# THE FERN SOCIETY

VICTORIA

Inc.

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# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 13, Number 2, March 1991

#### FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

POSTAL ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 45.

Heidelberg West. Victoria. Australia. 3081.

#### OFFICE BEARERS:

Ph. 836 1528 457 2997 571 8169 PRESIDENT: Robert Lee IMM. PAST PRESIDENT: Keith Hutchinson Terry Turney VICE PRESIDENT: 337 9793 Barry White Marilyn Wood 434 3978 TREASURER: Bernadette Thomson SECRETARY: SPORE BANK MANAGER: 337 9793 Barry White 879 1976 John Oliver MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: EDITOR: 336 3157 BOOK SALES: Derek Griffiths 8 Susan Court. E. Keilor. Vic 3033. Joan Taylor TYPIST:

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:

There are two important changes in the list of Office Bearers above:

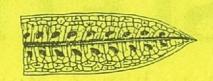
Barry White has agreed to fill the second Vice President position which has been vacant since the retirement of John Oliver in August. Thank you, Barry for accepting this extra responsibility and congratulations.

Barry is also our Spore Bank Manager and he would appreciate some help with this work, which he finds very interesting and enjoyable but time-consuming. If anyone interested in growing ferns from spore would like to consider helping in the Spore Bank work, would you please discuss the matter with Barry.

The other change is the resignation of Doug Thomas from the position of Editor after a year of very valuable service in that role. Thank you very much Doug, on behalf of all members, for this further segment of your long period of dedicated service to the Society. Doug agreed early last year to act as Editor for a period when no other volunteer was forthcoming after the resignation of Terry Turney, but now wishes to cease the work. The Newsletter will be produced on a committee basis until a new Editor is appointed.

( continued opposite )







#### NEXT MEETING

DATE: Thursday, 21st March, 1991.

TIME: Commencing at 7.30 p.m.

VENUE: The National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens

Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

GUEST SPEAKER: Keith Hutchinson - Immediate Past President

and Honorary Life Member of Fern Society.

TOPIC: "Photographing Ferns".

Slides of the Society excursion to Marysville

in October, 1990 will be shown.

#### MEETING TIMETABLE

7.30 p.m. Pre-meeting Activities: - Fern, Spore, Book @ Special Effort Ticket Sales; Library Loans.

8.00 p.m. March General Meeting.

8.30 p.m. Guest Speaker

9.30 p.m. Fern Identification and Pathology.

9.40 p.m. Special Effort Competition.

9.45 p.m. Supper.

10.00 p.m. Close.

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#### President's Message (cont'd ):

You will also notice that there is a blank in the place for the Secretary's telephone number, as the phone has not yet been connected to Bernadette's new house. The new number will be advised next month.

As we cannot have a booking for the Herbarium hall any night in May for our General Meeting, this will be held on Sunday, 19th May, at Chris and Lorraine Goudey's place at Lara. Their fern nursery has been the venue for several enjoyable functions in the past. Details for the day will be announced later, but in the meantime please try to keep the day free. Many thanks to Chris and Lorraine for solving a problem for us.

Best regards, Bob Lee.

## 1991 FERN SHOW

at

Nunawading Horticultural Centre 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill (Melway Ref. 62F4)

Saturday, 13th April 10.00 a.m. — 6.00 p.m. Sunday, 14th April 10.00 a.m. — 5.00 p.m.

Our tenth Fern Show will be open to the public during the above periods. Activities for Members will begin at 12 noon on Friday, 12th April, with setting up of the fixtures in the display hall and the tables in the sales area.

We should like to receive ferns both for the display and for sale between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. - as early as possible in this period, but definitely not before 2 p.m. please, as we will not be organised to handle them before then. Members who have only a few ferns to sell and will find it difficult to bring them on Friday are welcome to deliver them to the Show on Saturday or Sunday before 9.30 a.m., but only by prior arrangement, please.

Would all Members who wish to sell ferns at the Show please advise Bernadette Thomson of their intention, either at the March meeting or by phoning 393 9311 during business hours only. Please note that this number is different from that listed for Bernadette in the article in the February Newsletter. All plants offered for sale should, of course, be healthy and free from pests, and all must have individual labels. In fairness to customers, please mark labels clearly where hot-house or other special growing conditions are required. Also please remember the earlier request that, where ferns of very small size are offered for sale, a larger specimen of each type be provided for inclusion in the display as a guide for customers to the appearance of the mature plant.

The display will incorporate a pergola for hanging-specimens as well as bench and floor displays of potted ferns. We look forward to receiving plants from many Members to provide the large number and wide variety of well-grown healthy ferns required to produce a spectacular effect. Do not forget to label all display plants with their botanical names plus some suitable identification to ensure their safe return to you.

