THE FERN SOCIETY

OFVICTORIA

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 12, Numbers 1/2, Jan/Feb 1990

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 Treasurer: 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 Book Sales: Derek Griffiths - 336 3157 8 Susan Court, East Keilor, Vic., 3033

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(Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year)

President's Message:

Best wishes to all for the start of our 1990 activities. Let us hope it will prove to be both an enjoyable and rewarding year.

Our December meeting ended 1989 in appropriate fashion with a lively discussion during the Fern Forum and an enjoyable Christmas supper to follow. The "gag" had to be applied to the Fern Forum before all the questions listed could be discussed. Many thanks to those who provided the questions, to the members of the Forum panel and to moderator Doug Thomas.

Thanks also to those who bought along plates of refreshments for the supper and items for the Special Effort hampers, to Mavis Potter for yet another of her superb Christmas cakes, and to those who organised the Special Effort and the supper. In short, many thanks to everyone who helped to make the evening a success. The meeting was a great success for Keith Hutchinson, even though he was absent due to illness - he managed to achieve his ambition of winning the Mavis Potter cake in the Special Effort with tickets bought for him by Jean Trudgeon!

I'm pleased to be able to report that our problem with the position of Secretary has been resolved and Bernadette Blackstock will now be able to continue in the position. We have provided a typewriter so that she can do the necessary work from home as time is available.

Unfortunately though, we are still in urgent need of a new Editor or an Editorial Committee; this is the last issue which Terry Turney can edit. In an article elsewhere in this issue Terry discusses what is involved in the position of Editor and makes suggestions on possible other ways of organising the publication of our Newsletter. There must be at least some

member of this Society who has the necessary skills for the work and can make the time available. Please consider earnestly whether you can help with the problem, and contact either Terry or myself if you are prepared to contribute.

With our 1990 Fern Show less than two months away, now is the time to firm up and act on those good intentions to take part (see separate Show article later).

Best Regards, Bob Lee.



NEXT MEETING

at 7.30 p.m., Thursday, 8th February, at the Herbarium, Botanic Gardens Birdwood Ave, South Yarra FERNS OF NEW CALEDONIA by Chris Goudey

7.30 p.m. - Fern and Book Sales, Spore Bank, Library Loans, Special Effort Ticket Sales 8.00 p.m. - Meeting 8.30 p.m. - "Ferns of New Caledonia" by Chris Goudey 9.30 p.m. - Fern Pathology and Identification Table. Special Effort. 9.45 p.m. - Supper. 10.00 p.m. - Close

Forthcoming Meetings:

March 8th - Fern study night - Fern descriptions April 12th - talk on ferns by David Jones of the National Botanic Gardens, Canberra

> asplenum Capitisyork

Editor's Message

Dear Readers,

As this is the last Newsletter that I shall present to you, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those Society members (and non-members) who have contributed to the production of the Newsletter. These include the previous Editor, Keith Hutchinson, for his assistance in getting me started and John Oliver, who kindly acted on my behalf during the times I have been overseas. John, together with the longstanding and dedicated dispatch team of Kath Brown, Margaret Radley and Jean Trudgeon, also made the job of Editor so much easier by ensuring that you received your Newsletter regularly each month, notwithstanding the vagaries of Australia Post! special thanks also go to my wife, Sharyn, for her time, creative flair and effort in laying out and pasting up the Newsletter each month. I have been pleasantly surprised by many interstate and overseas members who were only too willing to contribute articles to the Newsletter. Of the local members, Doug Thomas deserves special mention; without fail each month, Doug has produced a speaker's report from the previous meeting. These people have combined with others to make the position of Editor relatively easy, very rewarding and always instructive. Thank you all.

I would also like to take this opportunity to make some personal comments and prompt you to consider how you would like to see your Society develop and prosper into the 1990's. As you know, our Society is now over 10 years old. We continue to interact essentially the same way as when we started, concentrating on monthly meetings and Newletters. There is no particular need to maintain the Society in its existing format. It should reflect your current requirements and anticipate those which will arise in future. It is my hope that over the next few months your Executive Committee will be able to get your opinions on the future directions of the Society.

The issue which you should consider first is whether the Newsletter should continue in its present form. If you feel it should, then a relacement editor is needed NOW. The position of Newsletter Editor requires no special knowledge of either publishing or ferns. There are numerous people with sufficient experience to guide a new Editor through the mechanics of publication, which are nowadays relatively simple with the ready availability of word processors. I found being Editor provided me with the opportunity to learn so much more about ferns and gave me access to a world wide network of knowledgeable fern lovers. This position can be filled just as easily by a brand new member, as well as by one of our more established members, who may feel it is their turn to make a contribution to the Society. If you are interested in this position and would like more information, or just have some suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact either Bob Lee (Ph: 836 1528) or myself (Ph: 571 8169).

