



THE
FERN SOCIETY

OF
VICTORIA

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

Volume 11, Number 6, June 1989

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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	Terry Turney	-	211 8169
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Membership Secretary:	John Oliver	-	879 1976
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SUBSCRIPTIONS: single - \$13.00 (Pensioner/Student -\$9.00);
Family - \$16.00 (Pensioners - \$11.00);
Overseas - A\$25.00 (by Airmail).
(Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

There have been further delays to the modification work at the Herbarium and we will not be able to use the hall for our July meeting. Hence, it will be held at the current venue, the Welsh Church hall and on the second Thursday of the month as usual. We have been assured that the Herbarium hall will be available in August for our A.G.M. and 10th anniversary celebration, but it would have been much more satisfactory to have had at least one meeting in the new premises to sort out any problems our major meeting.

Our June meeting will be a Gadget Night and a discussion on 'Caring for Ferns during Winter'. Gadget Nights have been very popular in the past, so bring along and share with others any little gimmicks you employ to aid your fern cultivation. Caring for ferns during Winter can be a problem for many and a good discussion should bring out many points of wide interest and application. Discussion need not be confined only to the meeting itself; our Newsletter Editor would be only too pleased to publish written contributions on this or any other topic.

Our July meeting will feature a talk by Mr John Eichler, who is very knowledgeable on native ferns and where to find them.

Best Regards,
Bob Lee



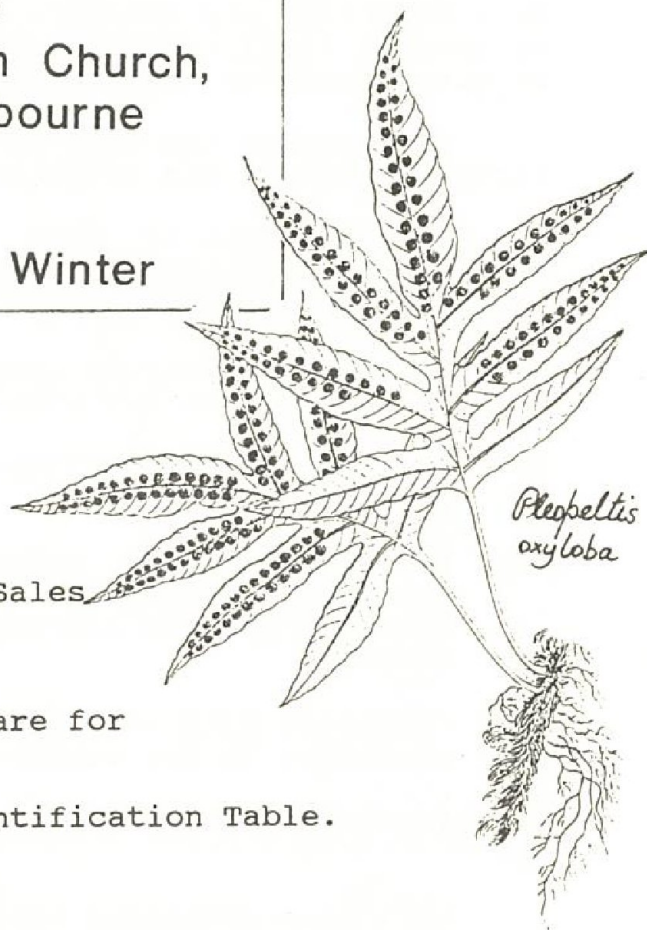
DON'T FORGET TO RE-NEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP THIS MONTH

NEXT MEETING

at 7.30 p.m.
Thursday, 8th June
at the Welsh Presbyterian Church,
320 Latrobe St, Melbourne
GAGDET NIGHT
plus discussion
Caring for Ferns During Winter

PROGRAMME:

- 7.30 p.m. - Fern and Book Sales,
Spore Bank,
Library Loans,
Special Effort Ticket Sales
- 8.00 p.m. - June General Meeting
- 8.30 p.m. - Discussion on how to care for
ferns over winter
- 9.30 p.m. - Fern Pathology and Identification Table.
Special Effort.
- 9.45 p.m. - Supper.
- 10.00 p.m. - Close



Notice of an Excursion to the Goudey's at Lara

from 10 a.m.

on Sunday, 18th June 1989

Venue: Lot 8, Couzens Road, Lara
(Melways Map 222 Ref. H9)
From Melb., Turn left off the Highway at
Avalon Road, then right into Couzens Road.

