

**THE  
FERN SOCIETY**

**OF  
VICTORIA**

**Inc.**

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST: PUBLICATION No. VBH3411

**NEWSLETTER**

VOLUME 12, Number 3, March 1990

## FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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Subscriptions: Single - \$13.00 (Pensioner/Student -\$9.00);  
Family - \$16.00 (Pensioners - \$11.00);  
Overseas - A\$30.00 (by Airmail).  
(Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year)

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### President's Message:

Our 1990 activities started rather traumatically when it was discovered through a lucky phone call to the Herbarium that our application for use of the hall on the second Thursday of each month for our meetings had been rejected (the night has been re-allocated to the Field Naturalists Club, which had met then for many years before the Herbarium shut in 1988 for modification). At this point the Jan./Feb. Newsletter was folded and labelled ready for posting the next morning. Despatch was delayed and an insert prepared for all Victorian copies advising that the meeting had been re-scheduled for Thursday 15th. It could have been a lot worse if we had found out 24 hours later !!

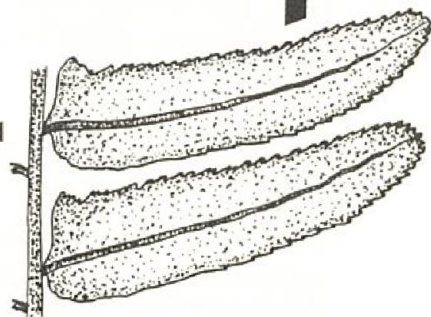
We have now booked the Herbarium Hall for the THIRD Thursday of each month for the balance of the year (but will probably arrange an earlier date for the December Meeting). Please note this continuing change from the second Thursday. As this newsletter will be issued approximately a week later than usual because of the delayed February meeting, we have sent a separate letter advising of the change to those members not at the February meeting but thought likely to be possible attendees at the March Meeting.

This edition of the Newsletter has been produced under great difficulty, with John Oliver again acting as Editor (thanks very much, John). He cannot, however, substitute in this role any more because of his increased work load in his other community activities. How the next edition of the Newsletter will be produced has yet to be worked out.

continued.....p.20

## NEXT MEETING

at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, 15th March  
at the Herbarium, Botanic Gardens  
Birdwood Ave, South Yarra  
FERNS STUDY - FERN DESCRIPTIONS  
by  
Terry Turney



- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 7:30 p.m.  | - Fern and Book Sales,<br>Spore Bank,<br>Library Loans,<br>Special Effort Ticket Sales, |
| 8:00 p.m.  | - Meeting   |
| 8:30 p.m.  | - "Fern Study - Fern Description"<br>by Terry Turney                                    |
| 9:30 p.m.  | - Fern Pathology and Identification Table.<br>Special Effort.                           |
| 9:45 p.m.  | - Supper.   |
| 10:00 p.m. | - Close.  |

### FERN STUDY NIGHT

The March meeting will feature a Fern Study Night. On this occasion, we propose to examine in some detail how ferns are described by taking an actual example. We are going to look at a published botanical description - with the aid of a set of notes you will be given and the actual fern in front of you. As it is the first time we attempted this, we have chosen a fern familiar to all - *Nephrolepis cordifolia* - the common fishbone fern. So if you want to participate, please bring along a pen or pencil, a magnifying glass (if you have one, but not essential) and a piece of fishbone fern, roots and all, in a bag. Please, NOT your prized fern as you will be chopping it up. There should be some spare ferns you can pull apart at the meeting if you don't have any. If you have any cultivars of *Nephrolepis cordifolia* or *exaltata*, any other *Nephrolepis* species or their more distant relatives - *Oleandra* spp (stilt ferns) and *Arthropteris* spp, please bring these along as well. They will be for show only and will be lovingly cared for and returned intact.

## Speaker Report - General Meeting, 15th February, 1990

Speaker: Chris Goudey.

Topic: "Ferns of New Caledonia"

On 28th May, 1989 a small party of dedicated fern enthusiasts took a voyage of fern exploration to New Caledonia. Chris was a Member of this party and in introducing his topic described the planning necessary and the problems which arose from not being able to speak French. Despite this the party gathered together such items as maps, food supplies, a rented car and limited information from Forestry Officers. The planning was actually based on a day to day format over six days and Chris's slide photographs followed this sequence.

