



THE
FERN SOCIETY

OF
VICTORIA

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 13, Number 9, October 1991

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Single	-	\$15.00	(Pensioner/Student - \$11.00)
Family	-	\$18.00	(Pensioners - \$13.00)
Overseas	-	A\$30.00	(by Airmail)

Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Thank you for the suggestions which have come in. Keep them coming; use the Suggestion Box or mail them to P.O. Box 45, Heidelberg West.

We have had a number of useful suggestions for meeting topics. It has also been suggested that we should organise small informal meetings at member's homes, which could be partly social and partly learning. New members and also older ones (or should I say more experienced ones) could gain or exchange information on fernery set-ups, and on the care and multiplication of ferns. Some aspects of fern identification could also be covered. I think this idea has considerable merit and the Committee will look at its implementation next year.

The Committee is also looking at methods of making the Society better known. An advertisement will be placed in "Your Garden" magazine for the next twelve months. A fern display will be put on at Prahran on Sunday, 27th October, and we will be discussing with "Rippon Lea" a fern display and sale in December. Several of our members are also engaged in giving talks and displays at a number of nurseries and garden societies. It is hoped that this will boost interest in ferns, and in our Society. Membership has been slipping at it is essential for a healthy society that we reverse this trend. Members could give thought to other ways in which the Society may promote ferns and pass their thoughts on through the Suggestion Box.

Regards,
Barry White

NEXT MEETING

DATE: Thursday, 17th October, 1991.

TIME: Commencing at 7.30 p.m.

VENUE: The National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens,
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.
(Melway Directory Ref. 2L A1)

GUEST SPEAKER: Mr Steven Stewart of Gale Australia Pty Ltd.

TOPIC: Shade Cloth and its Application.

MEETING TIMETABLE

7.30 p.m. Pre-Meeting Activities:- Sales of Ferns, Spore, Books
and Special Effort Tickets ; Library Loans.

8.00 p.m. October 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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OTWAYS EXCURSION

So far the bookings for the Otways excursion in November have been disappointing.

We are still short of the numbers to make it a "goer". If you have been undecided, please give it further consideration, and if you would like to come ring Barry White on 337 9793 or, if he is not available, Bob Lee on 836 1528.

The excursion will be on Saturday and Sunday, the 9th and 10th of November. Final cost will depend upon the numbers but is expected to be no more than \$80. The fee covers transport, evening meal on Saturday, accommodation, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Accommodation will be at the Kangarooie Lodge near Princetown.

We will be visiting most of the outstanding fern areas of the Otways, such as Turton's Track, Melba Gully, Beauty Spot and Mait's Rest, and it will be an unmatched opportunity to observe and learn about our native ferns. BE IN IT !

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SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING - 19th SEPTEMBER, 1991

Speaker: Geoff Beilby - Department of Conservation and Environment
(Colac Branch).

Topic: FERNS OF THE OTWAYS

The subject for the talk was chosen as a preliminary to the planned weekend trip to the Otways in early November. Geoff Beilby kindly substituted for our scheduled speaker Paul Barnett (Leader of the Otway Group of The Society for Growing Australian Plants), who was unable to come to the meeting because of family illness. Geoff is also a member of S.G.A.P. and joined in our Fern Society trip to Tasmania in 1987.

The official listing of the ferns in the Otways area now contains 69 species and possibly up to 72, depending on how it is decided to treat the Skirted Tree-fern, Cyathea marcescens (now recognised as a hybrid) and two small Pellaeas. Names changes have caused some confusion in updating lists. Since Dr R. Willis published his list in 1972, about 45 of the species he included have had their names changed!

The Otways area contains a wide variety of habitats, ranging from low coastal heaths through low inland heaths, low woodlands, dry sclerophyll forests, moist sclerophyll forests, wet sclerophyll forests and cool temperate rain forests to Red Ironbark forest at the dry end. Somewhat surprisingly, the area contains no Box forest.

