# THE FERN SOCIETY

# OF VICTORIA Inc.

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VOLUME 12, Number 5, May 1990

# FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

Postal Address: P.O. Box 45, Heidelberg West, Victoria, Australia, 3081

# Office Bearers:

President:	Robert Lee	Ph.	- 8	36	1528
Immed. Past Pres.:	Keith Hutchinson		-	45	2997
Vice-Presidents:	John Oliver		- 8	379	1976
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Spore Bank Manager:			- 3	37	9793
Membership Secretary:	John Oliver		- 8	379	1976
Editor :	Doug Thomas				7229
Book Sales:	Derek Griffiths				3157
8 S1	isan Court, East Ke	eilor,	Vic	:.,	3033
Typist:	Joan Taylor				

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# President's Message:

Our somewhat abbreviated April Newsletter was produced by a "scratch" team under considerable difficulty, increased by the major involvement of the Members in Fern Show activities. So it is with relief and much pleasure that I am now able to announce that Doug Thomas has kindly agreed to fill the position of Editor, thus continuing a long period of valuable service to the Society. This service has included of course, being President for the period 1982-85 - the typing of the Newsletter will be done by Joan Taylor, who has also served the Society well as a Member of both the Committee of Management and the Show Committee. Thank you very much Doug and Joan, I trust you will find your new roles both enjoyable and rewarding.

It seems appropriate at this moment to point out to other Members that several Committee and other positions will need to be filled at our next Annual General Meeting - that is only three months away. Please give some thought now as to whether you are able to contribute in this way to the functioning of your Society. Willingness to become involved is the only qualification required - knowledge is gained through participation. If you wish to offer to help or would like more information on what is involved, please contact me or any Member of the Committee.

A report on our 1990 Fern Show appears elsewhere in this issue. I should like to thank everyone who took part in the Show activities, and especially my fellow Members of the Show Committee for their efforts in organizing and running the event.

Best regards BOB LEE.

# NEXT MEETING

DATE: THURSDAY 17TH MAY, 1990

TIME: COMMENCING AT 7:30 P.M.

VENUE: THE ROYAL HERBARIUM BOTANIC GARDENS, BIRDWOOD AVENUE, SOUTH YARRA.

GUEST SPEAKER: DOUG THOMAS

TOPIC: AN INTRODUCTION TO FERNS.

# MEETING TIME TABLE

- 7:30 p.m. Fern, Book and Spore Bank Sales, Library Loans. Special Effort Ticket Sales.
- 8:00 p.m. Meeting Commences.
- 8:30 P.M. GUEST SPEAKER.
- 9:30 P.M. FERN PATHOLOGY AND IDENTIFICATIONS.
- 9:40 P.M. SPECIAL EFFORT COMPETITION.
- 9:45 P.M. SUPPER

 $\bigcirc$ 

10:00 P.M. CLOSE

#### A THREATENED VICTORIAN FERN by Barry White

Filmy maidenhair (Adiantum diaphanum) is a delicate fern with smooth, black stems and dark green tufted fronds. It clings to existence in Victoria at three tiny sites in South Gippsland.

One, in a deep gully near Trafalgar, is below land proposed for a share farm. Clearing vegetation above and planting pines on the farm is seen as threatening this patch of maidenhair.

The worst threat to the fern is changes to the moisture flows and micro-climates of its supporting habitat. Clearing native vegetation in the headwaters of its creeks, for example, with the resulting soil erosion and siltation, could wipe out a colony downstream.

At Korumburra, the ferns grow among ground flora that has been disturbed by introduced weed species.

(The Age 7 April 1990)

Note. This fern occurs in many other areas. It is listed by David Jones as also occurring in N.S.W., Qld., N.Z., Fiji, Norfolk Island, New Guinea, Indonesia, China and Japan.

#### SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING 19th APRIL, 1990.

- <u>Speaker:</u> David L. Jones. B.Ag.Sc., Dip. Hort. National Botanic Gardens, Canberra.
- Topic: Recent Studies of Ferns of the Northern Territory of Australia.