Rain fell on each of the six days making photography difficult and personal comfort impossible. However much of the spectacular New Caledonia mountain country was explored and some magnificent fern species seen.

DAY ONE: A day spent locally organizing supplies and equipment. It included a non-productive visit to the Forestry Office.

DAY TWO: A visit to Mount Des Koghis which is 1079 metres high, is an important tourist attraction and a short drive from capital city Noumea. On the way to the site the native tree fern *Sphaeropteris intermedia* was seen growing vigorously in private gardens. This plant reminded Chris of our *Cyathea cooperi*. Other spectacular plants seen were a very attractive conifer and a pitcher plant.

Walking tracks led into the forest from a car park and it was along one of these tracks that the party came upon the red-stemmed *Sphenomeris alutacae*, a fern not unlike an *Adiantum* in appearance but which stands on long upright bright red stems.

Other ferns photographed on this day were:

*Blechnum gibbum*, a native of New Caledonia which grows to tree fern size - *Cyathea albifrons*, a tree fern having jet black stipules with underside of fronds white - *Cyathea vieillardii*, a slender tree fern - *Marattia attenuata* with fronds 2-6 metres long - *Asplenium robustum*, a attractive fern pictured growing in a decaying log - *Selaginella hordeiformis*, a very pretty fern ally - *Oleandra neriiformis*, a tropical fern which is very difficult to grow in southern Australia and *Cyathea novae-caledoniae*, characterized by reddish brown scales.

DAY THREE: To Mount Muo whose forests at an altitude of 1220 metres are often shrouded in cloud. A coral fern (*Gleichenia*), a bracken which became white with age and a brilliant red *Blechnum* were seen on the fringes of the forest.

In the cloud forest the vegetation was saturated and the atmosphere very humid. Thriving in this environment were countless filmy ferns including the magnificent *Leptopteris wilkesiana*. Another fern of great interest was the miniature tree fern *Dicksonia baudouini*. Mosses and *Selaginella* species were also photographed.

continued.....



DAY FOUR: to Mount Dzumac, a climb of twenty two kilometres using first gear all the way. Chris said that the road was treacherous but well worth the effort - the forest here was magnificent and highlighted by the presence of Dickonia thyrsopteroides, a massive tree fern with incredibly fine fronds. Cyathea alata, a quick growing close relative of Cyathea howeana were also seen.

DAY FIVE: The plan for this day was to visit Riviera Blue but the group was not able to find the way. As an alternative they visited the Zoo.

DAY SIX: Riviera Blue.

The visit to Riviera Blue proved to be one of many surprises. The terrain in one area was rocky and the plants grew in miniature as if grown by the bonsai method. Riviera Blue is actually the name of the lake whose water is crystal clear but in which there is no marine life. Chris thought that a toxic chemical in the water was responsible for this. Even a river flowing into the lake was similarly afflicted.

In a jungle in this area a palm was found whose new fronds were bright red. Schizaea dichotoma, a comb fern which also grows in Queensland was also seen.

Chris concluded the slide presentation with a screening of photographs taken in New Caledonia by group Member, Mary Frost.

In addition to the slides, Chris had brought some superb specimens of the fern species obtained in New Caledonia. He discussed each one of them in turn concluding a very interesting and informative Presentation.

President Robert Lee thanked Chris on behalf of Members. He felt that everyone present had appreciated the thoroughness of Chris's preparation and had enjoyed a very entertaining evening.

The audience heartily agreed.

written by Doug Thomas

#### AN APOLOGY

The report in last month's Newsletter on the December Fern Forum carried the credit "written by Doug Thomas" and referred in the first paragraph to "Doug Thomas performing the task of master of ceremonies with great flair."

All who know Doug personally will have realised already that he would not have written in such a self-laudatory fashion; in fact, in his manuscript he made no reference to himself at all. The problem phrases were inserted by the Editor who, in the rush of preparing his final edition under severe time constraints, did not notice the incongruity created by his attempt to give Doug due credit for his dual efforts.

