker, run this nursery. We spent almost an hour, just wandering amongst the ferns. Their prices were very reasonable, so we bought a few more specimens for our fernery back home. We finally made our way back home via Whittlesea, arriving about 4 p.m.

I felt this is very pleasant trip is well worth making by all Society members.

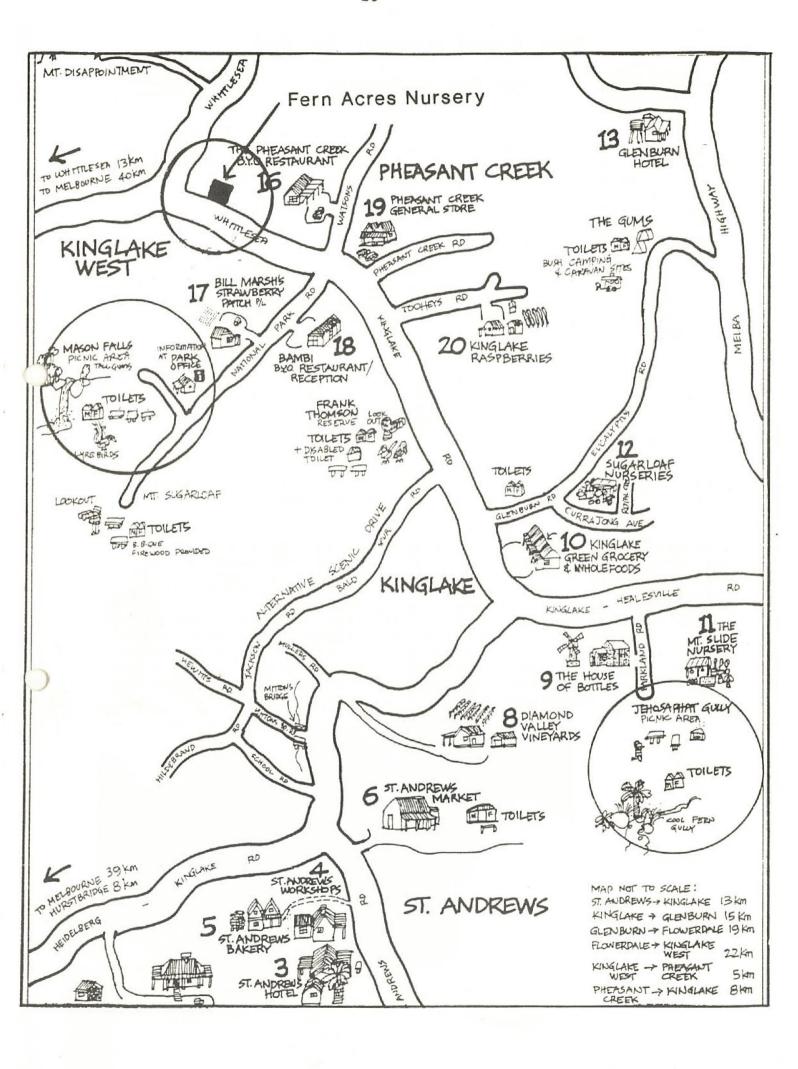
Notice of an Excursion to Kinglake National Park

on Sunday, 30th April 1989

A visit to the localities outlined in the above article. This is a do-it-yourself excursion, where members can visit any (or all) of the localities and meet for lunch. In the afternoon, the return trip will be via Fern Acres Nursery.

Venue for lunch - Masson Falls
Time - 12 noon - 1 p.m.

Esmunda Javanica



### This Could Happen To You!



### by Beryl Geekie

9.1/

My mother always had a lovely fernery. From the windows at the rear of the house one looked across a well kept lawn to a sunken fernery which was covered with Jasminum and other creepers for shade. The fernery was crowded with hanging baskets and the floor planted with masses of ferns. At one end was a "grandstand-type" set of shelves laden with pots of ferns. It was a picture to look at and was the start of my being interested in ferns.

It was many years later when my mother was in the twilight of her life that she became ill and had to live with us. I had to give up my sporting activities and needed something for an interest and relaxation. We decided to build a fernery for a hobby.