David Jones's knowledge of fern habitats throughout Australia is well known to fern enthusiasts world wide. In his talk he showed a large Fern Society audience how ferns; including several unnamed species, have established themselves in remote areas of the Northern Territory and Central Australia.

David explained that in regions like Arnhem Land the terrain is a heavily eroded very old sandstone where hugh rivers have worn deep ravines and gorges through the area. It is such a remote place that David and his colleagues had to be flown in by helicopter.

For nine months of the year the climate is dry and almost rainless, but during the other three a continuous deluge of rain is generated by the monsconal trough which moves in from the South. The months of the wet are December, January and February in addition to which tropical cyclones may occur from time to time - these also provide deluges of rain.

David said that because of the climate, the fern species were either drought resistant or had adapted to life in the dry. Most of these species grew, spored and germinated in the wet and favoured habitats where evaporation was slower during the dry season.

David showed beautiful introductory habitat slides of woodlands, gorges and monsoonal rain forests that he had entered in pursuit of his studies. With these slides, he set the scene for an absorbing and interesting presentation.

The following is a selection of rare fern species which David presented and described:

ADIANTUM PHILIPPENSE: Common across the tropical regions of Australia. A terrestrial fern which has a unique habit for an Adiantum in that it dies right back to the rootstock at which time it survives as a dormant rhizome. When the rains come it makes spectacularly rapid growth. Its preferred habitat is in seepage areas associated with rocks and boulders.

ADIANTUM PUBESCENS: Similar to ADIANTUM HISPIDULUM but is much softer and more hairy. It grows in shaded crevices in sandstone and reproduces itself vegetatively i.e. by means other than by the sexual fusion arising from prothallus and water. This plant along with many other dry area ferns cannot rely on water to aid the reproductive process. It therefore has adapted to producing spores which activate on the parent plant to produce sporelings which are exactly identical to its parent.

Continued Page 37.

DRYNARIA QUERCIFOLIA is widespread throughout northern Australia growing in shady gorges and on the boulders and trees of stream and river margins. Although commonly thought to be epiphytic it has adapted well to growing in the soil alsomit becomes totally deciduous during the dry and produces nest leaves and fertile fronds similar to the Platyceriums (elks and stags).

ANGEOPTERIS EVECTA: A colony of this huge ground fern was found thriving in Arnhem Land much to the amazement and delight of the research team. The habitat site was described as a densely shaded basin kept moist by constant seepage from adjacent sandstone.

NEPHROLEPIS ARIDA: Is known from a few gorges in Central Australia and Northern Territory - and from a gorge in the Kimberley Ranges. N. Arida is a vigorous grower proliferating by means of runners. It was found and named by David Jones.

CHEILANTHES LASIOPHYLLA is a fern of dry inland Australia whose fronds are densely covered by woolly hairs which insulate against dryness. This species can appear to be quite shrivelled and dead, yet within a few hours of receiving rain, it transforms into a green livery. After a few weeks a mass of new fronds is produced.

CYATHEA EXCELSA: A very rare species of tree fern which was found on Hand Creek, Cape York Peninsula. It was growing in a congested jungle situation and has the unusual characteristic of producing new fronds sparsely from points around the trunk; not from a crown as do other tree ferns. Three years after its discovery it was named by Professor Holtum of Kew Gardens, England.

ARTHROPTERIS ? An unnamed fern found on the Windsor Tableland in Queensland. This species appears to grow as a climber attaching itself to tree trunks and winding its way upwards. The fronds grow at right angles to the rhizome and press themselves tightly to the host - if pulled away the fronds tend to coil and spring inwards indicating that they must grow under a tension stress.

BOTRYCHIUM LUNARIA: A tiny moonwort which although it has a world wide distribution, is extremely hard to find. It grows in Alpine and sub Alpine areas among grasses. The plant is very simple, consisting of just two fronds, one of which is fertile the other sterile. In winter these fronds die back to a tiny rhizome which supports the plant during periods under snow. These remarkable little plants revive when the snow thaws.