Chris and Lorraine Goudey have invited Society Members and their friends and families to visit their magnificent nurseries at Lara. Please "bring a plate" for lunch; the Society will provide tea and coffee as refreshments.

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SPEAKER REPORT - May General Meeting.

Speaker - Bill Taylor

Topic - Ingredients For Potting Mixes



Bill Taylor, a former Vice-President, Committee Member, Fern Show organizer and Honorary Life Member of this Society is a man of immense vitality and industry - he is also a man of few words. He structured his talk on an audience participation format.

Bill opened his talk by briefly summarising the basic factors which he had found essential for "growing good ferns".

- (a) You need lots of TIME - time to maintain the plants, prepare potting mixtures, build, maintain, enlarge and furnish fern houses etc.
- (b) You need to provide lots of LIGHT but not direct sunlight Morning sun is not usually harmful.
- (c) You need lots of PATIENCE. Ferns need time to develop and flourish.
- (d) sensible WATERING. water as required. Bill said that watering in Winter is the most difficult time. It is terribly easy to overwater and just as easy to neglect to water.
- (e) FERTILIZE with only small amounts. Liquid fertilizer is not necessary in the winter months.
- (f) You need lots of LUCK.

Bill then proceeded to discuss potting mixes and reluctantly advised members that he had not been able to procure supplies of the Idaho sterilized African Violet Mix recently. This mix has proved to be very efficient in the propagation of spores and the growing of sporlings. He is apprehensive that it may become unprocurable.

With this in mind and with typical thoroughness, Bill set up an experiment to try to find out whether alternative commercial mixes are as effective as the Idaho mix for the propagation of spores. Bill chose mixes from Pro Pine and Debco with Idaho as a control mix. He pointed out that the two former mixes were unsterilized and had not been designed for the production of fern sporlings. The presence of contaminants among the fern prothalli made them unsuitable. Conversely, the results from the use of the Idaho mix was excellent. The trays of prothalli were perfectly clean, healthy and viable.

Bill said that even though the Pro Pine and Debco mixes were good enough to produce the prothalli, they had not measured up as a growing on medium for ferns. They had actually not been designed for that purpose.

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Ingredients For Potting Mixes (cont.)

For most of our members it is a practical proposition to make our own potting mixtures, and to this end we should look at the most efficient combination of ingredients. Bill discussed and invited members' comments on a wide range of materials. These included: Sandy Loam, fine Pine Bark, washed River Sand, Leaf Mould, (he prefers the leaves of oak, liquid amber and planetree passed through a shredder), Peat Moss, Ligna Peat, Cow or Poultry Manure, Compost, Sawdust, Scoria, Sphagnum Moss, Lime and Charcoal. Even the use of earth worm casts was discussed.

Bill found that by experimentation with the aforementioned ingredients, those which provide water retention, aeration, nutrient retention and which gives stability to the plant, will succeed. He has evolved the following mixture which worked in a most beautiful way with his ferns.

Shredded Autumn Leaves	3 parts	(50%)
Sandy Loam	1 part	(about 17%)
Fine Pine Bark	1 part	"
Washed River Sand	1 part	"