Our first fernery was 1" galvanized pipe construction 21' x 15' in 3 bays 7' wide, open to the east and all other sides and roof covered with 70 % shade cloth. Each bay stepped down 1' due to the fall in the land. One bay had a grandstand set of shelves. Baskets hung from the roof and the floor planted with a variety of ferns.

We began looking for ferns and I was lucky to meet Mrs Edna White who introduced me to a world of ferns (native and exotic) I had never seen before. We then became avid collectors.

Like most people, we became overcrowded, extending our original fernery and building more - 2 glasshouses and a patio attached to the house. The three ferneries are covered with fibreglass roofing material. We found this necessary in winter to control watering. In particular, we use less water for the tropicals and epiphytes and usually water in the morning rather than the evening if there are clear frosty nights. The patio, adjoining the house, has a northerly aspect, with an aluminum roof and glass on the western end to curtail the hot westerly winds. The remainder is enclosed with fly gauze. I was amazed how much sun some ferns can take, for in the winter months the sun streams across the floor.



We decided to become a registered nursery after supplying a local nurseryman with our excess ferns. We don't have large stocks of any one variety, but we try to have as many different varieties as possible in stock.

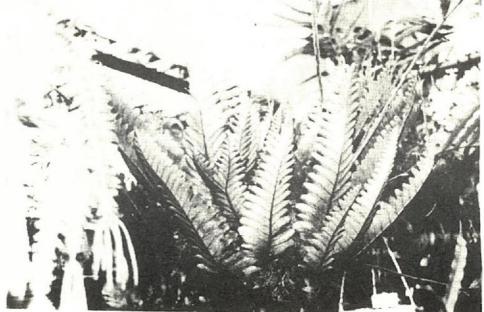
Being close to the house on the patio, our Cibotium schiedei is quite happy, as is the Ctenitis sloanei and our Aglaomorpha "Roberts", splendens, heraclea and meyeniana. Blechnum brasiliense and cv 'Crispum' grow beautifully and fronds remain unmarked all year round. We are also growing on the patio Drynaria rigidula cv Whitei, Schellolepis subauriculata and cv Knightiae, Humata tasmanii, Lastreopsis walleri. Our Lygodium grows in tubs supported by dead twiggy branches of bottlebrush. They look lovely climbing through the branches. By having mature stock plants buyers see the size of full growth.



Pyrrosia lingua cv 'Nankin shishi'

Of our 3 fibreglass roofed ferneries, one is totally used for a large variety of Adiantum. These are quite hardened as they are grown here all year. Our tropical Adiantum are grown in the glass house.

Ferneries 2 and 3 have many types of ferns -Athyrium, Asplenium, Blechnum, Polystichum, Polypodium, Osmunda, Pyrrosia, Davallia, Microsorium, Dryopteris, Drynaria and Pseudodrynaria species abound.

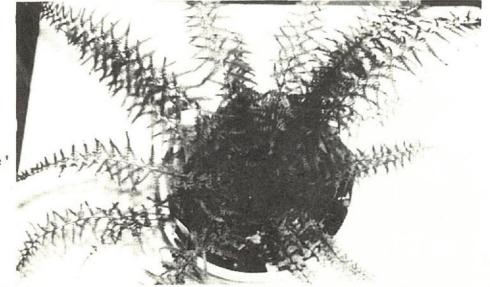


For growing epiphytes, we use a thick layer of coconut fibre in wire baskets. It gives good drainage yet keeps the roots moist in hot windy weather and also allows the fern to encase the basket eg. Pseudodrynaria Coronans and Drynaria.

The glasshouses are used for the tropical ferns and propagation of our own needs. Space under shade trees is fully utilized with many varieties of tree ferns, Todea barbara, Dryopteris and Polystichum. Our Angiopteris evecta suffered frost burn one year but since moving it under a thick tree canopy has recovered. In the garden Davallia grows wild as a ground cover and is climbing the trees. Paesia scaberula grows prolifically and takes full summer sun for 5-6 hours a day. Deciduous Athyrium cvs burst forth with beautiful new fronds in

the Spring.

