



THE
FERN SOCIETY

OF
VICTORIA

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 12, Number 11, November 1990

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. Box 45.
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Overseas: - A\$30.00 (by Airmail):
(Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Our November meeting will feature a talk by Terry Turney on the family Polypodiaceae. This should be a very interesting evening if the success of Terry's talk in March on the describing of ferns is any guide.

The main activity at our December meeting will be a group discussion on the growing of epiphytes, using ferns provided by Members as examples. This is a logical follow-on from the November talk as the majority of the Polypodiaceae are epiphytes and many are favourite subjects for basket and slab culture. Please note however that for this meeting we are interested in epiphytes in general, not just Polypodies.

We need a good range of epiphytic types for the discussion to be a success and should like to continue our tradition of decorating the hall with ferns for our Christmas meeting, so all Members attending are asked to bring along one of their epiphytes.

Please remember to bring your donations for the Christmas hampers to the November meeting if possible to allow plenty of time for the packing of the hampers. This will also give you enough hands available to carry your fern and a plate of supper to the December Meeting!

Best regards.
Bob Lee.

N E X T M E E T I N G

DATE: Thursday 15th November, 1990.
TIME: Commencing at 7.30 p.m.
VENUE: The National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens,
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.
GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Terry Turney - Vice President of the Fern Society.
TOPIC: A study of the fern family POLYPODIACEAE.
NOTE: Please bring a POLYPODY to the meeting if you have one.
You will need a note pad, pen or pencil.

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. November General Meeting.
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 CHRISTMAS MEETING:

DATE: Tuesday, 11th December, 1990.
VENUE: National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens,
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.
MAIN FEATURE: An Epiphyte Night.

Contributors of items for the December Newsletter are reminded that in order to issue this publication commensurate with the meeting date, the amount of time available for its preparation is eleven (11) days less than normal. It is important then that I have material for publication to hand by the meeting on the 15th November, 1990.

Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

With kindest regards.
Doug Thomas - Editor.

THE STRINGYBARK BUSH FESTIVAL AND THE MARYSVILLE WEEKEND EXCURSION.

Reports on the above Fern Society events are being prepared by Bill Taylor and Keith Hutchinson respectively. They will be published in the December Newsletter.

SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING 18th OCTOBER, 1990.

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

Topic: Phase two of Chris and Lorraine's recent United Kingdom and Continental tour.

Chris opened his slide presentation with excellent photographs taken in Paris. These included the Stourhead Gardens, Moulin Rouge, Eiffel Tower, the Steine River, the Bagatelle Gardens - where magnificent roses were featured and the Versailles Palace.

Of Belgium, we were shown well protected Beech Forests, the Atomium in Brussels and the Palace of the Belgium Royal Family.

Holland came next showing us the craft of clog making by hand using timber from the Poplar tree. We saw the typical Dutch windmills, Volendam fishing village, the Amsterdam railway station, a houseboat of cats and the barge activity up and down the canals.

Of special interest was a pictorial description of the Halsmeer Flower Market where 100,000,000 flowers are sold by Dutch auction annually. At Cologne Chris had visited the Gothic Cathedral and had succeeded in taking excellent photographs of its stained glass windows. The famous Rhine with its complex system of cargo movement by hugh barges was also described.

In Germany the Heidelberg Castle was visited and the grounds photographed. We also saw the poppies of Switzerland and the Rhine Falls.

And so to the United Kingdom where firstly Chris and Lorraine were hosted by Peter and Pam Franks, former Members of this Society. They were taken to the Japanese Gardens and to the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens where Equisetum was being dug up and disposed of. Outstanding fern species seen here were Polystichum Aculeatum and Dryopteris Filix-mas.

Several aspects of David Bannister's wholesale fern nursery were shown including Adiantum S.sp. Aleuticum.

The common speenwort, Asplenium Trichomanes was a feature at the Bodnant Gardens in Wales and a visit to noted fern authority Mr. Reginald Kaye proved full of interest. Mr. Kaye is ninety years old and still does all the maintenance work with his large collection of ferns. Chris said that ferns grown in the open always look the healthiest in England, and that this was probably due to the almost constantly overcast conditions. He said that Mr. Kaye had perfected an open situation method by making rock mounds laced with "fern soil" into which he planted his ferns. The result was spectacular. When the soil becomes spent, Mr. Kaye dismantles the whole mound and rebuilds and replants afresh.

Fern species of note here were Blechnum Spicant cv lobatum; Asplenium Ceterach; Dryopteris Filix-Grandiceps Askew; Adiantum Pedatum cv. Japonicum; Asplenium Trichomanes cv Incisum Claphamii; Cystopteris Fragilis (crested cultivar) and Adiantum Monochalamys (Japan).