To speed the preparation of the large easily-read labels put with the display plants, would you please make a list of the names of your ferns in advance and present it to the labelling group; who will be located near the entrance to the display hall.

As the prime purpose of the weekend is to present the results of our efforts to the public, we need on-going publicity to inform as many people as possible of the Show. Please continue to promote the Show

right up to the time of the event by our advertising leaflets and any other means that occur to you. Two leaflets are included with this Newsletter and more will be available at the March meeting. Please try to have them displayed prominently at suitable public places in your neighbourhood (nurseries, libraries, shops, garages, etc.) to attract the attention of potential visitors to the Show.

We should like to hear soon from Members who plan to help with the various activities at the Show to ensure that all periods are covered adequately. There is much to be done in setting up and later dismantling the display and sales areas, staffing them during opening hours, providing the refreshment service, etc. Jobs are available for all levels of expertise, and having sufficient help allows those present some spare time to enjoy the Show and converse with their fellow Members.

I made the point in the last Newsletter that a regular influx of new participants is necessary to maintain the viability of the Show. This point is emphasised by the death late last year of Albert Jenkins, who made a major contribution to all our past Shows by providing many superb ferns for the displays and giving generously of his time during the weekend. He made many converts to fern growing by his enthusiastic responses to visitors questions; our challenge now is to replace his contribution.

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Please contact a member of the Show Committee with offers of help or display ferns, for any queries, etc. Their names and telephone numberes are as listed in the February Newsletter, except for Bernadette Thomson as noted above.

Bob Lee Chairman - Fern Show Committee

#### BRING ME YOUR SPORE

The Fern Show is coming and I would like to refresh the spore bank. It is very desirable that the beginners' kits contain fresh spore. Please see what you can do to help, either mail to the address in the spore list, or bring it along to the March meeting. Tree ferns not on the list would be most welcome.

Many thanks to the following spore donors: Ed Brown (Florida), Terry Terney, Mrs P.Johnstone(N.Z.), Jimmy Punter (S.Africa) and Halyna Kuheana (Hawii).

Barry White Spore Bank Manager SPEAKER REPORT - February Meeting 1991

SPEAKER - Chris Goudey

<u>SUBJECT</u> - The Cultivation of ferns from spore.

Chris commenced by explaining the many important aspects of collecting spore. Be sure the spore is ripe and has not already been shed; a hand lens will ensure this. Most spore is black or brown but some are yellow and a few are green when ripe. The species with green spore such as the Filmy Ferns, Osmunda, Todea and Leptopteris must be sown within 2 months as their viability is short lived. The indusium of Adiantums and Notholaena will often close again after shedding their spore; only experience will help with this.

By collecting spore continually Chris ensures a high percentage of success. He always takes a supply of envelopes with him on trips and folds the corners to prevent leakage. A sheet of clean paper folded into a leakproof package will also suffice. Be sure to write the name of the fern on your package immediately.

The container for sowing your spore must allow maximum light to enter, retain humidity and be thoroughly cleaned. A scrub with hot soapy water and then a dip in bleach or formalin is best. Many different mediums have proven successful; some excellent ones are chopped sphagnum moss, peat moss, tree fern fibre (dicksonia only), grey sand and african violet mix produced by Idaho Nursery.

Sterilizing can be done in a microwave oven, 160° for 30 minutes will suffice. Another method is to pour boiling water over the medium through a collander. Chris stressed that is is far better to oversterilize your medium than to expect the sporelings to compete with algae and fungus. Any spare medium can be stored in a clean polythene bag in a low light area.

Once you are ready for sowing, select a hygenic place, Chris likes the kitchen table, far from any potting sheds or glasshouses where contamination may occur, keeping your containers covered except while actually sowing. A 70 micron sieve can be used to separate the spore from the husks but a simple method is to place your spore on a sheet of blotting paper, hold it on a slight angle and tap it gently. The husks will slide off leaving the pure spore. To sow a small plastic container 12 cm. in diameter, Chris uses enough spore to cover a matchhead with an end result of usually 300 to 400 ferns. Immediately after sowing a spray with previoure will give added protection against fungus. By sowing every six weeks you will always have some sporelings coming on and even with a few failures you will be gaining experience.

Chris had on display several containers of sporelings which were in excellent condition. They were placed in a large polystyrene box with a hinged perspex lid. As the small plugs of prothalli were pricked off with a blunt knife into tubes, they were placed back into the box until they became re-established, then gradually the lid would be lifted back for short periods to harden them off.