If no Editor can be found, there are several alternatives to be considered, ranging from complete discontinuance of our Newsletter altogether. Instead of a single person acting as Editor, we could have several different members getting together each month to decide on the theme and contents of each issue with a co-ordinator assisting them in producing it.

Alternatively, we could have an editorial committee - three or four people, each with a different task, which could be rotated on a regular basis. It might also be possible to pay a part-time secretary, whose job it would be simply to collate news and copy, contributed by individual members and distribute stapled copies of this to all.



Terry Turney

<u>December Fern Forum</u>

written by Doug Thomas

In a remarkable performance, the Fern Forum provided sound advice, reasoned points of view and good-natured entertainment. The format of the meeting was made more effective by the willingness of the audience to contribute useful information in a most lively manner. Members comprising the Ferum Panel were: Betty Allgood, Ian Broughton, Chris Goudey, Bill Taylor and Barry White, with Doug Thomas performing the task of master of ceremonies with great flair. Here is a selection of questions:

Q. Small brown spots about 2-3 cm apart are appearing on the underside of the semi-mature fronds of my bird's nest fern. The spots are almost transparent against the light. Could the panel tell me what is causing this and if there is a remedy?

A. The symptoms indicate that this is a problem which can be caused by more than one malfunction. Firstly, it could be caused by a spot fungus. This is encouraged by having the hot rays of a full sun falling on the fronds, directly after watering. You would need to shift it to a position where the full rays of the sun do not reach it. Another possibility may be the presence of a parasite, known as "white coconut scale", a tiny insect which once was only found in Northern Australia. It has now worked its way down South, being introduced through large consignments of Asplenium australasicum (bird's nest ferns), other Asplenium species and Davallia species. A systemic spray is recommended, but complete eradication is very difficult. Rogor is a reasonably effective control.

Q. In the October issue of the Society Newsletter, under the "Ferns for Sale" listing, a fern was offered under the name of Athyrium japonicum var. 'pictum'. Is this name correct? I feel it should be Dryopteris goeringianum.

A. The species referred to was on show at the December meeting. It is definitely not a Dryopteris sp. - it was clearly seen to be an Athyrium by the soral pattern and shape. However, confusion has arisen in the past, where this fern has been referred to by the incorrect name Athyrium goeringianum var'pictum'.

Q. Would the panel recommend a good potting mix for epiphytes?

A. Commercial growers prefer to use a general purpose mix - one which works well with both epiphytes and terrestrials. However, the basic ingredients varied from grower to grower - a commercial potting mix to which minced tree fern fibre is added was one suggestion. Another was a mixture of equal parts Debco orchid mix with potting mix; another which was recommended for Platyceriums was totally leaf mould. Yet another was a mixture of leaf mould, gravelly sand, sandy loam and pine bark.

Q. What can I do about thrip which collect very thickly on the

young fronds of my birds nest fern?

A. Thrip are very persistant especially during the summer months. Because they are sucking insects they can be controlled by use of a systemic spray. A good general purpose spray containing both Carbaryl and Rogor is suggested. To make this mixture, prepare a spray of Carbaryl i.e. 1 level teaspoon Carbaryl powder to five litres of water. To this mixture add three drops of Rogor and apply to affected plants every fourteen days till the insects disappear.

Q. Why is it that fern prothalli do not produce sporelings when

spore is sown too thickly?

A. When prothalli are crowded they produce many more female cells (archegonia) than would normally be necessary for fertilization. However, when this occurs, the production of male cells (antheridia) is suppressed - hence a situation arises where there is an abundance of egg cells but little or no sperm with which to fertilize them.

Q. Recently purchased staghorn ferns are ailing and have shot holes all over them. Snail bait has had no effect. Could these plants be infested with staghorn beetles and if so what treatment

can be applied to eradicate them?

A. The staghorn beetle is a tiny insect similar in appearance to a lady beetle but much smaller and bluish black in colour. It has four orange or orange-red spots on its back. It burrows into the frond to form a tiny crater - the eggs are laid in the growing tips of the fertile fronds and it is the caterpillar which does the damage. The Carbaryl/Rogor systemic combination spray recommended above would be worth trying for these beetles and their caterpillars. Another insect pest which could be responsible for damage to the staghorn ferns is the staghorn borer, which bores into the sterile fronds close to the eye rhizome. It hides by day and emerges at nioght to feed on both sterile and fertile fronds. This insect can be identified by its habit of constructing a web around the outside of the bore hole where excretatends to lodge. A pyrethrum or malathion spray is the recommended treatment. For further reading on these unusual pests, D.L.Jones Encyclopedia of Ferns, p.p. 100 is recommended.