I offer Doug sincere apologies for any embarrassment suffered from this stumble. I should also like to take this opportunity to add personal thanks to those expressed by Terry Turney in the last Newsletter for Doug's outstanding dedication to the onerous task of producing the speaker report each month from the taped record.

Bob Lee.



# 1990 FERN SHOW

at

Nunawading Horticultural Centre

82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill

(melway Ref. 62 F4)

Saturday, 31st March 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday, 1st April 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Setting up the various structures and tables in the display hall and sales area will begin at 12 noon, Friday 30th March. We should like ferns, both for the display and for sale, to arrive between 2 pm and 8 pm - definitely no earlier than 2 pm, please, as we will not be organized to receive them before that time. People with only a few ferns to sell and <sup>w<sup>h</sup></sup> find it difficult to bring them on Friday, can deliver them to the Show before 9:30 am. on Saturday or Sunday, but only by prior arrangement, please.

For the display this year we plan to have a water feature with cascading ponds (surrounded by ferns, of course) in the centre of the hall and an elongated pergola for hanging baskets along the wall facing the door. Other bench and floor displays will be set up in appropriate locations. We hope that many members will participate in the display. A wide selection of well-grown healthy ferns is needed, and do not hesitate to bring along your special favourites, particularly if they are ferns not widely seen elsewhere - they will be well cared for. Don't forget to have all ferns adequately labelled - with their name for identification and your name to facilitate return.

A great deal of work is involved in preparing the large easily read labels for the display plants, and we generally do not have time to do the job as thoroughly as we would like. To speed up the writing of the labels, we ask that people providing ferns for the display prepare a list of names of those ferns in advance and present it to the labelling group, which will be located near the entrance to the display hall. This will save the time previously lost in locating the ferns in the display and then returning to write the labels.

The Show Committee is anxious to finalize arrangements for the Show, and to this end would like to have firm information on availability of helpers for the various activities. These include setting up and later dismantling the display, staffing it during opening hours to answer visitors' questions (and guard the ferns!), selling and restocking in the sales area, demonstrations, the refreshment service, etc. As mentioned previously, do not worry that your knowledge of ferns may not be adequate. There are plenty of jobs for all levels of knowledge and chances all the time to learn. Please wear your triangular F.S.V. name tag with your name on it while at the Show.

Would members wishing to sell ferns at the Show, who have not already advised their intentions, please contact Bernadette Blackstock either at the March meeting or by phoning 391 5517. It is a condition of acceptance that all ferns for sale be grown on by members and not just acquired for re-sale. Please remember also that sellers are expected to contribute ferns for display in proportion to their sales volume. Please ensure that all plants have individual labels, and in fairness to customers, indicate clearly whether hot-house or other special growing conditions are needed. All plants should, of course, be healthy and free from pests.

On the publicity front, please continue to promote the Show right up to the weekend of the event by word of mouth and our advertising leaflets. A leaflet is included with this newsletter and more will be available at the March meeting. Please try to have them displayed prominently at suitable public places in your neighbourhood (nurseries, libraries, garages, etc.) to attract attention of potential visitors to the Show. Limited public transport to the Horticultural Centre is available on Bus 765, which runs between Nunawading and Mitcham railway stations, passing along Jolimont Road. Departures from either station are every half hour on weekdays and Saturday morning and hourly after 1 pm on Saturday afternoon. Unfortunately, the service does not operate on Sundays. Copies of the timetable will be available at the March meeting.

Please contact a member of the Show Committee (names and phone numbers in the February Newsletter) with offers of help or display ferns, for any queries, etc.