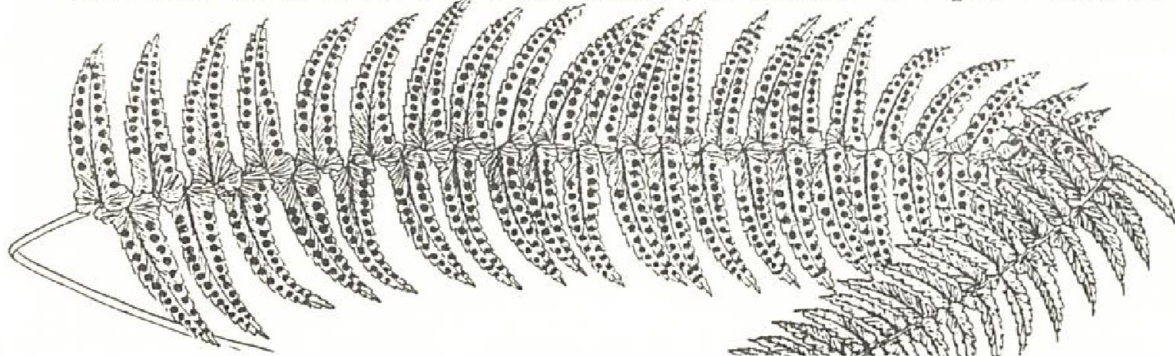
Bill mixes these components thoroughly then bags the mixture and stands it aside for four to six weeks. He said that the quarantine period is necessary to ensure that all toxins have left the Pine Bark before the mix is used. Bill said that he adds fertilizer to the growing fern in the form of a few grains of Osmocote sprinkled over the surface of the mixture.

In answer to a question Bill explained that he sets up his spore growing containers with the mixture dry - he sprinkles the spore as thinly as possible over the dry mixture and introduced moisture by capillary attraction from water trays beneath the containers. The water used must be cool and boiled.

With so many ingredients available for potting mixes Bill felt that when we as individuals settle for a mix it is a good idea to have it tested for pH. He said that the pH for ferns is best around a neutral 6 and certainly no more than 7.

written by Doug Thomas

Barry White's talk on "Sori Patterns - Close Up", has been held over for next month's Newsletter, because of space limitations.



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1989 FERN SHOW

Our 1989 Fern Show was the eighth in the ten-year history of our Society and the third at Nunawading Horticultural Centre. This venue again proved excellent as regards the facilities available for staging the Show, and the complementary attractions of its glass- and shade-houses were appreciated by many of the visitors. The Council staff again had the Centre in immaculate condition but the overcast (though dry) weather unfortunately took some of the normal sparkle from the setting.

The dominant feature in the display hall was a pergola with many beautiful hanging specimens, located opposite the entrance door. A floor display incorporating a waterfall (courtesy of L. & N. Gedye Pty. Ltd.) was located between the pergola and long display bench of *Adiantum* species. This was flanked at the other end by more hanging specimens, with two more large floor displays completing the layout.

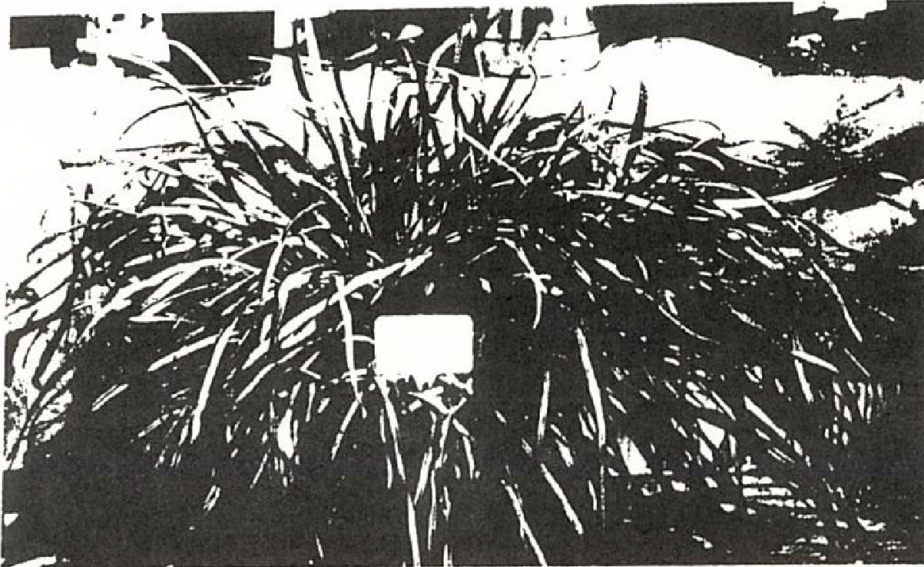


Attendance at the Show was rather disappointing at only 1005 visitors, compared with 1700 at the previous Show in 1987. We will never really know why numbers were low; perhaps there were too competing events that weekend, such as the televising of the inaugural International Motorcycle Grand Prix at Phillip Island. A good crystal ball would come in handy when selecting the dates for the Show.