SOCIETY NEWS:

New Member:

A warm welcome is extended to a new overseas member, Ed Brown of 10712 Lippizan Drive, Jacksonville, Florida 32257, USA. His interests lie not only in ferns but also in palms and cycads. He would like to correspond and perhaps exchange spore or plants with other members.

Ferns on exhibit:

Several members brought some choice or rare ferns along to the Xmas meeting. They included:
numerous Adiantum sp., Athyrium nipponicum var. 'pictum',
Blechnum contiguum, B. pattersonii with dissected fertile fronds,
B. penna-marina 'cristatum', Cyathea loheri, Marattia salicina
var. howeana, Photinopteris speciosa, Selaginella tamariscina cvs
Hakkohkirin and Kinka,

From the December Meeting:

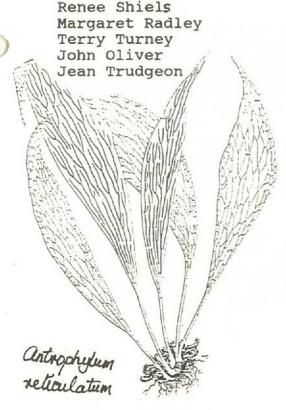
Highlights of the many ferns offered for sale at the December meeting were:
Asplenium contiguum, A. milnei, A. protensum, A. rhizophyllum,
Blechnum minus 'cristatum', B. penna-marina 'cristatum', B.
punctulatum, Camplyoneuron angustifolium, Cyathea dealbata, C.
rebeccae, C. sp. aff. tomentosissima, Davallia canariensis, D.
divaricata, D. mariesii, Lygodium japonicum, Microsorium sp.
(Lord Howe Is.), Notholaena sinuata, Pellaea falcata 'nana',
Polypodium fortunei, Polystichum rigens, P. vestitum, Pteris
argyraea, P. microptera, P. wallachiana, Sadleria cyatheoides, S.
pallida, Scyphularea pentaphylla, Tectaria gemmifera, Woodwardia

Christmas Hamper Winners:

unigemmata.

Many thanks to those who donated goods to the hampers. Keith Hutchinson won the Xmas cake, so kindly cooked and decorated by Mavis Potter. Winners of our Xmas hampers were: Bill Taylor

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1990 FERN SHOW

Saturday 31st March - Sunday, 1st April

The Show will be held at the Nunawading Horticultural Centre on the above days and, as usual, will be open to the public 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Sunday. Setting up will begin at 12 noon Friday, 30th March (further details on times for this day will be forthcoming).

Publicity for the event is a prime need from now right up till the time of the show. The Show Committee will be organizing as much publicity as possible through the media, but this will probably be less than usual because of the well-publicised economies by many of the organisations. Hence, the assistance of all members is needed in this area. Advertising leaflets will be available at the February meeting and everyone attending is asked to take some and arrange to have them displayed in places where they are likely to attract the attention of potential visitors to the Show. Please also try to promote the Show at every opportunity over the coming weeks, by any other means that occur to you.

The Committee would like to hear reasonably soon from members willing to help in the Show activities - setting up and staffing the display, helping in the fern sales area, providing the tea and coffee service, etc - so that a roster can be arranged to cover all periods adequately. It is important that there is a regular influx of new participants into Show activities, and we particularly encourage new members to join in. The Show is an ideal opportunity to get to know other members and improve your knowledge of ferns. Feeling that you do not have an adequate knowledge of ferns should not be a deterrent from joining in. There is always plenty of backup available in the event of a difficult question, and you learn from the answer.

A good display requires a lot of ferns and we hope that many members will contribute (again with a special invitation to new members and those who have not been involved before). Now is the time to make this decision so that selected plants can be brought into prime condition before Show time. While large spectacular ferns always stand out as highlights in a display (and so we will be hoping for plenty of these), the Show is really intended to generate an enthusiasm for ferns in the visitors by presenting a wide range of varieties of well-grown and well-groomed specimens, with quality more important than size. So do not be too modest in assessing the suitability of your plants for the purpose. If in doubt, talk to one of the Show Committee.

Please ensure that all display ferns, especially uncommon ones, are clearly labelled. We have been embarrassed at times, trying to answer questions about spectacular, unusual ferns that are not identified. If you are not sure of the name, try to have the fern identified in advance, rather than hope someone at the Show will recognize it.

Members who plan to sell ferns at the Show must tell us of their attention in advance, so that the necessary arrangements can be made. There is no limit, either high or low, to the number of plants that can be brought along for sale (and we would encourage anyone with a few suitable surplus plants to participate), but we cannot accept small tubes as the difficulty and effort of handling them is disproportionately high. Please note that people selling ferns are expected to contribute a reasonable number of plants to the display in proportion to their sales volume. Where plants of a very small size are offered for sale, it would be a great help if a specimen of each type of a reasonable size could be brought along for the display, so as to give customers a better idea of what the more mature fern will look like.