Bob Lee

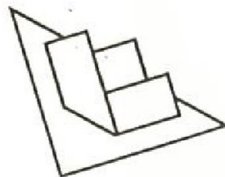
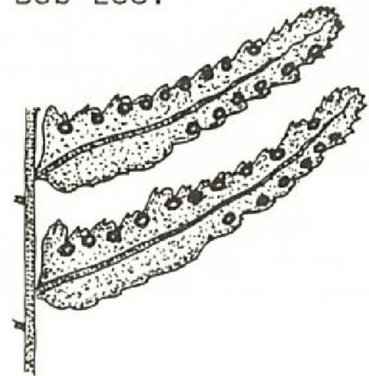
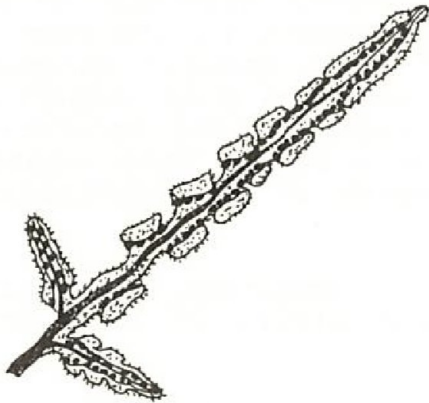


PRESIDENTS MESSAGE continued.....

We have had a couple of offers of assistance with the editorial work - but only from people who already carry out regular major work for the Society. I hope we will not have to impose further on these "willing horses" and that others will volunteer to carry out the work of keeping our Newsletter functioning. Apart from the point that it is unfair to load extra duties onto people who already work hard for the general good, it must be recognized that the entry of new personnel into the operating team is essential if the Society is to be a viable on-going organization. Remember too the old truism that the more you put into a society the more you get out of it. The benefits flowing from the job of Editor were outlined by Terry Turney in the Editor's Message last month. Please consider further your ability to help resolve this critical problem.

In conclusion, I'm sure I speak for all in offering to Terry our sincere thanks for the hard work as Editor over the past nineteen months and our congratulations on the result achieved.

Best regards  
Bob Lee.



LOCAL EXCURSION TO GREENS BUSH

The weekend excursion To Greens Bush as announced at the February meeting has had to be cancelled due to us failing to meet the minimum number of persons required to make an accommodation booking.

However, an alternative day trip to Glen Nayook near Powelltown, with a visit to Fletchers' Nursery (Seville) on the return trip, is being arranged. This day will be either Saturday 28th April or Sunday 29th April; this will be decided at the March meeting by the members interested in going. A coach will be arranged if sufficient numbers are interested in this trip, otherwise private transport will be used.

If you are unable to get to the meetings and would like to go on any of the trips arranged, please let any of the committee members know of your intentions so that accurate numbers can be catered for.