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1989 FERN SHOW (cont.)

On the positive side, the lower attendance made viewing the display much more comfortable and resulted in less crowding in the fern sales area (where the number of plants bought per visitor was 32% more than the previous highest level - is there a clue here for the future?). The other positive spin-off was that Society members had more time to socialize and discuss fern lore.



It was pleasing to see several new faces among the members helping at the Show. Interstate members, Lloyd and Nita Frost of Mount Gambier and Barry and Lynn Hubbard of Parkes were present each day from Friday until Sunday. Lloyd and Nita made history by being the first interstate members to provide ferns for the display and also bought some fern sales.



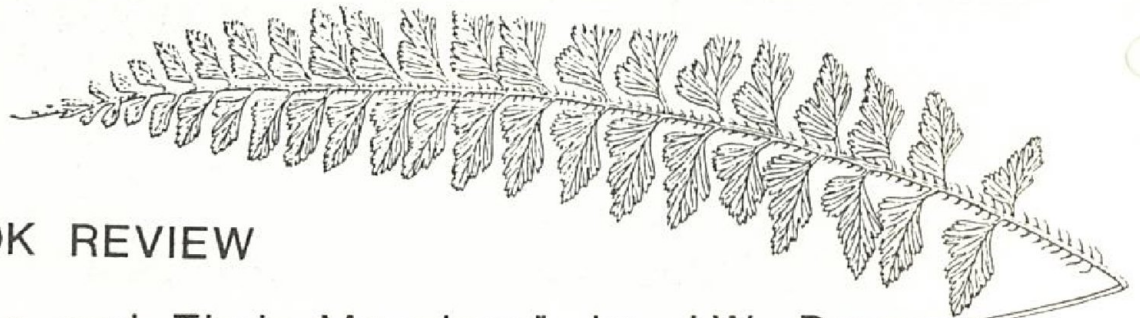
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1989 FERN SHOW (cont.)

The demonstrations of potting techniques were very popular as usual. The spore bank and book sale tables also received plenty of visitor attention, but business at the outdoor refreshment service was less than brisk in the unfavorable weather. On the financial side, the Show produced a profit to the Society of just over \$2200.

The Show Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Show by providing ferns and joining in the activities. We would be glad to receive any suggestions you care to make for improving the event in future years.

Bob Lee,
Chairman, Fern Show Sub-Committee



NEW BOOK REVIEW

"Fern Names and Their Meanings", by J.W. Dyce

31 pp. Published by The British Pteridological Society, London, 1988. UK£ 3.00. ISBN 0 9509806 1 7

This small but very comprehensive book is from the pen of Jimmy Dyce, President Emeritus of the British Pteridological Society. Although it concentrates on the origins and derivations of British fern names, it a wealth of information on the meanings of the various Latin and Greek names encountered by all fern enthusiasts. The chapters include:

- * Etymology of British fern genera names
- * Meanings of Latin and Greek word elements commonly occurring at the beginning of fern names
- * Meanings of Latin and Greek word elements commonly occurring at the end of fern names
- * Glossary of fern varietal names
- * References

I found this book fascinating reading, covering the topic thoroughly. It is a must for all who are interested in how and why ferns are named as they are.