At the Grizedale National Park the more familiar fern species *Blechnum Spicant* and *Polypodium Vulgare* were seen.

On then to the Lakes District where Chris had photographed the Lakes to perfection. An unusual fern seen in this district was *Cryptogramma Crispa* (a parsley fern).

Two cultivars of *Polystichum Setiferum* i.e. *Plumosa Divisilobum* and cv. *Drueri* were seen at the collection of Mr. Jim Lord. Another outstanding cultivar here was *Athyrium Filix Femina* cv. *Plumosum Superbum* Druery.

Chris and Lorraine visited Sizergh Castle where in the grounds they found *Osmunda Regalis* cv *Cristata* growing strongly. *Matteucia Struthiopteris* was also a delight to behold.

Probably the best collection of *Cheilanthes* in the world was seen at the property of Clive and Doreen Brotherton, after which came a visit to the home of Martin and Hazel Rickard. This property occupies five acres, most of which is planted out in garden. Chris said that the Rickards would have the largest collection of ferns in England. The beautiful lady ferns, *Athyrium Filix Femina* and their cultivars were a feature. A part of this garden has been developed in an abandoned quarry which is now transformed into a particularly beautiful landscape.

At the Kew Gardens the huge palm house was visited and the world's oldest potted plant photographed. Scenes inside the palm house described the variety and beauty of palms from all over the world.

On the return journey to Australia, Chris and Lorraine stopped over at Singapore. The Singapore Botanic Gardens, Sentosa Island, the spectacular Chinese Gardens and the Jurong Bird Park were all visited. Unusual ferns seen were *Lemmaphyllum Microphyllum* (the Green Penny Fern); *Platycerium Coronarium*; *Cyathea* species; variegated *Pandanus* palms and the climbing fern *Lygodium Japonicum*. Orchids, palms and bird species were also screened.

President Bob Lee thanked Chris on behalf of Members who responded by their acclamation.

C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S

In addition to his success in growing beautiful ferns, our popular Member, Bill Taylor, has recently won a trophy for a perfumed *Rhododendron* (*Amamiense Elliptium*) at the recent *Rhododendron* Show.

Hearty congratulations Bill.

THE FERN SOCIETY BASICS PAGE.

Essential Factors - continued.

Fertilizers.

When ferns are observed growing in their preferred habitats in Nature, the essential factors of moisture, leaf mould, aeration, drainage etc. are all obvious and in combination with shade and protection they make the fern community healthy and beautiful.

However, there is another factor which is not at all obvious and this is fertilizer. Fertilizer is so inconspicuous in Nature that some fern growers believe that it is not necessary in fern cultivation. But the fact is that fertilizer is available to ferns in Nature - it comes to them in the form of bird and animal droppings which are dispersed and distributed as liquid fertilizer by rain fall.

To keep ferns growing strongly, fertilizer in some form or another should be included in potting mixes. Some of those which are available to fern growers are described as :-

- (a) Organic Fertilizers.
- (b) Slow Release Fertilizers.
- (c) Liquid Fertilizers - and
- (d) Animal Manures.

This list, although extensive, by no means covers the full range of products available. However it does provide fern enthusiasts with opportunity to select according to convenience of purchase and ease of application.

(a) Organic Fertilizer.

Blood and Bone: has been a reliable plant fertilizer for many years; it is composed of pulverised bones and dried blood and is an excellent source of nitrogen, phosphorus and calcium.

Add blood and bone to your potting mixture at the rate of one small tea cup full to a ten litre bucket of mixture. In the garden, scatter thinly over the soil surface as a top dressing (about 3 ounces per square yard). Blood and bone is very good when added to a mixture for Platyceriums (Elks and Stags), but because of its smell it should not be used on indoor plants. Over use will also cause problems with mildew, especially if this spreads as a fungus to valued plants.

In the growing season, i.e. Spring and Summer, blood and bone is effective as a top dressing for container grown ferns. Watering at that time of year is more frequent and will therefore take the fertilizer through the mixture.

Hoof and Horn: is a similar material to blood and bone; it has all the attributes but not the smell. It is composed entirely of pulverised hooves and horns and can be applied in the same manner as blood and bone.

(b) Slow Release Fertilizers.

Osmocote: is a slow release fertilizer which can be mixed evenly through a potting mixture, used as a top dressing for potted ferns or scattered over the soil in the fern garden. Osmocote is available in pellet form coated with a substance which limits the release of chemical fertilizer over varying periods of time. Some growers mix 3 - 4 month release pellets with those of a longer duration say up to 12 months. This is done to achieve a steady growth rate in ferns over that period.