## Books On The Ferns Of Africa.

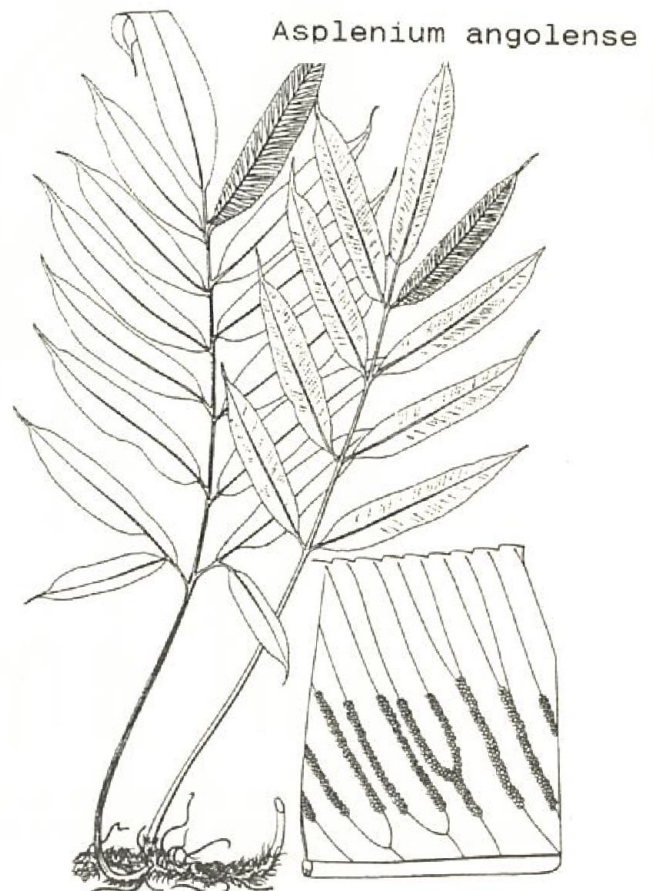
by Terry Turney

The ferns and fern allies of Africa are less well known to most Australian fern growers than those of other regions of the world. Millions of years ago the two continents were joined together and this is reflected in some similarities still existing in the regional flora (e.g. in the Proteas). There are several fern species common to both continents - *Todea barbara*, *Rumohra adiantiformis* and *Histiopteris incisa* are found in both regions. Moreover, many of the ferns of Southern Africa are particularly graceful and attractive. As the geography and climate of parts of Africa has close parallels in Australia, the fern flora of Africa deserves greater attention from Australian growers.

Two volumes on African ferns are now in our library: "Flora Zambesica - Pteridophyta" covers over 270 fern species in the area Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique and "Conspectus Florae Angolensis" covers Angola, with over 180 species mentioned. The author of both books was the world authority on ferns of that region, the late Prof. E.A.C.L.E. Schlepe. Both books are well illustrated, with the first giving detailed descriptions and habitat and distribution data. The book on Angola gives references and distribution data only. If these books are taken in combination with the more recently published "Ferns and Fern Allies of Southern Africa" (by W.B.G. Jacobson), one obtains a comprehensive picture of this region's ferns. Unfortunately, the corresponding fern flora of Tropical and Northern Africa are more poorly described. There are some rather dated descriptions of ferns of most areas - a list of these publications is available on request.



