



THE  
FERN SOCIETY

OF  
VICTORIA

Inc.

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST: PUBLICATION No. VBH3411

# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 12, Number 9, September 1990

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

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

OFFICE BEARERS:

<b>PRESIDENT:</b>	Robert Lee	-	Ph. 836 1528
<b>IMM. PAST PRESIDENT:</b>	Keith Hutchinson	-	45 2997
<b>VICE PRESIDENT:</b>	Terry Turney	-	211 8169
<b>TREASURER:</b>	Marilyn Wood	-	434 3978
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	Bernadette Thomson	-	391 5517
<b>SPORE BANK MANAGER:</b>	Barry White	-	337 9793
<b>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:</b>	John Oliver	-	879 1976
<b>EDITOR:</b>	Doug Thomas	-	870 7229
<b>BOOK SALES:</b>	Derek Griffiths	-	336 3157
	8 Susan Court, E. Keilor. Vic. 3033.		
<b>TYPIST:</b>	Joan Taylor		

---

**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:

The appropriate way for me to begin this first Newsletter after our eleventh Annual General Meeting is by offering thanks and congratulations to the Members of the Committee of Management elected at that Meeting and saying "welcome" to those Members who are serving for the first time. Many thanks also to those who filled various non-Committee positions last year and have all agreed to continue in their important roles for another year.

There are a few coming events which should be mentioned at this stage; details will be given later when appropriate. These items are:-

(i) We have been invited to participate in the Stringy Bark Bush Festival again this year. It will be held in the Rowville Community Centre on the 27th and 28th October. Bill Taylor will again co-ordinate our activities - thank you Bill.

(ii) We are planning a one day excursion to Mount Worth State Park in the Strezlecki Ranges; a little past Warragul, on Sunday 25th November. Transport will be by private car, so some preliminary thoughts on car-pooling could be in order.

(iii) As the third Thursday of December is too close to Christmas for our December meeting, we have booked the Herbarium hall for Tuesday 14th December for the event.

Best regards  
Bob Lee.

N E X T M E E T I N G

DATE: Thursday 20th September, 1990.  
TIME: Commencing at 7.30 p.m.  
VENUE: The National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens,  
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.  
GUEST SPEAKER: Mr. Bob Campbell.  
TOPIC: Commercial Glasshouses and Glasshouse Equipment.

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

7.30 p.m. Pre-meeting activities; Fern, Book, Spore & Special Effort  
Ticket Sales; Library Loans.  
8.00 p.m. September General Meeting Commences.  
8.30 p.m. Guest Speaker  
9.30 p.m. Fern Pathology and Fern Identifications.  
9.40 p.m. Special Effort Competition.  
9.45 p.m. Supper.  
10.00 p.m. Close.

The Fern Society Newsletter.

I acknowledge with grateful thanks the written contributions to the Newsletter of the following Members :-

President Bob Lee; Barry White; Ray Best; Keith Hutchinson;  
Bernadette Thomson; Mary Frost; Chris Goudey and the official  
Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society. "Gardening News."

These items together with letters seeking practical advice or information are providing a useful service to Members.

The topics already forward cover a wide range of interests and are excellent examples of what is needed every month; not only to fill pages but to keep them interesting and ongoing.

There is an ever present need for the publication of Members' successes with ferns. Even your failures; especially the ones for which a reason is known, could be quite helpful to others.

If you consider yourself to be a struggler with letter writing, please remember that help is available. If it were not so, of what use is an Editor? Don't just think about it - write it and post it to :-

The Editor,  
Fern Society of Victoria Newsletter,  
17 Knaith Road,  
Ringwood East. Victoria. 3135.  
AUSTRALIA.

T H E F E R N S O C I E T Y O F V I C T O R I A I n c .

President's Report for the year 1989/90.

The year under review; July 1989 to June 1990, saw us return to the Herbarium as our regular meeting venue, just in time for our tenth Annual General Meeting and the tenth Birthday Celebrations which followed. A set-back occurred however at the start of 1990 when we were forced to change our meeting nights to the third Thursday of the month. Our application to book the hall for our traditional second Thursday was refused by the Herbarium authorities.

Two highlights of our birthday celebrations were the conferring of an Honorary Life Membership on Keith Hutchinson for outstanding service to the Society since its inception and the presentation of a commemorative plate to Mavis Potter for her notable effort in providing a Christmas cake for every December meeting since the Society was founded in 1979. Mavis also provided a large birthday cake - beautifully iced and decorated by Beth Ward, for our tenth birthday.