The variety of habitats gives rise to a wide range of plant species. While the cool temperate rain forests receive most publicity, the wet sclerophyll forests actually have the greatest abundance of ferns. Some of the more interesting ferns occur in the drier sites, e.g. a species of Pellaea found near the Stony Rises.

Most of the ferns found in the Otways were illustrated by slides and their areas of occurrence discussed:-

Adiantum aethiopicum (Common Maiden-hair) is quite widespread in dry sclerophyll forest.

Cheilanthes tenuifolia (Rock Fern) occurs on drier rocky sites in the northern Otways.

Pellaea falcata (Sickle Fern) is found on rocky scarps between the higher Otways and the surrounding foothills. P. falcata var nana was illustrated growing on a rock face at Glasgow Falls.

A very interesting unnamed species of Pellaea occurs only in the Floating Islands Nature Reserve, where it grows in small shady crevices with a very thin soil cover under basalt rock overhangs. It almost disappears in summer and re-grows during the cooler months.

Pteris tremula (Tender Brake) grows in the lower foothills along the Carlisle River in the western Otways, extending almost into the dry sclerophyll forest.

Polystichum proliferum (Mother Shield-fern) grows mostly in very moist areas on the verges of cool temperate rain forests and the plants are much softer and more spreading than those from drier areas elsewhere.

Asplenium bulbiferum (Mother Spleenwort) is very widespread through the Otways, virtually anywhere there is sufficient moisture. Many plants grow on the trunks of tree-ferns. Some of the best examples are found under the Douglas Firs in the Aire River plantation area.

Asplenium flaccidum (Weeping Spleenwort) is not very common in the Otways. It grows epiphytically in a couple of rain forest sites on the Parker and Elliott Rivers in the Otway National Park.

Asplenium obtusatum (Shore spleenwort) is rarely seen now in the Otways. It has been reported from rocks around Cape Otway and near Shelly Beach at the eastern extreme of the Otway National Park.

Pleurosorus rutifolius (Blanket Fern) is found in the drier country, especially out in the Stony Rises. It grows under rock overhangs in wet depressions which dry out in summer. This species is a true resurrection fern; it can dry right out and go brown but turn green again after just a couple of misty days. Two slides were shown of the same plant in a natural site, one with the fern completely brown, the next taken a few days later showing it bright green.

Blechnum chambersii (Lance Water-fern) is generally thought of associated with rocky areas around waterfalls, but in the southern part of the Otways it is quite common in clay soils on wet banks.

Blechnum nudum (Fishbone Water-fern) occurs in open wetter areas where there is good light. One slide showed a beautiful crested form.

Blechnum patersonii (Strap Water-fern) is found in only two very different sites in the Otways. One is on limey sandstone beside some little creeks near Shelly Beach in the extreme east. The other is on a clay bank along Roadknights Creek Road between Forest and Gellibrand in the northern part of the Otways.

Blechnum wattsii (Hard Water-fern) is common in the wetter areas but is very variable, probably corresponding to variation in the amount of light penetrating to the forest floor.

A new species on the Otways listing is the King Island Blechnum, which has not yet been named. This is quite widespread, occurring all down the lower reaches of the Gellibrand River below Carlisle and especially in swampy areas on the floodplains near Lower Gellibrand.

Doodia media (Comon Rasp-fern) occurs in some of the drier sites inland.

Cyathea australis (Rough Tree-fern) occurs on the verges of the cool temperate rain forests. The brown scales on the unfurling croziers make it easy to visually distinguish this tree-fern from Dicksonia antarctica (Soft Tree-fern), which has furry hairs on the croziers, without feeling for the characteristic roughness of the stipes.

Cyathea cunninghamii (Slender Tree-fern) is on the rare and threatened list for Victoria as a whole but is not uncommon in the Otways. Some of the specimens in the gullies are up to 20 metres tall and may be up to 400 years old. The plants illustrated were near Little Aire Falls, which is a very good spot for a variety of ferns.

Cyathea x marcescens (Skirted Tree-fern) is now considered a cross between C. australis and C. cunninghamii. It has a very large crown and generally retains a deep 'skirt' of persistent dead fronds. There are a number of sizeable patches of this fern in the Otways, such as in the gullies along the road between Ferguson and Gellibrand winding down from the top of the ridge to the foothills.