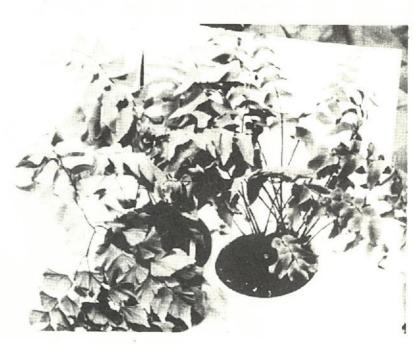
Athyrium felix femina cv 'Victoriae'



Jim has now retired and we both work full time on our "hobby". Because we are a two-man show, we sometimes find it difficult to man the nursery 7 days a week every week of the year. Our locals call in when passing but for anybody who has to travel we ask them to phone (02-484 2684) so they won't be disappointed.

We do hope all other Society members get as much enjoyment with their ferns as we do.

Adiantum macrophyllum and trapeziforme



## The Family "Osmundacae" by Terry Turney

This is an old and distinctive Family of ferns, now comprising only three living genera, but with a fossil record dating back to the Carboniferous Age. One characteristic of these ferns is that they all have green, short-lived spores.

#### 1. Osmunda.

There appear to be about 6 species, but with those marked (\*) numerous sub-species and varieties exist. Although not native to Australasia, they are found in most other parts of the world.

O. angustifolia (Ching) - China

O. banksiifolia (Kuhn) - China, Japan (the photo below of this fern came from the Geekie's fernery. As its name suggests the pinnae are remarkably similar in shape to the leaves of Banksia species)

O. cinnamonea (L.) - 'cinnamon fern' - cosmopolitan (\*)
O. claytoniana (L.) - 'interrupted fern' - cosmopolitan (\*)

O javanica (Blume) - Malaysia, Phillipines
O. regalis (L.) - 'royal fern' - cosmopolitan (\*)

#### 2. Leptopteris

This genus, confined to the Australasian region, contains exceptionally beautiful ferns, generally with finely dissected fronds. They are very difficult to grow, requiring constant and high humidity. Chris Goudey claims they are his favourites!

L. alpina (Christ) - P.N.G.

- L. fraseri (Presl) 'crepe fern' Aust., New Caledonia
- L. hymenophylloides (Presl) N.Z.

L. laxa (Copel.) - Solomon Is.

- L. moorei (Christ) Lord Howe Is.
  L. superba (Presl) 'Prince of Wales Feathers' N.Z.
- L. wilkesiana (Christ) P.N.G., Polynesia

#### 3. Todea

- T. barbara (L.) 'king fern' Aust., Sth Africa
- T. papuana (Hennip.) P.N.G.



Osmunda banksiifolia

#### SOCIETY NEWS:

#### A 'Thank You' from Albert Jenkins:

"I would like to thank the members of our Fern Society for their beautiful flowers, their sympathy and the kind thoughts expressed at the death of my dear wife, Aldyth. Please accept my deep appreciation"

Albert Jenkins

#### \* Society Meetings and Venues - 1989

Listed below are our next few meetings. Please note the change of both day and venue for the July meeting.

Thursday, 13th April - Welsh Church Thursday, 11th May - Welsh Church Thursday, 8th June - Welsh Church Tuesday, 11th July - Herbarium (we

Tuesday, 11th July - Herbarium (we hope!!!!!)
Thursday, 10th August - Herbarium,

Annual General Meeting and 10th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, 14th September - Herbarium Thursday, 12th October - Herbarium

#### 10th Anniversary Meeting:

The Committee would especially like to hear from any member would has suggestions for the celebration of our 10th anniversary meeting. We plan to hold this meeting at the conclusion of our A.G.M. in August.

#### \* Overseas Importers:

The Society has had recent requests from two different members of the Los Angeles International. Fern Soc. in the U.S.A., who are keen to import Australian native ferns. If there are any professional or private growers, who are interested and have the relevant permits etc, to ship plants overseas, then Derek Griffiths (Ph; 03-336 3157) may be contacted for further details.