Chris Goudey

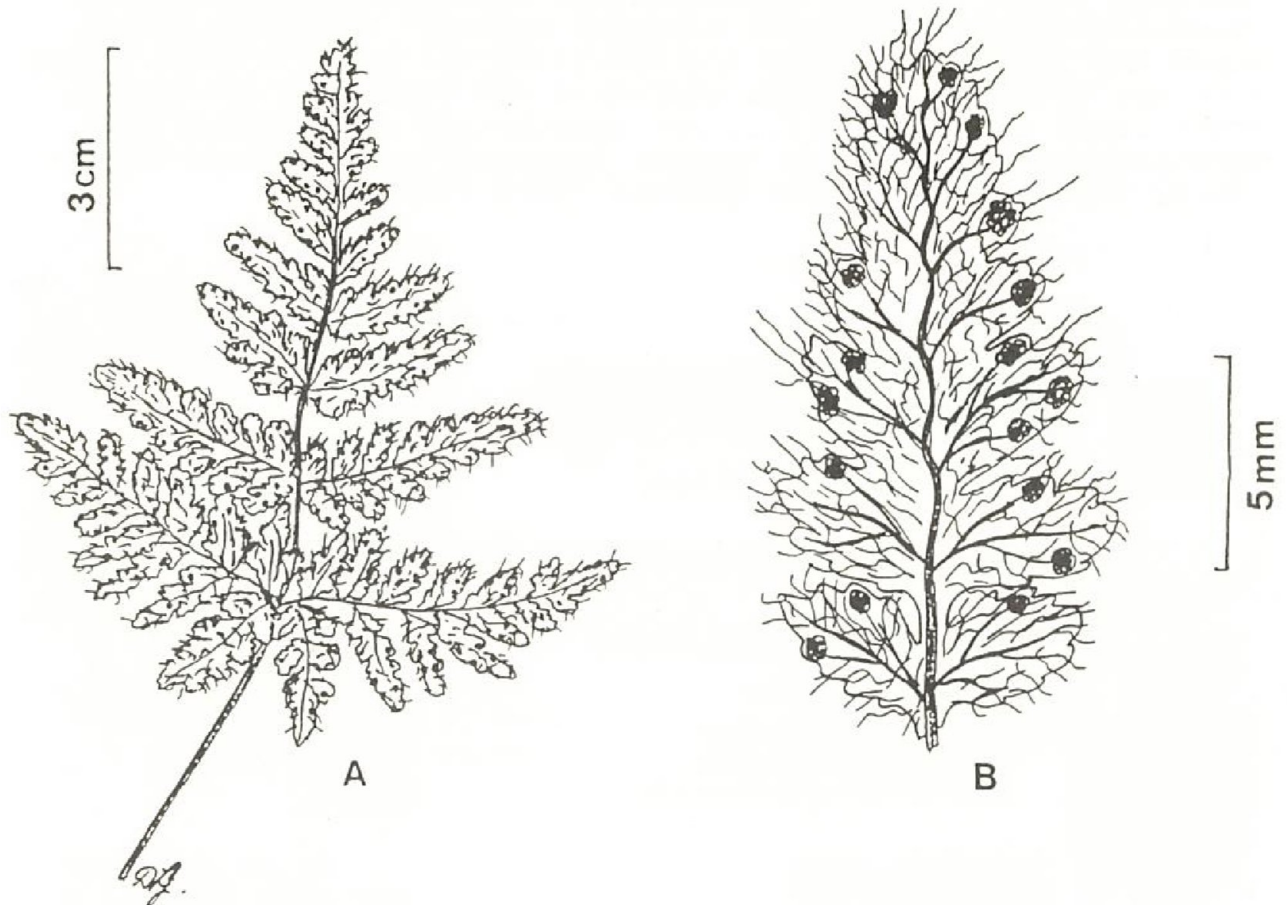
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NEW FERN SPECIES FROM AUSTRALIA - Part 2

Cheilanthes cavernicola (D. Jones):

This species is a medium-sized terrestrial fern, found growing in branched clumps. Its fronds are up to 40 cm long and are ovate-deltate (i.e. between oval and triangular in shape). They are covered by masses of white cottony hairs up to 2mm long. This species is rather similar to *C. fragillima*, but can be readily distinguished from the latter by its paler, thinner-textured fronds, which are much less deltate.

This plant has been found in several sites in sandstone areas, including near Jabiru East in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory and along the Mitchell River in the Kimberly region of Western Australia. It usually grows on rock ledges and at the entrance to shallow caves, to which the species name refers (Latin "caverna" - a cave). It is noticeable that plants growing in moist, sheltered situations have thin textured, almost membranous frond when compared to those in more exposed sites.



Thanks are extended to David Jones for permission to reproduce details from his publication in *Austrobaileya*, 2(5), 469-480 (1988).