A special edition of our Society glasses was prepared to commemorate our first ten years and one was given to every Member who could collect it.

For the rest of the year our Society made steady progress, following our established pattern of monthly general meetings with occasional field excursions and shows. Membership increased slightly during the year and at 30th June stood at 327 individual Members.

Monthly Meetings.

Our eleven general meetings provided a good blend of educational, entertaining and practical topics. Four visiting speakers covered a range of subjects embracing fossil ferns, mosses, liver worts, native ferns of Victoria and recent studies of the Northern Territory of Australia. The last was presented by David Jones, our interstate Guest Speaker for the year.

Excursions.

Only two organized excursions were conducted during the year; fewer than we had hoped. Both were day trips.

The first was by private transport to the home of Ian and Dorothy Forte of Garfield North where we were able to admire the contents of their glass and shade houses. In addition, we enjoyed a barbeque lunch and explored part of the adjacent native bushland. The second excursion was a bus trip to the rainforest gully at Glen Nayook with a stop at Fletcher's Fern Nursery on the return journey.

Shows.

(i) Our own Annual Fern Show was held at the Nunawading Horticultural Centre on 31st March and 1st April. An excellent display was viewed by 10% more visitors than last year but the attendance was still lower than on earlier occasions. The show again provided a major boost to the Society's finances.

The Members of the Show Committee this year were Betty Allgood, Julian Basser, Bernadette Thomson, Ian Broughton, Derek Griffiths, John and Norma Hodges, Bob Lee, Barry and Gay Stagoll, Bill Taylor and Barry White.

President's Report. - continued.

(ii) In October, Bill Taylor again led a small group which prepared and staffed a Society stand at the Stringybark Bush Festival run by the Knox City Council. The display was well received by visitors to the Festival.

Newsletter.

Several changes occurred during the year in the personnel producing the Newsletter. Terry Turney continued as Editor until he was forced to resign after the February edition because of an increasing professional work load. John Oliver acted as Editor for a few months in the latter half of 1989 while Terry was overseas and again after Terry's resignation. Doug Thomas assumed the position as Editor in time for the May edition and Joan Taylor took on the work of typing the Newsletter at the same time.

Doug Thomas has continued throughout the year with the time consuming task of writing up Speaker Reports from the monthly meetings. Our newsletter despatch team of Kath Brown, Margaret Radley and Jean Trudgeon also continued with the job they have carried out so efficiently for many years.

Finance.

The Treasurer will report separately on the financial affairs of the Society for the past year. This report will show that our finances are in a healthy state and I repeat my recent invitation to Members to make suggestions for some sort of significant project to which some of these funds could with advantage be allocated.

The Committee of Management.

Membership of the 1989/90 Committee of Management elected at the tenth Annual General Meeting was as follows:-

President:	Bob Lee
Imm. Past President:	Keith Hutchinson
Vice Presidents:	John Oliver
	Terry Turney
Secretary:	Bernadette Thomson
Treasurer:	Albert Ward
Committee Members:	Andre Cleghorn, John Hodges, Joy Horman, Janet McLennan, David Radford, Margaret Radley.

Janet McLennan was unfortunately forced to resign after only a few months because of a change in job commitments, but the other Members have served the Society for the whole year. Regrettably four of these now have to retire.

Albert Ward was a Committee Member for two years, Vice President for one year and has been Treasurer for the past five years, a record which speaks volumes for his dedication to the Society. John Oliver has been a Vice President for five years after one year as a Committee Member and will continue as Membership Secretary. Joy Horman and Andre Cleghorn with four years and two years respectively of Committee Service are now unable to continue because of other demands on their time. I thank them all for their contributions to the Society.

President's Report. - continued.

The Non Elected Positions.

As well as formally elected Committee positions, there are many other non-elected positions filled by Members who provide services vital to the functioning of the Society. Some of these have already been mentioned in preceding sections of this report - the others are listed below. It should be noted that some of these positions are filled by people who are also Committee Members.

Minute Secretary and Librarian:	David Radford.
Membership Secretary and Property Officer:	John Oliver.
Book Sales and Publicity Officer:	Derek Griffiths.
Fern Identification and Pathology:	Chris Goudey.
Special Effort Organizers:	Margaret Radley and Joy Horman.
Supper Hostesses:	Jean Boucher and Norma Hodges.
Spore Bank:	Barry White.
Maxicrop Sales:	Albert Jenkins.