It is most important to choose a cool day for pricking off, water in with maxicrop and keep under maximum humidity. Never prick off late autumn or winter as those done in spring will quickly catch up to earlier plantings. It takes about two years from sowing to establish a 12 cm potted fern.

Chris concluded by saying "keep on sowing and you will keep on learning".

Barry White expressed the appreciation of all present for an excellent presentation of his subject and the thorough preparation of the many fronds showing various stages of spore.

Keith Hutchinson.



by Chris Goudey

Developing a Collection: continued from last instalment.

If you are interested in collecting and growing ferns, it can be quite frustrating when your local Nurseryman only has a few different ferns, and you are not allowed to collect them in the wild.

What do you do?

There are several specialized Fern Nurseries in Victoria, most of which advertise in garden magazines such as Your Garden. These Nurseries carry a large range of ferns, some common, and others quite rare. Also in garden magazines you will occasionally see an advertisement from interstate Nurseries who are prepared to freight your plants to you, such as Sonters and Kamahele Nurseries in N.S.W. and Limberlost in North Queensland.

Hopefully through the Society you will meet people who have a common interest and you will be able to exchange ferns, spore and ideas with fellow members.

If you are a serious collector there are all sorts of avenues open to you, such as joining overseas Fern Societies and writing to collectors in other countries with the view to exchanging spore or even ferns. You can also visit interstate Nurseries and collectors on your annual holidays; quite often you can exchange ferns through the post. Some Nurseries overseas will ship plants, but most will not go to all the trouble unless you have something they particularly want.

If you are buying a fern, make sure first of all that the ferns you wish to buy will grow in your environment. Don't expect a tropical fern to flourish in an open fernery, unless of course it comes from a high altitude in the tropics. Also don't expect a cold climate fern such as an alpine or British fern for example to do well in a heated glasshouse. There are of course a few exceptions such as Blechnum penna-marina.

#### Developing a Collection: continued.

Once you have decided what fern you wish to purchase, examine the plant carefully, make sure that the growing tip or crown is healthy and not shrivelled. A good indication is, if the plant is sending up new fronds that are as large or larger than the existing mature fronds. You can usually tell if a new frond is going to be large or small by the size of the crozier or the length of the stipe as (The crozier is the new uncoiling frond, the new frond uncoils. the stipe is the stem of the frond from the leaf base down to the crown or rhizome). If the stipe is a long or longer than other stipes on the plant you have a good indication that the frond is going to be a good size.

If you buy a treefern, make sure it has a Department of Agriculture tag on it (I'm not sure about Queensland treeferns, but southern ones - Victoria and New South Wales - must have tags. Don't buy a fern that looks an off colour, or one that has deformed or diseased growth. If ever you see aphids, mealy bug, scale or any other disease on a plant, you would be well advised to leave it alone.

The soil mix is another important factor, different Nurseries use different mixes. Some Nurseries in the tropics use a very heavy That is quite O.K. for their climate, but no good this far A fern grown in such a mix will probably grow all right south. for you through the warmer months of the year, but could quite easily die through the winter because the soil is too heavy, and holds too much water and not enough air.

In Victoria we need a good open spongy soil mix with at least two thirds of the mix organic.

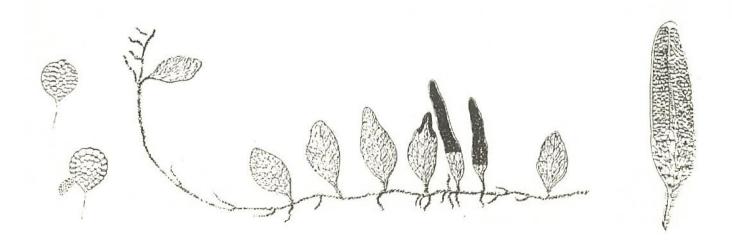
The following is a good basic mix :-

1 part of good friable garden loam

1 part of coarse washed sand (Pylon Sand) and 2 to 3 parts humus (Peat moss, leaf mould, old rotted manure).

1 tablespoon of Hoof & Horn can be added to each gallon of the

Also a small amount of ground limestone can be added, particularly if the mix is to be used for maiden hair ferns. Maiden hair ferns (Adiantums) like a mix that is about neutral whereas most other ferns prefer a slightly acid mix.



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

#### by Ralph H. Hughes.

#### Horticultural Practices.

#### Light:

Platycerum superbum, despite its evergreen foliage, prefers high light, but is damaged when exposed to full sun during the high sun season in southwest Florida and needs filered light during the hottest part of the day. In particular, the base fronds thrive, are more luxuriant, firmer, thicker, and grow more rapidly in 30 to 60 percent shade than in dense shade.