Nutricote: is similar to Osmocote except that it contains a higher percentage of nitrogen - it can be used in the same manner as described for Osmocote.

Dynamic Lifter: is a product of poultry manure processed into pellet form and coated with a soluble material to control the tenure of fertilizer release. It is particularly useful as a top or side dressing in potted or basketed ferns, otherwise it can be used throughout the garden and in potting mixtures according to the Manufacturer's directions.

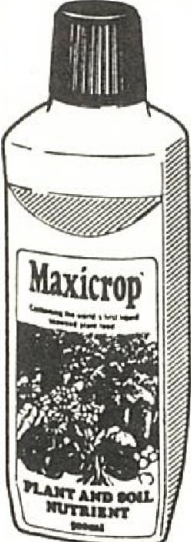
At the October meeting of the Fern Society, Chris Goudey reported that he had encountered difficulty in growing species of Cheilanthes (Rock ferns). Through experimentation he had discovered that these plants did much better when fed with a fertilizer which lacked phosphorus.

To be continued.

October General Meeting.

Special Effort Winners.

Karen Young
Keith Hutchinson
Moira Gascard (2)
Marilyn Wood (2)
John Hodges
Joan Taylor
Ivy Harris
Mavis Potter
Dave White
Simon Hardin
Norma Hodges



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W H A T I S A F E R N

by Chris Goudey

The Scientific naming of ferns: continued from last instalment.

Many ferns are known to people by their common names, names that are easy to remember, and no doubt useful when dealing with a small number of plants.

But the trouble is with common names, elsewhere people may have different names for the same plants. Or, the same common name may be used for several different plants.

Scientific names may be long and difficult to pronounce and remember, but they are understood and accepted the world over, by people who are acquainted with them.

Every species of fern known to science has a legitimate scientific name which is used only for that particular plant. The scientific name of a plant consists of two words. The first is like the surname of a person such as Smith, the second is like a Christian name, such as John.

The first word denotes the genus or group to which the plant belongs. The second word denotes the particular plant in the group. For example, *Adiantum eathropicum* is the Scientific name for the Common Maidenhair fern. The first word, *Adiantum*, is the name of the genus to which this fern belongs. The second word, *eathropicum* is the species.

There is a similar fern called *Adiantum raddianum*, it is obvious that this fern is related to the Common Maidenhair fern as it belongs to the same genus, (*Adiantum*) but it has a different species name because it is a different fern.

The Botanist who names a particular plant is known as the Author of that name, and his initials or an abbreviation of his name appears after the scientific name of the plant, for example: *Adiantum eathropicum* L. is the correct scientific name for the Common Maidenhair fern.

The letter L. indicates that the species name was given by Linneaus the famous Swedish Botanist who began the system of giving species two names. (The Binomial System).

Most of the maidenhair ferns sold in shops today are not true species. They are plants which show in most cases, considerable variation from the species from which they originated.

They can be either cultivars which are abbreviated CV., sub species which are ssp., forma which can be f. or forma or varieties which is var.

The Scientific naming of ferns: continued.

Some examples are *Adiantum raddianum* cv. Crested Majus which is a horticultural cultivar of *Adiantum raddianum*. *Adiantum pedatum* forma *imbricatum* is a form of *Adiantum pedatum* that was reportedly found in the wild. *Asplenium trichomanes* ssp *quadrivalens* which is a subspecies of the Common Spleenwort. And lastly *Doodia caudata* var *laminosa* is a variety of *Doodia caudata*, the small raspfern which occurs in N.S.W. and Queensland.

To be continued - next instalment - DEVELOPING A COLLECTION.

THE FERN SOCIETY DAY EXCURSION TO MOUNTWORTH STATE PARK.

DATE: Sunday, 25th November, 1990.

ARRIVAL TIME: 11:00 a.m.

HOW TO GET THERE: Travel east on the Princes Highway/Freeway through Pakenham to Darnum, about 112 Kilometres from Melbourne. In Darnum village the Mount Worth State Park is clearly signposted. Turn right at the sign and continue south for about 12 kilometres to the Park. Sign posts are in place at road intersections along this road.

LUNCH: Bring your own lunch, either picnic or barbecue plus a little extra morning and afternoon tea. Please keep in mind that Mount Worth is a beautiful and very popular place and that the barbecue facilities could be in heavy demand. If you have folding picnic chairs and tables bring these also. Bring your own crockery and cutlery.