<u>Vote of Thanks</u>: Chris Goudey, who moved a vote of thanks to both David and Barbara remarked that he had been amazed at the number of fern species presented in David's slides. He was particularly interested in the many species of CHEILANTHES screened and very impressed with the unnamed ARTHROPTERIS.

Chris presented David and Barbara with a box of the Society's engraved drinking glasses. He was enthusiastically supported by the large audience.

#### SPORE BANK DONATIONS

Spore bank donations have been received from Bill Taylor, Dorothy Forte, Joel Macher, Doug Thomas, and Ed Brown. ( Ed is a new member from Florida ). Thank you to all these members.

The bank cannot function unles it has deposits as well as withdrawals. The healthy functioning of the bank depends upon having a reasonable range of fresh spore. More donations are desirable.

Look through the spore list, if you can donate spore which is not on the list or which is getting dated please do so. It is not necessary to provide a large amount of spore or even to separate out the spore. Simply place the spore bearing fronds in an envelope of a suitable size. It is advisable to ensure that any envelope or other container does not allow the spore to leak out through the corners, the spore are very small and often blow out through quite small openings. Bending over the corners of the envelope and securing with a piece of tape or staple will prevent loss.

#### FORTHCOMING MEETING HIGHLIGHTS.

June 21st: Mini-talks by experienced Members.

- Bill Taylor, a former Vice President and an Honorary Life Member of the Society will speak on "The Cultivation of Maiden Hairs".
- Keith Hutchinson a former Society President and an Honorary Life Member has chosen the topic "Drynarias".

#### THE FINANCIAL YEAR.

The Fern Society's financial year is exactly the same as that of the Federal Taxation Office i.e. 1st July to 30th June.

This note is simply a reminder that annual subscriptions are due next month. The Committee of Management is much better able to plan future budget strategies for the Society when the subscription funding is known by early July.

#### ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF NEW MEMBERS 18.4.90

#### NAME

#### ADDRESS

P/CODE

Mr & Mrs B. Abbott	1 Malvern Ave.	Belgrave.	3160
C. Archer	17 Washusen Rd.	Heathmont.	3135
D & G Baker	99 Clipper St.	Inala	4077
D.G. Catt	12 Ronald Ave.,	Bulleen	3105
Mr. C. Clayton	233 Centre Dand. Rd.		
Mr. R. Davis	371 Elgar Road	Mont Albert.	3127
K. Doensen	33 St. Davids Drive	Wantirna	3152
Mrs. W. Duncan	231 Cumberland View	Wheelers Hill	3150
S & J Edgley	9 Amelia Court	Kilsyth	3137
Mr. R. Francis	7 Allice St.		3787
Mrs. S. Gange	8 Salsbury Ave.	Blackburn	3130
A. George	41 Roseberry St.		
Mr. D.C. Good	Unit 1/9 Scenic Ave.	Ringwood East.	3135
R. Keeling	Lot 1 Dalry Road	Healesville	3777
L & B Marshall	P.D. Box 46	Monbulk	3793
Mr & Mrs. S. Smith	37 Glenair St.	Lower Templest	owe 3107
K. Smith	17 Amelia Ave.	Deerpark	3023
R & N Spencer	22 Wilhelma Ave.	Bayswater	3153
Ms. M. Wood	1 Phillip Court	Greensborough	3088

A warm welcome is extended to the new Members listed above. We hope that this Society will serve you well and that you will enjoy the friendship and fellowship of your fellow Members. If you have a fern problem, "Ask for help". This Society is well equipped to respond.

#### NOTE TO FERN SOCIETY MEMBERS:

Any contributions of fern articles that the Members have that they would like to be printed in the Newsletter, the Editor must have them at the monthly meeting or prior to by mail.

Any contributions would be greatly appreciated.

#### TREE FERN FLOORING by Barry White

Those who went on the trip to Tasmania will remember the paths in that beautiful fern area in the north west, Milkshakes Reserve. The paths were made from the soft tree-tern (Dicksonia antarctica) or man fern as they are known in Tasmania, presumably because of the man-sized trunks. Many hundreds were laid down to give an unusual and effective path even though many members thought it a shame to use the tree ferns for such a purpose.