*Contogramme Africana*



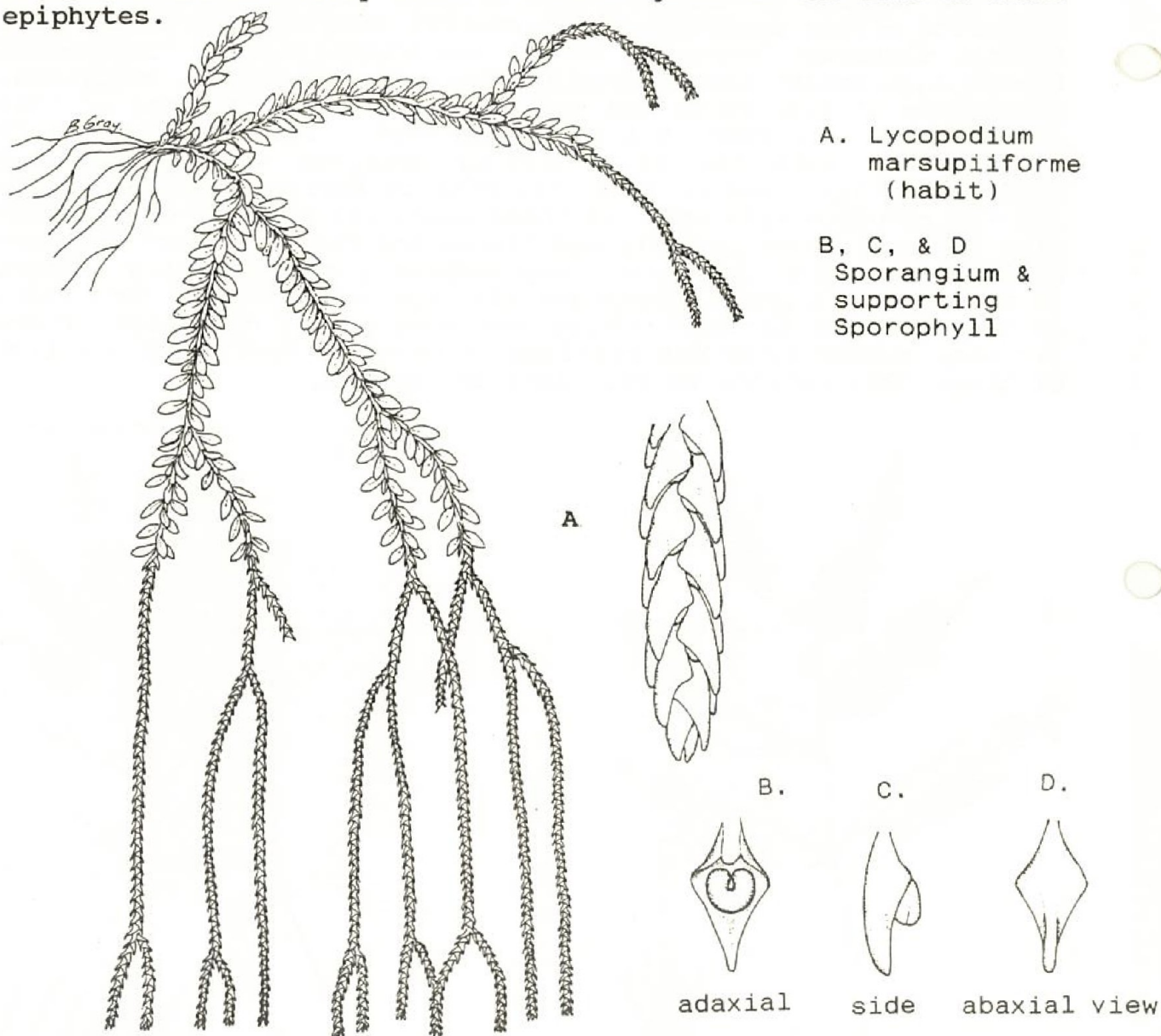
*Asplenium angolense*

# New Fern Species from Australia

## Part 8 - *Lycopodium marsupiiforme*

This epiphyte forms slender clumps with the hanging stems up to 60 cm long. Although it superficially resembles *Lycopodium proliferum*, it is easily distinguished from the latter by the less crowded, blunt, sterile leaves which spread at a wide angle to the stem and also by the sudden transition from the sterile portion to the fertile portion. The species also bears similarities to *Lycopodium phlegmaria* but has a much more slender growth habit and blunt rather than pointed leaves. The specific name, "marsupiiforme", comes from the small pocket or pouch on the sporophylls below the sporangia.

The habitat of this fern is on moist trees or rocks in high altitude rainforest in N.E. Queensland, between the Windsor Tableland and the Tully River. It often grows at the base of other epiphytes.



A. *Lycopodium marsupiiforme* (habit)

B, C, & D Sporangium & supporting Sporophyll

B. C. D.  
adaxial side abaxial view

Thanks are extended to David Jones for permission to reproduce details from his publication in *Austrobaileya*, 2(2): 126 (1985).

## SOCIETY NEWS



### Forthcoming Meetings:

April: Recent Studies In Australian Ferns,  
by David Jones of the National Botanic Gardens, Canberra  
May: An Introduction To Ferns  
by Doug Thomas  
June: Mini-talks By Members



### IN MEMORIAM

Members at the February meeting were saddened, as will be her many friends in the Society, to learn of the death of Beulah Powell early in February, just four months after the passing of her husband. Beulah was a foundation member of the Society and demonstrated her continuing enthusiasm by travelling frequently from Shepparton until the end of last year to attend monthly meetings.

### New Members:

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Mrs Helen Pearson	from Roseville N.S.W.
Mr Peter and Mrs Jill Stowey	from Forest Hill Vic.
Mrs J Stuchbury	from Glen Alvie Vic.
Sandra Kavanagh	from Mirboo Vic.

### February Special Effort Winners:

Chris Goudey  
Anne Bryant  
Mary Frost  
Mac Gregory  
Fran Harrison





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- \* Ideally suited for ferns
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## Maxicrop

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P.O. BOX 302, Bayswater, Vic. 3153. Tel. Melb. (03) 720 2200

### Spore Bank:

Urgently requires spore - some stock getting old and needs replacing

Bob Fletcher's Nursery, Seville featured in a segment on ferns in Burke's Backyard last Friday.

## BUYERS' GUIDE TO 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.
- \* Andrew's Fern Nursery - Retail  
Cosgrove Road, Invergordon, 3636, Ph:(058) 65 5369.  
Large range of ferns for beginners and collectors. Open daily,  
inculding public holidays, except Saturdays.
- \* 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 Pineapple. Turn right into Kell Road).