- and then there are, of course, those who help in miscellaneous other ways when called upon.

To conclude, I should like to sincerely thank everyone mentioned in the foregoing for their part in the operation of the Society over the past year and I express the hope that the next twelve months will bring us to greater understanding and enjoyment of those plants we have chosen as our specialty.

Robert Lee.  
PRESIDENT.

THE MARYSVILLE EXCURSION - 20th and 21st OCTOBER.

As only twenty Members registered their intention of going on this excursion, the cost per person for the forty seat coach with driver originally planned, made the overall cost of the weekend far too high. We have now hired a smaller self-drive bus which Terry Thomson has kindly agreed to drive, and revised the accommodation and meal arrangements for the weekend.

The whole group will now be accommodated in the Nanda Binya Lodge at Marysville on Saturday night. Dinner, a light breakfast and a take-away lunch for Sunday will be provided by the Lodge. Individual Members should plan to bring their own Saturday lunch - morning and afternoon tea will be provided. Cost for the excursion will now be \$65 per person.

Details of the itinerary and bus pickup arrangements will be advised when Keith Hutchinson returns from holidays in the near future.

Bob Lee.

SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING 16th AUGUST, 1990.

Guest Speaker: Chris Goudey. First President and Honorary Life Member of the Fern Society.

Topic: A short time spent among the horticultural treasures of England's Botanic Gardens.

Chris's opening remarks summarised the enormous impact that tourism has on the United Kingdom economy. He said that on average 17.4 million people visit England every year - they spend an enormous A\$15.6 billion in the country.

To illustrate the feverish business activity in London, Chris showed slides of Oxford Street so packed with traffic that any movement of vehicles seemed impossible.

We saw the world famous shopping complexes of Selfridges and Harrods, Hyde Park, The Royal Albert Hall, The Royal College of Organists and The Houses of Parliament.

We were shown the impressive spectacle of the changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London and Tower Bridge. Chris said that the architecture in all of these world famous buildings was magnificent.

Kew Gardens.

Chris and Lorraine gained access to some of the glasshouses to which the general public are usually not admitted. Among the tropical species of ferns were Angiopteris evecta and several species of Marattia. There were selaginella species, filmy ferns and Lygodiums all new to Members.

Outstanding among the maiden hair ferns were Adiantum asarifolium and A. raddianum cv Henslovianum and then there was the filmy fern house and the Princess Diana Conservatory where Cashmeriana, Begonias and tree ferns grew as if inspired.

Next we saw Kensington Palace, Princess Margaret's home and the beautiful gardens in the palace grounds.

Wisley Gardens.

One of the delights at Wisley Gardens was the very rare Polystichum setiferum plumosum dreury valued at \$200 per plant. Other outstanding species were Onoclea sensibilis, Polypodium vulgare cv Bifida grandiceps and Osmunda regalis. Chris made comment that he was intrigued by the fact that they were in many cases growing outside in the open; probably because the sun seldom shines through the cloud cover day after day.

Windsor Castle.

Chris showed a meticulously kept garden in the grounds of Windsor Castle which was once a moat that refused to hold water. In the car park nearby Chris counted sixty coaches which collectively deposited 2700 visitors.

Speaker Report. - continued.

Saville Gardens.

Osmunda regalis, Rhododendrons and Mollis Azaleas were complemented by the presence of countless other plants here. Among some beautiful ferns were several Athyriums and an Adiantum pedatum var. Subpumilum.

The fern ally Equisetum palustre made interesting viewing. Chris said that no species of equisetum grow in Australia. Another unusual but unattractive fern was shown: Osmunda daytoniana which develops its sporangia in the lower parts of the fertile fronds whilst the upper parts of the same frond resume the foliage of a sterile frond.

The Chelsea Flower Show.

Photographs of floral arrangements were a wonderful feature of the Chelsea Flower Show. Orchids and roses were in evidence here with floral displays adding to the glorious spectacle. Vegetables, Proteas and Tulips were also featured.

Hever Castle.

At Hever Castle Chris photographed Polystichum setiferum and another species not known to many of us - Matteuccia struthiopteris. Here also were the immaculate Italian Gardens with a man made lake and countless delightful Rhododendrons.

Sissinghurst.

Blechnum penna-marina cristata was shown growing in perfect condition at Sissinghurst as were Cystopteris fragilis, Adiantum pedatum and many other species.

