

**THE
FERN SOCIETY**

**OF
VICTORIA**

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 12, Number 6, June 1990

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. Box 45.
Heidelberg West, Victoria. Australia. 3081.

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VICE PRESIDENTS:	John Oliver	-	879 1976
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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)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

I am sure you would all wish me to start by congratulating Doug Thomas and Joan Taylor on the quality of the May Newsletter, their first edition as our new editorial team. Their task of producing future editions will be made much easier if they receive a good supply of contributions from the rest of us!

Our recent outing to Glen Nayook with a stop at Bob Fletcher's fern nursery on the way home, was greatly enjoyed by all who went. Many thanks to Keith Hutchinson for his work in organizing the day and to Doug Thomas for suggesting the location. We are now doing preliminary planning for a weekend trip to the Marysville - Healesville area on the 20th and 21st of October; further details will be provided in due course.

In the interim we hope to organize a day trip in the July - August period if a destination reasonably unaffected by the vagaries of the weather, can be found. Any suggestions will be most welcome.

The formal notice calling for nominations for positions on the Committee of Management appears later in this Newsletter. At this point we need at least five nominations to cover vacancies in the positions of Vice President, Treasurer and three Committee Members. Please give serious thought to whether you are able to contribute to the progress of your Society by joining the Committee. Please give me a call at the number above if you would like to discuss what is involved.

Best regards.
Bob Lee.

N E X T M E E T I N G

DATE: Thursday 21st June, 1990
TIME: Commencing at 7:30 p.m.
VENUE: The Royal Herbarium, Botanic Gardens,
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.
GUEST SPEAKERS: Bill Taylor and Keith Hutchinson.
TOPICS: "The cultivation of Maidenhairs" and "Drynarias"
respectively.

M E E T I N G T I M E T A B L E.

7.30 p.m. Fern, Book and Spore Bank Sales, Library Loans,
Special Effort Ticket Sales.
8.00 p.m. Meeting commences.
8.20 p.m. Guest Speakers.
9.30 p.m. Fern Pathology and Identifications.
9.40 p.m. Special Effort Competition.
9.45 p.m. Supper.
10.00 p.m. Close.

T H E A N N U A L G E N E R A L M E E T I N G.

Notice is given of the eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Fern Society of Victoria, which will be held on Thursday, August 16th, at 8.00 p.m. at the Herbarium, Birdwood Ave., South Yarra.

Business transacted will be :-

1. To receive and deal with the Management Committee's Report for the 12 months ending June 30, 1990.
2. To receive and deal with the Treasurer's Report.
3. Election of Office Bearers for 1990 - 1991.
4. General Business.

B. Blackstock (Secretary).

S P E C I A L T H A N K S.

A special "thank you" is extended to Vice President Terry Turney. In the unavoidable absence of President Bob Lee from the May General Meeting, Terry took the Chair and conducted the Society's business for the first time.

I am sure that all members present at the meeting appreciated Terry's good work and would want their appreciation expressed.

Editor

SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING 17th MAY, 1990.

Speaker: Doug Thomas, Honorary Life Member of the Fern Society and former President.

Topic: An Introduction to Ferns.

This talk had two main purposes in its design - one of these was to introduce new and inexperienced Members to the cultural requirements of ferns; the other was to try and make these Members aware of the friendship and helpfulness that they will find within this Society.

The presentation was divided into five parts under the sub-headings of Numbers, Growth Features, Habitats, Propagation and Cultivation.

1. Numbers: An estimate of fern numbers world wide are 240 Genera and approximately 10,000 species. Doug said that the present rate of destruction of rain forests throughout the world made it difficult to provide accurate numbers. When rain forest is felled some species of ferns are totally destroyed.

Australia is very well placed in regard to fern numbers having approximately 107 genera and 350 species. By comparison with world wide numbers it will be seen that Australia has a large percentage of the world's genera but less of species.

2. Growth Features are the means by which fern plants can be recognized as such. The obvious features are the coiling of the new fronds to form a crozier, the presence of protective hairs and scales on the newly arising growth and the facility to produce reproductive spores on mature fertile fronds.

3. Habitats: Slide photographs describing the natural habitats of many species of ferns were screened. These included species which grow in soil (terrestrials) tree dwellers (epiphytes), rock dwellers (lithophytes), climbers such as LYGODIUMS which have their roots in the soil and their uppermost fronds right up in the foliage canopy, the desert dwellers e.g. CHEILANTHES with fronds covered in thick hairs to insulate against dryness, the lime lovers (Pneumatopteris Pennigera) seen established beside a stream which flowed over limestone and an aquatic fern AZOLLA established as a raft on the surface of water.

4. Propagation: The segment on propagation was dealt with in five divisions. (a) By spores followed by four vegetative methods. These were (b) by plant division: (c) by bulbils: (d) by stolons: (e) by auricles.