EXCURSION TO KINGLAKE NATIONAL PARK

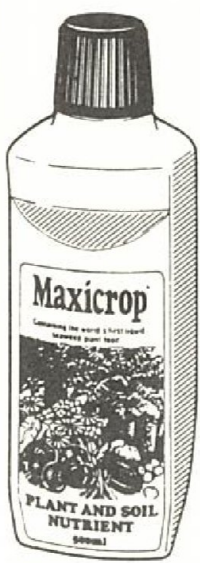
Although only 16 adults and 4 children attended, our outing to Kinglake National Park on the 30th April proved very enjoyable indeed. With showery conditions in Melbourne, we travelled with some trepidation, but the weather improved with each kilometre. On arrival at Mason Falls, the sunshine was streaming through the tall messmate and mountain grey gums. Norma and John Hodges soon had an excellent fire burning in a barbecue, so while it settled down, several members set out to find the lyrebirds with some success.

The fresh mountain air had enhanced our appetites, so the barbecue was soon smothered with steak, chops and sausages and although yours truly left his steak in the fridge at home (!!!), we were soon enjoying a hearty lunch. (My thanks to Norma Hodges). After clearing the tables, we set off along the Falls Walk and soon discovered magnificent clumps of *Asplenium flabellifolium* (Necklace Fern), *Pellaea falcata* (Sickle fern) and *Cheilanthes sieberi* (Rock Fern). The predominant undergrowth on the higher slopes of the valley consisted of *Culcita dubia* (Rainbow Fern), several *Hypolepis* sp. and *Pteridium esculentum* (Common Bracken). Numerous *Blechnum* species, including *nudum*, *minus* and *fluviatile*, were spotted along the water's edge, along with the treeferns, *Cyathea australis* and *Dicksonia antarctica*. Other ferns not so prolific, but nonetheless well established, were *Asplenium bulbiferum* (Mother Spleenwort), *Sticherus tener* (Silky Fan Fern) and *Todea barbara* (King Fern).

At about 3p.m., we moved onto Kevin and Gloria Tinker's 'Fern Acres Nursery' where we spent a very enjoyable hour wandering amongst their ferns. Several members arrived back to their cars with some choice ferns at very reasonable prices as well as with a free bag of potatoes from Gloria's vegie garden.

As we made our way back home, I'm sure all members felt that this had been a most enjoyable and healthy way to spend an Autumn Sunday.

Keith Hutchinson



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SOCIETY NEWS:

New Members:

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members to the Society:



Mr N. Bentley	Eltham Nth
J. Bryant	Eden Park
R.B. Casmere	Kilsyth
J. Cerchi	Box Hill
R. Cowan	Dapto, NSW
C. & L. Dunbabin	Ferntree Gully
Mr & Mrs J. Frederic	Burwood East
Mr & Mrs D.E. Fuller	Oakpark
L. Haddow	E. Bentleigh
Mr & Mrs G.Hegan	Bulleen
Miss M. Libby	Wantirna Sth
D. May	E. Coburg
B. Paterson	Thomastown
J. & M. Rauter	Kalorama
B. Whitehead	Gynea, NSW
Mr & Mrs B. Vetigan	Doncaster

Best wishes to Bob Lee:

All the members of the Society hope that our President, Bob Lee, has fully recovered from his recent operation.

Volunteers for Fern Sales Table:

Jack Barrett, Jean Rhodes and Janet McLennan have offered to help our monthly meetings run more smoothly by staffing the Fern Sales Table. Thank you!

From the April Meeting:

Highlights of the ferns offered for sale at the May meeting were: *Arachnoides simplicolor*, *Asplenium protensum*, *A. terrestre* ssp. *maritimum*, *A. x hookeriferum*, *Blechnum colensoi*, *Blechnum* sp. (Green Bay, NZ), *B. spicant* var '*cristatum*', *Cyathea* sp. (Bouganville), *Dicksonia boudinii*, *D. herbertii*, *Dryopteris atrata*, *Lastreopsis calantha*, *Notholaena sinuata*, *Pteris microptera*, *Scyphularia pentaphylla*.

Special Effort Winners:

Special thanks go to George Start, who so generously donated the tree fern planters for April's special effort.

Last month's winners were:

Dave White,	Margaret Radley,	Renee Shiels,	Neil Lennie
Jean Boucher,	Barry Gesthuizen,	Don Fuller,	Janet McLennan,
Joan Taylor,	Thelma Knight,	Bernadette Blackstock	

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BUYERS' 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.
Weeaprounah, 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).

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