Tree fern trunks have also been used for flooring in homes. In the Kalorama area the first home erected made good use of local timbers for construction, including blackwood (Acacia melanoxylon) and hairpin banksia (Banksia spinulosa) for cladding, and lightwood (Acacia implexa) for structural timbers. For the flooring, however, the builders elected to use tree fern trunks. The trunks were apparently still in good condition when the floor was pulled up 70 years later !

#### "THE JAPANESE PAINTED FERN"

#### ATHYRIUM NIPONICUM (MEETEN) HANCE.

#### FAMILY:- ASPLENIACEAE SUBFAMILY:- DRYOPTERIDOIDEAE.

Quite some time ago when propagating ferns from spores I prepared a setting of Athyrium niponicum (Mett) Hance. At the time of this setting, locating any details was quite a problem; many early records had been made using incorrect titles. However coming up-to-date from Richard Rushe's "A Guide to Hardy Ferns" 1984, we have as Athyrium Niponicum a full description and correct details.

From my own plants I have prepared the following description and water colour painting. Possibly one of the most colourful ferns ever grown, coming as it does from Japan where careful culture of plants of many varieties is part of their way of life. This fern is deciduous losing all its fronds in winter and remaining dormant for some time before re-appearing fresh and attractive each spring.

Another unusual feature of this fern when grown from spores is that two distinct types appear, both quite attractive. Naturally the most colourful specimens are the most valued, and over the years the Japanese have selected these for propegation. The spores used in my setting were taken from a mature and most colourful specimen in my fernhouse. However a few plants were just green.

Rhizome medium to long creeping, creating in time a sizeable cover in a ground situation will flourish also in a large pot in a protected position in a lath house, hot house or fernhouse situation. Like most ferns, it requires watering, and good drainage. Also when in a pot for about two years when spring produces the new growth that is reasonably developed; it is wise to divide to produce new ferns in fresh pots, with a good new mixture, containing a liberal amount of humus (well rotted leaf mould). Stipes are upright, becoming pendulous with maturity, a warm claret colour about one quarter of the frond length. This colour continues in the rachis and pinnae costas. Stipes and rachis are grooved on the upper surface and rounded beneath. Grooves continue from the pinnae to the rachis. Pinnae are most colourful ranging from white to green to deep green close to the rachis. Spores are borne on the backs of pinnae protected by a linear indusium that follows the vein system, as is common to all Athyriums (Aspleniaceae). Scales of two types are present on the stipes and rachis broad type at the base of stipes. Narrow scales on the rachis. (see illustration - page 41).

RAY BEST.

#### THE FERN SOCIETY BASICS PAGE.

Ferns are amongst the oldest group of plants in the plant Kingdom - even today after millions of years they occupy a prominent part of the world's vegetation. It is because of the prehistoric origin of ferns that makes them different to other plants in cultivation today.

For example, take the method of cultivation for a bed of iceland poppies - these grow well when planted into a well worked, well fertilized earth soil situated in an open sunny position. If this same technique was used for an outdoor garden bed of fern species, it would be doubtful if even one single plant would survive.

In nature ferns will most commonly be found thriving in rain forests and fern gullies. It will be seen that some species grow in the soil, some in the trees and others on boulders.

By observing ferns in nature we see that ferns require definite conditions in which they will flourish. The most important of these are that their habitats are always shady and cool and that the soil is deeply covered by fallen leaves and twigs. Through the interaction of rain water and bacteria this material breaks down to form nutritious leaf mould.

A combination of leaf mould, moist soil and warm air generates a humid atmosphere which is very much appreciated by ferns. In rain forests there is shelter for ferns - the shelter comes from tall trees and the escarpments of deep gorges. Glen Nayook is a typical example. Shelter of this nature serves ferns further by excluding strong winds - strong winds entering a rain forest unhindered would drive out the valuable humidity. Shelter also protects ferns from the rays of the sun. But whereas hot sun is an enemy of ferns, it also provides the warmth and intensity of light needed to keep ferns healthy.

To be continued - next month - "Essential Factors."



Illustration from page 40.