5. The Cultivation of Ferns:

(A) In the Fern House:

To illustrate the need to provide warmth, ample light and protection from strong winds and direct sunlight, Doug used photographs of a simple structure facing to the north.

continued page 49.

It was clad in fibreglass except for one wall facing north - this was covered in glass. Ventilation systems were shown using panes of glass as adjustable ventilators installed in simple plastic slides. Doug emphasised that such a structure does not need artificial heating to keep the ferns healthy. A shade cloth frame had been erected over the roof area facing north. This frame was seen to be raised about 37 cms (15") above the fibre glass roof surface.

Commensurate with providing a snug fern house or shelter comes the need to maintain the plants to be kept there. Repotting and basketing of ferns from time to time is a necessity and in this regard Doug suggested that Members, new and senior should make up their own fern potting mixture. One such mixture that is working well for Doug is a general purpose one composed of :-

5	parts	by	measure	-	Leaf Mould.
3	"	"	"	-	Cymbidium Orchid Mix (Propine)
1	"	"	"	-	Propagating Sand.

Charcoal from commercially prepared sources and Lime were discussed. Because of the presence of pine bark in the orchid mixture and its tendency to rot into a very acid material, a little lime helps to retain a PH balance.

Repotting of ferns was covered by slides describing a root bound fern whose congested roots were freed by a dunking in a bucket of diluted Maxicrop then positioned centrally in a slightly larger container with potting mixture added and firmed.

A method of preparing a wire basket for receipt of a fern was illustrated using as liners a coloured plastic mesh cut from an orange or onion bag, a uniform thickness of coconut fibre and an insert of perforated shade mesh. A mixture as above was added into which a little maiden hair fern was installed and firmed.

(B) In the Garden:

Preparation of garden soil for ferns should be aimed at raising the level of the soil above the surrounding terrain. This provides for drainage and prevents pools of water from forming and souring the plot. A heavy mulch of leaf mould should be applied to the whole of the surface of the new plot and the fern plants inserted through the mulch without further working. If overhead cover is not readily available, a suitable artificial canopy should be made from shade cloth and set in place. The newly planted ferns must be protected from direct sunlight, frost and strong winds. Morning sun is usually not harmful.

A method of setting up a spray system for watering large areas of fern garden was also illustrated and explained.

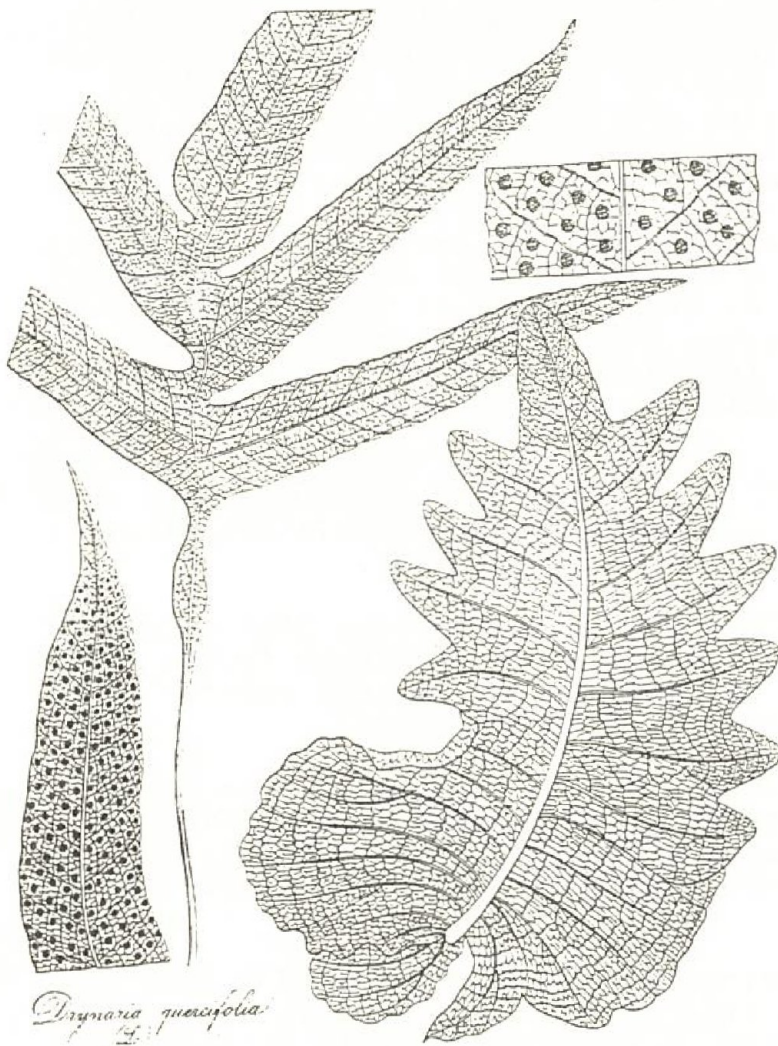
Vote of Thanks: Acting President Terry Turney thanked Doug for his contribution and Members showed their appreciation with generous applause.