THE SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE: Boiling water, tea or coffee.

ABOUT MOUNT WORTH STATE PARK: This Park is relatively new and has been developed by the State Government as an example of rain forest typical of southern Victoria at the turn of the century. Originally the area was rich in massive mountain ash and blackwood - these were logged mercilessly and what we will see is the total revegetation; forest species having been replanted and then protected by legislation. Remnants of the saw milling days can be seen in huge sawdust heaps and in pieces of abandoned winch material.

Attractions at the Park include a fine recreation and picnic area with spacious car parking. Circuit walks through the forest along well formed and well maintained tracks - a huge buttressed specimen of mountain ash (*Eucalyptus Regnans*) is specially protected with duck board platforms to give visitors the opportunity to see that countless trees like this one made magnificent forests until the white man came. Ferns will be seen in prime condition all the way along the walks and include four species of tree fern. A total of twenty eight species of ferns should be seen.

ORGANIZER: John Hodges: Telephone (03) 878 9584.

THE PLATYCERIUMS OF NORTH QUEENSLAND IN THE WILD AND IN CULTIVATION.

by RALPH H. HUGHES

FLORIDA 33901 U.S.A.

Many staghorn ferns native to Australia thrive in North Queensland. Their habitats are favoured by a tropical climate with a cool dry season, but with total precipitation sufficient to support vegetation. Weather records, generally unavailable at collection sites, were obtained at representative locations nearby where volunteer sporelings or harvested transplants were known to occur.

Garden forms of Australian ancestry comprise most of the staghorns grown worldwide. Observations in cultivation are based primarily on : (1) transplants from the wild, (2) home-grown sporelings of parent plants imported from the wild, (3) cultivars acclimated in Florida, and (4) cultivars of the nursery trade.

This paper concludes the habit-habitat series for Platynerium native to Australia. It supplements earlier reports for Platynerium superbum (Hughes 1982) and P.bifurcatum (Hughes 1984). Findings recognize the presence of P.willinckii in North Queensland referred to by Jones and Clemesha (1981), and the introduction of var. venosum into cultivation by the author (Hughes 1989).

Description

Of the four species assigned earlier to the P. bifurcatum group by Hoshizaki (Joe 1964), two were reduced by Hennipman and Roos (1982) to the botanical ranking of subspecies and two to varieties. My more recent addition noted above updates the alliance, as follows :-

HOSHIZAKI

HENNIPMAN AND ROOS

<u>P. bifurcatum</u>	<u>P. bifurcatum</u> ssp. <u>bifurcatum</u> var. <u>bifurcatum</u>
<u>P. hillii</u>	<u>P. bifurcatum</u> ssp. <u>bifurcatum</u> var. <u>hillii</u>
<u>P. veitchii</u>	<u>P. bifurcatum</u> ssp. <u>veitchii</u>
<u>P. willinckii</u>	<u>P. bifurcatum</u> ssp. <u>willinckii</u> var. <u>venosum</u>

Scientific name, range and description of species are in accord with those in the 1982 and 1984 Fiddlehead Forum articles noted above, with two exceptions: (1) an extension in the range of P. willinckii from Indonesia to Australia and (2) introduction of the new var. venosum. Its description in cultivation follows :

Plants epiphytic growing in clusters, propagated by root offsets (pups) or less frequently by spores; rhizomes short, stout, mostly concealed by fronds, only the tip is clearly visible; rhizome scales lanceolate, to 5 mm long, chaffy and bearing a distinct midrib; base fronds with upper part extended, rounded, the margins lobed and strongly wavy (sinuate); foliage fronds becoming more pendant with age than the species, but less decumbent than the subspecies, the upper surface typically blue-green and the underside covered with white stellate hairs having a brown centre, the blade forking two or three times, the ultimate segments long, narrow and pointed up to 30 cm long and 4 cm wide; sporangia mostly wanting.

To be continued. Distribution and Habitat.

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA
Spore List

Ordering: The following spore is free to those who donate spore.

Otherwise members 20 cents each sample, non-members 50 cents, plus \$1.00 to cover p. and p.. Available at meetings or by mail from Barry White 24 Ruby St West Essendon Vic. 3040. (Ph 03.337 9793). There is no charge for overseas members but to cover postage two International Reply Coupons would be appreciated.

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| ADIANTUM raddianum 'Lady supreme' 3/89 | DICKSONIA youngiae 8/90 |
| ADIANTUM raddianum 'Micropinnulum' 4/90 | DIPLAZIUM assimile 4/90 |
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Weeaprounah, 3237. Ph: (052) 35 9383.

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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).