#### THE 1990 FERN SHOW REPORT.

The Nunawading Horticultural Centre again proved to be a very pleasant and functional venue for our Fern Show, with good weather adding to the enjoyment of the event; how ironic it is with our present rain and floods to recall the very dry conditions of March and early April.

The fern display was a credit to all involved in both the quality of the ferns provided and the skill displayed in the arrangement. The centre of the hall was occupied by a water feature with a cascading series of ponds surrounded of course by masses of ferns. The eye moved naturally across this feature to a long pergola with hanging specimens set along the wall opposite the entrance door. One corner was occupied by a large display with a wide variety of tree ferns from all parts of the globe. The Adiantum display filled a bench along one wall.

Activity in the fern sales area was brisk as always and 2430 plants were sold. The demonstrators drew good audiences, the Spore Bank and the Book Sales table were kept busy and the refreshment service was much appreciated.

A total of just over 1100 people visited the Show; an increase of 10% on last year and a reasonable figure in view of all the other horticultural attractions available on that weekend. The Mayor of Nunawading and some of the Eldermen were among the visitors. Door takings and commission on the sale of ferns yielded a profit after expenses of about \$2300 (preliminary figure only).

The Show Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Show by providing ferns and joining in the activities. We are also very grateful to L and M Gedye Pty Ltd., for providing the ponds and pumps for the water feature.

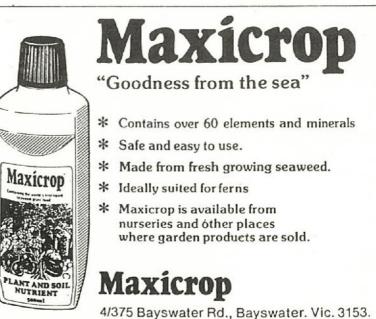
The next Fern Show will be our tenth and something special seems called for to mark the event. We should be very pleased to learn of any ideas Members may have on ways to improve the Show. Tell us now while your impressions of the recent event are still fresh in your memory.

Bob Lee, Chairman, Show Committee.

April Special Effort

Winners.

Keith Hutchinson (2) Nancy Perry Marion Scott John Hodges Lorraine Hansford Ella Thomas.



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

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THE FERN	SOCIETY	OF	VICTORIA	
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SPORE LIST

	SPECIES	DATE
	5, 20125	COLL.
-	ADIANTUM 'Diamond'	4/90
	ADIANTUM concinnum Edwinii'	4/90
	ADIANTUM cunninghamii	4/90
-	ADIANTUM hispidulum	6/89 4/90
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Bridal veil' ADIANTUM raddianum 'Cluster glory'	4/90
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Elecans'	2/89
	ADIANTUM raddianum Gracillimum	4/90
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Grandiceps'	4/90
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Grossum'	3/87
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Lady Geneva'	4/90
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Lady supreme'	3/89
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Pacottii'	3/89
	ADIANTUM raddianum 'Splendens'	4/90
-	ADIANTUM raddianum (micropinnulum)	4/90
	AGLAOMORPHA heraclea	6/87
-	ALSOPHILA capensis	3/89
	ANEMIA mexicana	3/89
	ANEMIA phyllitidis	3/89
	ARACHNIODES foliosa	10/68
4	ASPLENIUM bulbiferum (native) ASPLENIUM milnei (bifurcated)	1/87 9/89
	ASPLENIUM sp. (nidus ? - W. Irian)	/87
	ATHYRIUM elegans	3/89
	ATHYRIUM schimperi	3/89
	BLECHNUM australe	6/89
	BLECHNUM capense	10/88
	BLECHNUM discolor	2/89
	BLECHNUM fluviatile	4/90
	BLECHNUM gibbum	2/69
	BLECHNUM punctulatum	5/88
	BLECHNUM tabulare	4/87
	BLECHNUM wattsii ·	4/90
	CHEILANTHES multifida	2/89
	CHRISTELLA dentata CHRISTELLA queinziana	6/89 10/88
	CNEMIDARIA horrida	4/90
	CTENITIS subincisa	4/90
	CULCITA dubia	4/90
	CULCITA macrocarpa	4/90
	CYATHEA australis	4/88
	CYATHEA cooperi	2/69
	CYATHEA dealbata	6/88
	CYATHEA leichhardtiana	9/89
	CYATHEA medullaris	6/88
×	CYATHEA pubescens	10/89
	CYATHEA vieillardii, New Caledonia	4/88
	CYRTOMIUM falcatum	3/87
	CYSTOPTERIS filix-fragilis	6/89
	DICKSONIA antarctica	2/89 3/89
	DICKSONIA herbertii DIPLAZIUM assimile	5789 4790
	DIFLATION ASSIMITE DIFLATION AUSTRALE	3/87
	DIPLATION AUStrate	4/90
	DOODIA aspera	4/90