T H E T O P I C S

DRYNARIA QUERCIFOLIA

This beautiful oak leaf fern is a native of India, China, Malaysia, New Guinea, Polynesia and Australia.

If you would like to know more about DRYNARIAS, attend Keith Hutchinson's talk at the next General Meeting.



ADIANTUM PEDATUM

An American maidenhair which grows as a native in North America, Canada, Alaska, North India and Japan.

Bill Taylor will show you how to grow maidenhairs on the 21st June.



FERN SOCIETY EXCURSION REPORT:

by Keith Hutchinson.

Glen Nayook and Bob & Marion Fletchers Fern Nursery. 28th April, 1990.

With the promise of a fine day, thirty Members set out for the Regional Park at Glen Nayook to enjoy a day amongst the magnificent ferns in that area.

Our coach was very comfortable and the driver a competent warm person who kept our journey interesting with his lively wit. On arrival at our destination, a study of the Rangers' boardmap indicated that the walking track was just over 1.2 kilometres with an optional extra 100 metres circuit at the bottom of the gorge.

We took a clockwise route which proved to be the best, as the first section, although steep had well formed wooden steps and handrails where needed allowing us a longer but more gradual slope by which we could return to the car park.

About halfway down the side of the gorge, a timber lookout had been built to provide visitors with an excellent view of the whole fern area with numerous giant tree ferns forming a canopy over the smaller fern species.

Upon reaching the picturesque stream meandering along the valley floor, we crossed a wooden bridge and to our delight found magnificent specimens of NECKLACE FERN, MOTHER SHIELD and SHINY SHIELD FERNS and FILMY FERNS growing to perfection. Many more species were soon discovered and as we moved along the track we came upon several high rocks - rocks as large as a medium sized motor car completely covered in mosses, lichens and fungi. At this point the sun began to stream through the giant mountain ash trees creating a scene of great beauty.

The gentle slope up proved quite an easy walk and we too quickly arrived back at the car park. Due perhaps to the fresh country air, we had all acquired healthy appetites and were soon enjoying steaks and sausages cooked on the barbeque by our driver Noel. In addition there were fine green salads, fruit salads with whipped cream followed by hot tea or coffee.

After lunch there was time for a chat with the nine Members who had joined us by car. Even so it soon became time to reboard our coach and travel on to Seville. At Seville we came to the magnificent fern nursery of Bob and Marion Fletcher. This would have to be one of the best specialist nurseries in Victoria and all who had the privilege to view not only the ferns for sale but the private collection of rare and beautiful ferns as well were of the opinion that the hour we had there was not nearly enough.

Every fern was in "mint condition" and one could not see a tatty frond in the whole nursery. Any fern lover who has not yet visited the Fletchers Nursery has a real treat in store when they do.

The tally of fern species discovered at Glen Nayook totalled twenty nine and these are listed on another page.

As Members left the coach at various points on the journey home all had commented that it had been a most enjoyable day.

THE FERN SOCIETY FERN EXCURSION:

The following is a list of fern species observed at Glen Nayook on 28th April, 1990.

DICKSONIA ANTARCTICA	-	Soft Tree Fern
CYATHEA AUSTRALIS	-	Rough Tree Fern
HISTIOPTERIS INCISA	-	Batswing "
PTERIDIUM ESCULENTUM	-	Common Bracken
POLYSTICHUM PROLIFERUM	-	Mother Shield Fern
STICHERUS TENER	-	Silky Fan Fern
LASTREOPTERIS ACUMINATA	-	Shiny Shield Fern
ASPLENIUM BULBIFERUM	-	Mother Spleenwort
RUMOHRA ADIANTIFORMIS	-	Shield Hares Foot
ASPLENIUM FLABELLIFOLIUM	-	Necklace Fern
PELLAEA FALCATA	-	Sickle Fern
BLECHNUM CARTILAGINEUM	-	Gristle "
" MINUS	-	Soft Water Fern
" NUDUM	-	Fish bone water Fern
" CHAMBERSII	-	Lance water "
" PATTERSONII	-	Strap " "
" FLUVIATILE	-	Ray " "
" WATTSII	-	Hard " "
MICROSORUM DIVERSIFOLIUM	-	Kangaroo "
GRAMMITIS BILLARDIERI	-	Finger "
HYPOLEPIS RUGOSULA	-	Ruddy Ground "
DIPLAZIUM AUSTRALE	-	Austral Lady "
TMESIPTERIS BILLARDIERI	-	Long Fork "
ADIANTUM AETHIOPICUM	-	Common Maidenhair "
TODEA BARBARA	-	King Fern
HYMENOPHYLLUM AUSTRALE	-	Austral Filmy Fern
" FLABELLATUM	-	Shiny " "
" CUPRESSIFORME	-	Common Filmy "
POLYPHLEBEUM VENOSUM	-	Veined bristle "

Prepared by Keith Hutchinson.