Of all the Platyceriums, var. <u>veitchii</u> is the least shade tolerant. Accordingly, when fully acclimated, its gowth form and other characteristics enable it to endure the noon sun of a bright, cloudless summer day, in light of high intensity. The stiffly upright, densely white tomentose foliage fronds are compatible in the open or beneath 30 to 40 percent plastic cloth.

The ssp. willinckii is an adaptable form. It is suitable for growing in 30 to 80 percent shade, as is its ubiquitous cultivar, ssp. willinckii cv. 'Payton' (P. sumbawense of trade). Platycerium willinckii cv. 'Lemoinei', sometimes termed a hybrid between var. veitchii and ssp. willinckii, closely resembles var. veitchii when grown side by side in low humidity and high light. But in low light, it develops the long, decumbent, gray-green foliage fronds of ssp. willinckii.

Observations on light requirements for var. <u>venosum</u> are continuing. Needs and tolerances appear to be similar to those of ssp.<u>willinckii</u> when grown outdoors in southwest Florida.

#### Humidity:

Most ferns prefer 60 to 80 percent relative humidity during the day and a lower humidity at night (Hoshizaki 1975). The seasonal range is greater for staghorn ferns, varying from a low (40 percent) wintersummer for var. veitchii to a high (80 percent) winter-summer for var. venosum. Selections imported from the wild adapt slowly, if at all, to the local condition and form cultivars.

In the prevailing seasonable climate here and in Australia, humidity (and rainfall) is higher during the summer growing season and lower during the cooler dry season. In most locations, P. superbum requires sheltering and/or added drainage of substratum during the rainy season. Conversely, var. venosum needs extra moisture (hand watering) to sustain normal growth of base fronds and foliage fronds during the cool season.

With the exception of var. venosum, ferns in the P.bifurcatum group have a wide geographical distribution and extreme variability in the wild and in cultivation. Accordingly, a myriad of P.bifurcatum group cultivars lacking additional humidity (watering) thrive outdoors yearlong in a humid frost-free climate.

Indoors with supplemental heat during cold weather, relative humidity recommended varies from a low of 40 to 60 percent for P. superbum and var. veitchii to a high of 80 percent yearlong for var. venosum.

To be continued.

#### FORTHCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS

#### APRIL MEETING:

Date:

Thursday, 18th April.

Time:

Commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Venue:

The National Herbarium, South Yarra.

Topic:

Group Discussion on "Handling Newly Purchased Ferns".

#### MAY MEETING:

Date:

Sunday, 19th May.

Time:

To be advised.

Venue:

Chris and Lorraine Goudey's Fern Nursery,

Lot 8, Couzens Road, Lara.

( Melway Directory Ref. 222 H9 )

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#### VALE

We are saddened to have to report the recent death of Nancy Paterson. Nancy was a very keen Member of the Fern Society and made many friends during her five years with us. We extend sincere sympathy to her husband Tom and family.

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#### SPECIAL EFFORT WINNERS

#### February General Meeting

Fran Harrison

David Radford

Barry Reece

Barry White

Alison Whytecross

## Max1crod "Goodness from the sea" \* Contains over 60 elements and minerals \* Safe and easy to use. \* Made from fresh growing seaweed. Maxicrop \* Ideally suited for ferns

- \* Maxicrop is available from
- nurseries and other places where garden products are sold.