	DCODIA maxima	2/89
	DRYOPTERIS affinis 'polydactyla'	/87
	DRYOPTERIS athamantica	3/89
	DRYOPTERIS atrata	6/89
₩.	DRYOPTERIS carleyi	4/90
V	DRYOPTERIS dilatata	4/90
	DRYOPTERIS dilatata 'lepidota'	2/87
	DRYGPTERIS erythrosora	4/90
	ORYOPTERIS inequalis	4/87
	DRYOPTERIS pedata	5/89
-	ORYOPTERIS sieboldii	4/90
	DRYOPTERIS sp., Korean Crown Fern	3/89
	LASTREOPSIS acuminata	6/88
	LASTREOPSIS smithiana	4/90
	LUNATHYRIUM japonicua	4/87
	MARATTIA salicina	3/89
	MICROLEPIA strigosa	2/87
-	MICROSORIUM parksii	4/90
	MICROSORIUM scandens	2/89
	OLFERSIA cervina	4/90
-	-PELLAEA actimiformis	3/89
	PITYROGRAMMA chrysophylla	4/90
	PLATYCERIUM bifurcatum	3/87
	PLATYCERIUM sp. (fimor)	/87
	PLATYCERIUM superbua	2/89
	POLYSTICHUM echinatum	2/87
	POLYSTICHUM formosum	6/99
	POLYSTICHUM munitum	4/88
	POLYSTICHUM proliferum	6/89
	POLYSTICHUM setiferum pluaosum cristata	2/89
	PTERIS biaurita	4/90
	PTERIS cretica 'parkerii'	3/87
	PTERIS hendersonii	2/89
	PTERIS lincata	2/89
	PTERIS quadaurita v. argyraea	3/89
	PTERIS semipinnata	2/89
	PTERIS tremula	3/89
	PTERIS tricolor	3/87
	PTERIS wabiichiana	2/88
	RUMOHRA adiantiformis (S.Africa)	3/88
	RUMOHRA adiantiformis (native)	6/89
	STICHERUS tener	2/89
	THELYPTERIS patens v. lepida	2/89
	THELYPTERIS reticulata	4/90

# BUYERS' GUIDE TO NURSERIES Victoria:

- \* <u>Allans Flat Plant Farm</u> 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.
- \* <u>Andrew's</u> <u>Fern</u> <u>Nursery</u> Retail Cosgrove Road, Invergordon, 3636, Ph:(058) 65 5369. Large range of ferns for beginners and collectors. Open daily, inculding public holidays, except Saturdays.
- \* <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.
- \* <u>Fern Acres Nursery</u> Retail. Kinglake West, 3757, Ph:(057) 86 5481. (On main road, opposite Kinglake West Primary School). Specializing in stags, elks and birdsnest ferns.
- \* <u>"Fern Glen"</u> Wholesale and Retail. Visitors welcome. Garfield North, 3814, Ph:(056) 29 2375.
- \* <u>R. & M. Fletcher's Fern</u> <u>Nursery</u> 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).
- \* <u>Mt Evelyn Fern Centre</u> Retail. 63 York Road, Mt. Evelyn, 3796, Ph:(03) 736 1729. Mail orders welcome.
- \* <u>Ridge Road Fernery</u> 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.
- \* <u>Marley's</u> Ferns Retail. 5 Seaview Street, Mt. Kuring-gai, 2080, Ph:(02) 457 9168.

# Queensland:

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