Oxford.

Chris and Lorraine found their way to one of the oldest botanic gardens in England. It had been established adjacent to the Oxford University and contained many species of ferns. The Dryopteris species were among the most outstanding with Equisetum telmateia unique and beautiful.

Blenheim Palace.

Winston Churchill's birthplace, the ceilings of which were painted as murals. Chris had managed to photograph these magnificent murals very well indeed - much to the delight of Members. Photographs of the gardens and some statuary were a feature here and the presentation concluded with lovely pictures of William Shakespeare's birthplace and Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

Members expressed their appreciation and enjoyment of Chris's work by sustained applause.

FORTHCOMING MEETING HIGHLIGHTS.

Chris Goudey will continue his talk on horticultural delights of England's world famous Botanic Gardens.

VENUE: National Herbarium Royal Botanic Gardens, South Yarra.

DATE: 18th October, 1990, commencing at 8 p.m. after the usual sales at 7.30 p.m.



## THE FERN SOCIETY BASICS PAGE.

### Essential Factors. continued.

One further suggestion concerning leaf mould.

It is often necessary to lay heavy plastic sheeting on the ground and to set up your leaf mould heaps on the plastic. The reason for this is that other garden vegetation such as trees, shrubs or hedges have a great liking for leaf mould too and will send their roots - sometimes over long distances, to greedily feed on the nutritious material. The plastic prevents these unwanted roots from entering the decomposing leaf mould.

Let us now turn our attention to other FACTORS which are essential to the growing of healthy ferns.

In addition to leaf mould, ferns need Aeration, Drainage, Moisture holding materials, Fertilizers and Humidity. When we keep ferns in plastic or terra cotta pots and in hanging wire baskets, these are the factors which we need to implement - each factor is one which Mother Nature has been employing since time began.

### Aeration.

Aeration is the term used to describe a situation which is charged with air. In fern growing this applies to the soils or potting mixes which we use. All plants, even huge trees, must have air available to their root systems. From the air in the soil, plant roots extract life giving oxygen.

The converse of this will be seen if repotting is neglected. Potting mixture left too long in the pots will often rot down to a thick muddy sludge completely devoid of aeration. The poor fern thus afflicted will at best look unhealthy and eventually will die.

Materials which are readily obtainable in Southern Australia and which can be depended upon to provide aeration are :-

PINE BARK which has been ground and screened to about 6mm ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " ) granules is ideal for most fern species but a larger size of say 10-12mm ( $\frac{3}{8}$ " -  $\frac{1}{2}$ " ) could be used for large ferns kept in tubs.

Never use pine bark if it smells of resin; set it aside in a heap in the open until the resinous smell has departed. Hosing the heap occasionally will hasten the dispersal of toxins.

Initially pine bark has a neutral P.H. but as the material breaks down it tends to become more acid; an ideal component for most fern species.

TREE FERN FIBRE. For many fern growers, tree fern fibre is difficult to obtain and is expensive. A visit to a plant nursery or super market will often reveal a dead tree fern trunk or two and most vendors are happy to dispose of these at a reduced price. However you will need a mulching machine to process your fern trunks into fibre.

Once mulched, tree fern fibre is ideal for keeping a potting mix open and for ensuring aeration. It also helps to retain moisture and assists drainage.

**NEW ZEALAND TOUR:** continued from last issue.

**DAY SIX** (24th May) - Dargaville to Auckland.

We visited Noel Crump's fernery in Auckland and everyone of us would have liked to own the enormous shade house which he had erected to display his ferns. He showed us his lovely specimen ferns and explained that he is now growing many Palms and Cycads. He conducted us through his glasshouse where he had many outstanding species of cycads and palms. This was a delightful morning.

**DAY SEVEN** (25th May) - Auckland to Rotorua via Coromandel National Park.

Today was the first on the tour when the weather really stopped us - it poured rain and we had to ford a gully stream where the water reputedly rises very fast after rain - we could have been stranded!

Along the Firth of Thames drive the tide was in and we were astounded to see the electricity poles in the sea water; later on we came upon this area when the tide was out leaving the pole bases exposed - they were covered with mussels. It was interesting to see a square-growing Kauri tree too.