#### \* Excursions

- i) More details of the Wilson's Promontory excursion are at hand. The return trip to Melbourne will be via the Tarra Valley, where the party will have Sunday lunch. Food costs (included in the overall cost of the trip) have been based on \$50 per head for the weekend if these expenses come to less, a refund can be expected. There are still a few places available but be quick! Albert Ward, who is organizing the excursion can be contacted on (03)459 4392 a.h.
- ii) Kinglake Excursion on Sunday, 30th April. See pages 28-29 for details.

iii) A one- or two-day excursion to Cumberland Falls is being planned for this June. We are hoping to return via Marysville and the Acheron Way and visit Cement Creek as well as a couple of specialist fern nurseries on the trip back to Melbourne. The ultimate cost of the trip will be determined by the number of members going, but if we attract 40-45 people, would be only \$18-\$19 for a one-day excursion including a BBQ lunch.

iv) A trip to P.N.G., which planned for later this year, has had to be postponed indefinitely, owing to difficulties in obtaining confirmation of costs from the Port Morseby travel agency and the very large deposit required.

#### \* Additions to the Library:

The following new arrivals to the library are now available for monthly loan at each meeting:

- \* Fern Society of Sth Aust. Newsletter, No.95, Feb. 1989
- \* South Florida Fern Society Bulletin, 17(1), Feb. 1989.
- \* Gardening News, 9(1), Feb. Mar. 1989.

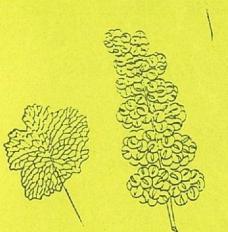
#### \* From the March Meeting:

Some of the ferns offered for sale at the March meeting included: Asplenium bulbiferum (Stewart Is. form),
A. chathamense, A. gemmiferium, A. inaequilaterale,
A. rhizophyllum, A. rutifolium, A. variens, Cheilanthes myriophylla, C. sp. (Africa), Davallia canariensis, D. tasmanii,
Dicksonia herbertii, Doodia caudata var. 'laminosa', Hypolepis lactea, Selaginella spp. 'gold form' and 'Snow dust'.

#### & Special Effort:

Winners of the Special Effort were:

Jean Boucher
Ray Harrison
Helen Ireland
Rod McConchie
Jim Geekie
Norma Hodges
Kevin Tinker
Mavis Potter
Gloria Tinker
Bob Lee





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#### BUYER'S GUIDE TO FERN NURSERIES:

#### Victoria

- \* Allans Flat Plant Farm Retail.
  Tomkins Lane, Allans Flat, 3691, Ph:(060) 27 1375.
  (25Km south of Wodonga on the Yackandandah Road)
  Specializing in ferns and indoor plants. Open daily, except Wednesdays, and all public holidays.
- \* Austral Ferns Wholesale Propagators. Ph:(052) 82 3084.

  Specializing in supplying retail nurseries with a wide range of hardy ferns no tubes.
- \* Beasley's Nursery Retail.
  195 Warrandyte Road, Doncaster East, 3109.
  Ph:(03) 844 3355.
- \* Cool Waters Fern Nursery Wholesale Fern Propagators.
  Beech Forest, 3237, Ph:(052) 37 3283.
  Specializing in cool climate native ferns.
- \* Fern Acres Nursery Retail.
  Kinglake West, 3757, Ph:(057) 86 5481.
  (On main road, opposite Kinglake West Primary School).
  Specializing in stags, elks and birdsnest ferns.
- \* "Fern Glen" Wholesale and Retail. Visitors welcome. Garfield North, 3814, Ph:(056) 29 2375.
- \* R. & M. Fletcher's Fern Nursery Retail.
  62 Walker Road, Seville, 3139, Ph:(059) 64 4680.
  (Look for sign on Warburton Highway, 300m east of Seville Shopping Centre. Closed Tues. except on public holidays).
- \* Mt Evelyn Fern Centre Retail.
  63 York Road, Mt. Evelyn, 3796, Ph:(03) 736 1729.
  Mail orders welcome.
- \* Ridge Road Fernery Wholesale and Retail. Weeaproinah, 3237, Ph:(052) 35 9383. Specializing in Otway native ferns.

#### New South Wales

- \* Jim & Beryl Geekie Fern Nursery Retail.
  6 Nelson Street, Thornleigh, 2120, Ph:(02) 484 2684.
  By appointment.
- \* Marley's Ferns Retail.
  5 Seaview Street, Mt. Kuring-gai, 2080, Ph:(02) 457 9168.

#### Queensland

Moran's Highway Nursery - Wholesale and Retail. P.O. Box 467, Woombye, 4559, Ph:(071) 42 1613. (1Km north of Big Pinapple. Turn right into Kell Road).