THE FERN SOCIETY BASICS PAGE.

Essential Factors:

At page 41 of the May, 1990 issue of "Newsletter" a description of the conditions in which ferns thrive naturally was presented. These conditions were seen to be Shade, Leaf Mould, Humidity, Shelter, Light, Fresh Air, Soils, Habitats, Nutrition and fern species. Those then are "Essential Factors" which we need to understand if we are to grow ferns successfully in an artificial environment. During the next few months we will discuss these essentials one by one and how we can simulate and apply them in our private collections.

SHADE: It should be understood that all ferns require light of some intensity - a few species will tolerate dense shade, yet none will grow in constant darkness. Some will tolerate early morning sun and strong indirect light whilst one species of tree fern in Victoria (CYATHEA AUSTRALIS) will cope with full sun for short periods during the day. All other Victorian species of tree fern are shade lovers. In general however, a hot summer sun is an enemy of ferns - shade obviates the damaging effects of the sun's rays.

Shade can be effectively applied by use of shade mesh in varying degrees of intensity, by painting glass or fibre glass with a well thinned smear of pale blue oil based paint, by hessian and by brush.

WHEN SHADE IS TOO DENSE your ferns will have more than a fair share of withered brown or tatty fronds and new growth will be weak and listless. If these symptoms are present, tap the fern out of its pot whereupon most likely you will find that the soil mixture is quite wet and cold and that the roots have not moved through the mixture. Healthy root activity is recognized by the colour of the growing tips - these should be greenish white to fawn.

WHEN SHADE IS NOT AVAILABLE OR THE LIGHT IS TOO BRIGHT your ferns will grow to a good size, look healthy but will be yellowish or even white in colour.

All that is needed to correct this is to apply more shading. Just a little at a time until the ferns themselves indicate that the "light is right."

Ferns in this condition are otherwise quite healthy and can also be helped back to green by spraying the foliage with a solution of magnesium sulphate (Epsom Salts) during the warmer months at three week intervals. Dilute 12 grams magnesium sulphate in one litre of water to make your spray.

To be continued - next month - more on the Essential Factors.

N O M I N A T I O N S F O R O F F I C E B E A R E R S .

Nominations for Office Bearers and Management Committee must be in the Secretary's hands in writing no less than 14 days prior to the Annual General Meeting. Nominations may be received from members at the meeting only if insufficient nominations have been received previously to fill all vacancies. Consent of all nominees must be received prior to election and nominations will be accepted only from financial members.

GENERAL BUSINESS AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting will discuss and vote upon, under General Business, any matter of which 21 days written notice has been given to the Secretary. Details of such business will be included in the August Newsletter, which will be posted to all members 7 days before the Annual General Meeting in accordance with the Society's Constitution.


B.Blackstock. (Secretary)

Special Effort Winners

General Meeting

17th May, 1990.

Terry Fuhrmeister.
Bernadette Blackstock (2)
Barry White
John McGlone
Jean Boucher
Albert Ward
Edna Fuhrmeister



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FORTHCOMING MEETING HIGHLIGHTS.

July 19th "A recapitulation of the highlights of the Fern Society's recent trip to New Zealand."

Experienced Speakers, Bob Lee, Mary Frost, Keith Hutchinson and other Members of the party will describe the ferns and other features observed with slides, anecdotes and literature.

The ferns of New Zealand are without doubt among the most beautiful in the world and this coupled with the many natural wonders of the place, should provide us all with a fascinating and enjoyable evening's entertainment.

THE FERN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER.

To fill these pages month by month, the Editor needs articles from Members. These articles should have ferns as a basic interest and not be lengthy essays - in fact short descriptions of particular successes or failures with ferns are always interesting and informative to others.

Correspondence from country, interstate and overseas Members would be very welcome.

Post to:- The Editor,
Fern Society of Victoria Newsletter,
17 Knaith Road.
Ringwood East, 3135.
VICTORIA. AUSTRALIA.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE.

Next June 30th marks the end of another financial year for the Fern Society and subscriptions are due on that date. The President, Office Bearers and Management Committee thank the Membership at large for their financial and practical support during the last 12 months and trust that everyone will not only renew Membership for 1990-91 but will do so promptly.

Facilities will be available for acceptance of Members renewals and new Memberships at the General Meeting on June 21st.

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,
including 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 Nurser - Wholesale and Retail.
P.O. Box 467, Woombye. 4559, Ph:(071) 42 1613.
(1Km north of Big Pineapple. Turn right into Kell Road).