**DAY EIGHT** (27th May) - Rotorua.

At Rotorua we took the Blue-Green Lake walk which proved to be superb. *Pteris macilenta* plants had grown to four feet high, *Cyathea medullaris* with fronds twenty feet long. *Leptopteris hymenophylloides* grew so abundantly that we could not avoid walking on it in places. *Leptolepia novae-Zelandiae*; *Laastreopsis hispida*; *L. microsora*; *Hypolepis ambigua* and three foliage variations of *Asplenium bulbiferum*. Other ferns seen were *Polystichum silvaticum*; *Athyrium japonicum*; *A. australe* and *Pteris comans*.

Afterwards we visited the thermal valley where we found *Psilotum nudum*; *Nephrolepis cordifolia*; *Dicranopteris linearis*; *cyclosorus interruptus*; *Christella dentata* and many other fern species growing happily in the heat and steam.

We met a young University student who was studying the Geology of the area. She introduced us to "Ruaumoko's Throat", a crater in which the water was clear blue but whose level had recently dropped three feet. She told us that since the recent earthquake the water had not boiled whereas formerly it regularly boiled over once a fortnight.

This was indeed a very fascinating place. We also walked through the Redwood Forest where the *Cyathea medullaris* stood straight and very high, probably climbing in search of light.

A Park Ranger advised us to visit Whirinaki Forest Park which is a virgin forest. In Rotorua we visited the Rainbow and Fairy Springs where all the ferns are named.

**DAY NINE** (27th May) - ROTORUA TO TURANGI.

At a forest on the way to Turangi we found thirty three different fern species and to add to our list were:- *Gleichenia microphylla*; *Polystichum cystostegia*, a *Blechnum colensi* and a *Lycopodium*. Filmy ferns grew here in great profusion.

**DAY TEN** (28th May) - TURANGI TO NAPIER.

Firstly we visited the boiling mud ponds and thermal pools and then Tongariro National Park. The Mount had snow on the summit making the air cold even though the day was sunny. We took the Whakapapanui walk and found *Lycopodium fastigiatum*; *Grammitis magellana*; *Gleichenia dicarpa*; *S.sp alpina* and *Sticherus cunninghamii*.

**DAY ELEVEN** (29th May) - NAPIER TO WELLINGTON.

The Kartoke Waterworks Reserve was the venue for our first visit today where we found thirty seven fern species. Among these we saw *Trichomanes reniforme* growing over the banks everywhere. The last of the new ferns for our list were:- *Blechnum vulcanicum*; *B. procerum*; and *Asplenium hookerianum*.

**DAY TWELVE** (30th May) - WELLINGTON TO MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

At least eighty five species of ferns were listed excluding many varieties of *Hymenophyllums*.

\* \* \* \* \*

**STRINGYBARK BUSH FESTIVAL.**

To be held at the Rowville Community Centre, Fulham Road, Rowville, on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th October. The hours will be from 9.30 a.m. 'till 5.00 p.m.

If you can assist, please contact Bill Taylor on Ph. (03) 754 8275.

It will be staged in the hall so that more delicate plants will be able to be displayed. There will also be a small area for sales.

BILL TAYLOR.

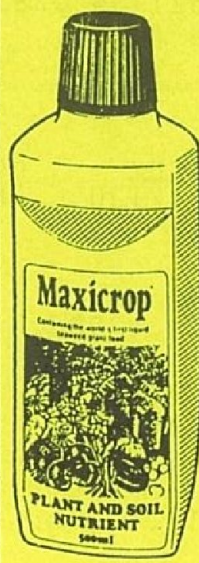
**A.G.M. AUGUST 1990 MEETING.**

**Special Door Prize Winner.**

Bill Taylor.

**Special Effort Winners.**

- Bob Lee
- David White
- John Hodges
- Margaret Radley
- Ray Harrison (2)



# Maxicrop

"Goodness from the sea"

- \* Contains over 60 elements and minerals
- \* Safe and easy to use.
- \* Made from fresh growing seaweed.
- \* Ideally suited for ferns
- \* Maxicrop is available from nurseries and other places where garden products are sold.

## Maxicrop

4/375 Bayswater Rd., Bayswater. Vic. 3153.  
P.O. BOX 302, Bayswater, Vic. 3153. Tel. Melb. (03) 720 2200

BUYERS' GUIDE TO NURSERIES:

VICTORIA:

Allans Flat Plant Farm - Retail.  
Tomkins Lane, Allans Flat, 3691. Ph: (060) 27 1375.  
(25 Km 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 St., 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.  
(1 Km. north of Big Pineapple. Turn right into Kell Road).