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

### 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.

ADIANTUM concinnum 'Edwinii' 4/90 CYATHEA medullaris 5/90 CYATHEA milnei 11/90 ADIANTUM cunninghamii 4/90 CYRTOMIUM lonchitis 11/90 ADIANTUM hispidulum 6/89 ADIANTUM malesianum 06/90 CYSTOPTERIS filix-fragilis ADIANTUM raddianum Bridal veil 4/90
ADIANTUM raddianum Cluster glory 4/9
ADIANTUM raddianum Diamond 4/90
ADIANTUM raddianum Elegans 2/89
ADIANTUM raddianum Gracillimum 4/90 DICKSONIA antarctica 2/89 DICKSONIA herbertii 3/89 DICKSONIA squarrosa 5/90 DICKSONIA youngiae 8/90 DIPLAZIUM assimile 12/90 ADIANTUM raddianum 'Grandiceps' 4/90 DIPLAZIUM australe (N.Z.) ADIANTUM raddianum 'Lady Geneva' DIPLAZIUM wercklianum 4/90 ADIANTUM raddianum 'Lady supreme' 3/89 DOODIA aspera 4/90 ADIANTUM raddianum 'Legrand Morgan' 4/90
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Micropinnulum' 4/90
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Pacottii' 3/89
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Splendens' 4/90
DIANTUM raddianum 'Triumph' 5/90 DOODIA dives 5/90 DOODIA maxima 2/89 DORYOPTERIS pedata 5/89 DRYOPTERIS atrata 6/90 DRYOPTERIS corleyi 4/90 ADIANTUM silvaticum 5/90 DRYOPTERIS dilatata 4/90 ANEMIA mexicana 4/90 DRYOPTERIS erythrosora 11/90 ANEMIA phyllitidis 3/89 DRYOPTERIS patula 06/90 ARACHNIODES foliosa 11/90 DRYOPTERIS sieboldii 4/90 ARACHNIODES simplicior 4/90 DRYOPTERIS sp., Korean Crown Fern 3/89 ASPLENIUM australasicum 6/90 LASTREOPSIS smithiana 4/90 MARATTIA fraxinea var salicifolia 11/90 ASPLENIUM bulbiferum (native) 4/90 ASPLENIUM lamphrophyllum 6/90 MICROLEPIA hirta 04/90 MICROSORUM diversifolium 5/90 ASPLENIUM milnei 6/90 MICROSORUM normale 06/90 ASPLENIUM scleropium 6/90 ATHYRIUM elegans 3/89 MICROSORUM parksii 4/90 MICROSORUM scandens 2/89 ATHYRIUM filix-femina 6/90 MICROSORUM scolopendrium 7/90 ATHYRIUM schimperi 3/89 BLECHNUM australe 6/89 OLFERSIA cervina 11/89 BLECHNUM brasiliense 04/90 PELLAEA cordata 06/90 BLECHNUM camfieldii 6/90 PELLAEA falcata 10/90 BLECHNUM capense 5/90 PELLAEA pectiniformis 3/89 PELLAEA rotundifolia 12/90 BLECHNUM cartilagineum 4/90 NLECHNUM chambersii 4/90 PITYROGRAMMA chrysophylla 4/90 BLECHNUM discolor 2/89 PLATYCERIUM superbum 6/90 BLECHNUM fluviatile 4/90 POLYPODIUM vitron 06/90 BLECHNUM gibbum 2/89 POLYSTICHUM formosum 6/89 BLECHNUM minus 5/90 POLYSTICHUM formosum 4/90 POLYSTICHUM lentum 5/90 BLECHNUM punctulatum 7/90 POLYSTICHUM proliferum 6/89 BLECHNUM tabulare 5/90 BLECHNUM wattsii 4/90 POLYSTICHUM retroso-paleaceum 4/90 POLYSTICHUM richardii 12/90 CAMPYLONEURON latum 06/90 PTERIS biaurita 4/90 CAMPYLONEURON phyllitides 06/90 PTERIS lineata 2/89 CHEILANTHES multifida 2/89 PTERIS quadaurita v. argyraea 3/89 CHRISTELLA dentata 6/89 CNEMIDARIA horrida 4/90 PTERIS semipinnata 2/89 PTERIS tremula 3/89 CTENITIS subincisa 4/90 CULCITA dubia 10/90 PTERIS vittata 7/90 RUMOHRA adiantiformis (cape form) 11/90 CULCITA macrocarpa 11/89 CYATHEA australis 4/90 RUMOHRA adiantiformis (native) 6/89 CYATHEA brownii 7/90 CYATHEA cooperi 8/90 SCHIZEA anemiaphyllitoides 06/90 STICHERUS tener 6/90 CYATHEA dealgadii 12/90 TECTARIA trifoliata 12/90 THELYPTERIS patens v. lepida CYATHEA dregei 05/90 THELYPTERIS reticulata 4/90 CYATHEA leichhardtiana 8/90

#### 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.

<u>Austral Ferns</u> - Wholesale Propagators. Ph: (052) 82 3084. Specializing in supplying retail nurseries with a wide range of hardy ferns - no tubes.

Cool Waters Fern Nursery - Wholesale Fern Propagators. Beech Forest, 3237. Ph: (052) 37 3283. Specializing in cool climate native ferns.

<u>Dingley Fern Market</u> - Wholesale and Retail. Ph: (03) 551 1868. 233 Centre Dandenong Road. Dingley. 3172. Specializing in Ferns, Palms, Indoor Plants, Orchids and Carnivorous Plants. Open daily except Xmas Day.

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. Weeaproinah, 3237. Ph: (052) 35 9383. Specializing in Otway native ferns.

#### NEW SOUTH WALES:

<u>Jim & Beryl Geekie Fern Nursery</u> - 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).