Finally, we should be grateful if members, intending to come to the Show, would save up and then bring to the Show any smallish cardboard boxes they may acquire, which could be used for packing sold ferns.

The members of the Show Committee responsible for organizing the event this year are:



Bob Lee (Chairman)	Ph: 836	1528
Betty Allgood	(059)68	4858
Julian Basser	596	3132
Bernadette Blackstock	391	5517
Ian Broughton	(059)64	6402
Derek Griffiths	336	3157
John & Norma Hodges	878	9584
Barry & Gay Stagoll	844	1558
Barry White	337	9793
Bill Taylor	754	8275



Please do not hesitate to contact any of these for further information, help with any difficulties and (most welcome) any suggestions for improvements.





New Fern Species from Australia - Part 7

Asplenium bicentenniale

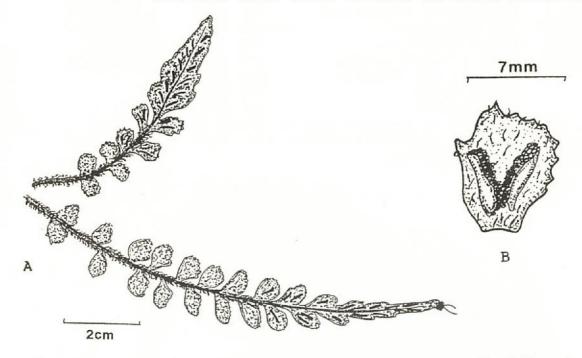
Perennial fern forming small clumps. Rhizome short, tufted, up to 7 mm in diameter, with light to dark brown, clathrate, shiny, lanceolate, entire scales up to 3 mm long, 1 mm across. Fronds 8-23 cm long, arching, dark green, coriaceous. Stipe 2-3 cm long which are deltate at the base then quickly taper to a long-attenuate apical section. Rachis greenish-brown, with numerous linear scales. Lamina 1-pinnate, narrow-oblong in outline, 6-20 cm long, 1.5-2.5 cm wide, with 5-14 pairs of pinnae, proliferous near the apex. Lateral pinnae decresent towards apex and base, oblong-cuneate, alternate, widely spaced (1-2 times pinna width apart), sessile, the base of distal pinnae decurrent on rachis, margins irregularly dentate, dark green dorsal surface, paler beneath, venation conspicuous. Middle pinnae 0.7-1.2 cm long, 0.5-0.8 cm wide, obliquely erect. Apical segment 2-4.5 cm long, 0.6-0.9 cm wide, irregularly lobed, lower lobe dentate, distal part often caudiform. Sori linear-oblong, up to 4 per pinna, set at an angle on both sides of the costa. Indusia linear-oblong, entire, membranous but firm.

Distribution :

At present known only from the Lamb Ranges on the Atherton Tableland but probably also on adjacent ranges.

Habitat :

On rocks and boulders near small streams in dense rainforest.

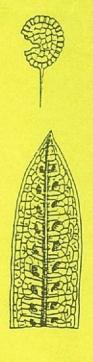


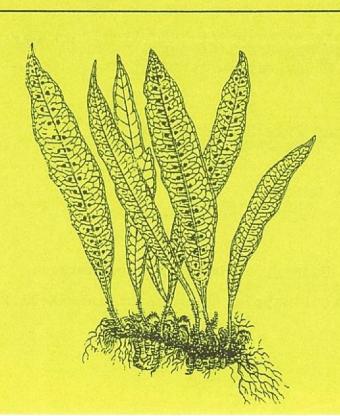
A: Asplenium bicentenniale fertile frond, B: fertile pinnae

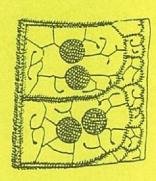
Thanks are extended to David Jones for permission to reproduce details from his publication in <u>Austrobaileya</u>, <u>2</u>(5), 469-480 (1988).

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Pleopeltis tridactyla

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- * Andrew's Fern Nursery Retail
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- * <u>Austral Ferns</u> Wholesale Propagators. Ph:(052) 82 3084. Specializing in supplying retail nurseries with a wide range of hardy ferns no tubes.
- * <u>Beasley's Nursery</u> Retail. 195 Warrandyte Road, Doncaster East, 3109. Ph:(03) 844 3355.
- * <u>Cool Waters Fern Nursery</u> 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:

- * <u>Jim & Beryl Geekie Fern Nursery</u> 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).