Dicksonia antarctica (Soft Tree-fern) occurs naturally in cooler and damper areas but survives remarkably well in full sun in areas which have been cleared. In moist conditions the trunks with their covering of soft rootlets often serve as hosts to a variety of other plants, both epiphytic and terrestrial, such as orchids, ferns and tree seedlings.

Histiopteris incisa (Bat's-wing Fern) is also an inhabitant of the wetter sites. It grows prolifically anywhere it can retain some moisture during the summer.

Gleichenia dicarpa (Pouched Coral-fern) and G. microphylla (Scrambling Coral-fern) grow mainly on sandy sites but also occur in the wet sclerophyll and rain forest areas on steep well-drained banks.

Sticherus lobatus (Spreading Fan-fern) and S. tener (Silky Fan-fern) occur in the cool temperate rain forests; good examples are found at Aire Crossing.

Grammitis billardieri (Finger Fern) grows in shaded gullies where moisture is plentiful. In some of the drier sites there occurs G. magellanica ssp. nothofageti, which was found by Paul Barnett in the Little Aire Falls area.

Hymenophyllum australe (Austral Filmy-fern), H. cupressiforme (Common Filmy-fern), H. flabellatum (Shiny Filmy-fern), H. rarum (Narrow Filmy-fern) and Polyphlebium venosum (Veined Bristle-fern) grow almost entirely in cool temperate rain forest and very wet areas of wet sclerophyll forest, generally in low light conditions. They are occasionally found in well-lit areas, but here they become dormant during the summer and completely disappear off the tree-fern or other hosts, regenerating again through the winter.

Lindsaea linearis (Screw Fern) is a wet heath species and is characterised by spirally formed fertile fronds.

Lycopodium deuterodensum (Bushy Clubmoss) grows in the lower foothill country in sclerophyll forests that are very wet in winter but dry right out in summer. This plant is highly sought after by the horticultural industry and a lot of theft from forest areas occurs. Geoff said that the Department has great difficulty catching people pulling up these plants and needs the public to help by reporting any suspicious behaviour observed.

Lycopodium varium (Long Clubmoss) is extremely rare in the Otways and is found only at two cool temperate rain forest sites - in Calder Reserve and on the Parker River in the Otway National Park. L. serpentinum (Bog Clubmoss) is a recent discovery in the Otways.

Phylloglossum drummondii (Pigmy Clubmoss) is quite common in inland heaths, particularly down the Gellibrand Valley and in the Devondale heathlands area.

Todea barbara (Austral King-fern) is fairly site-specific. The sites are all on a sand base, but very wet in winter with the water staying around in summer only about 30 centimetres down - essentially bog sites. Light levels at the sites are quite high. Massive plants up to three metres tall and two metres across at the base are found.

Microsorium diversifolium (Kangaroo Fern) is one of the most obvious even if not one of the most common ferns. It is found in wet schlerophyll and rain forests where the Blackwoods are often covered with it. The reason for the name diversifolium was clearly demonstrated by one slide which showed six different frond shapes from one plant.

Tmesipteris billardieri (Long Fork-fern) and T.elongata (no common name) grow mainly on tree-fern trunks in wet areas with low light, although some are found in areas of higher light, when growth is somewhat stunted. T.elongata is considered extremely rare in the Otways but is more common in other parts of the State and in Tasmania.

Schizaea asperula (Rough Comb-fern) and S. bifida (Forked Comb-fern) grow mainly in tertiary sand country on the margins of the Otways, on sites which are quite wet though less so than the areas where Clubmosses occur. The sites are usually fairly fire-prone heaths with tea-tree and similar scrub, typical sites for Epacaris impressa.

The native Selaginella uliginosa (Swamp Selaginella) occurs in damp areas in the lower foothill country. The exotic S. kraussiana is now widespread as the result of escapes and should probably be listed as naturalised.

Pneumatopteris pennigera (Lime Fern) is a recent re-discovery. A very large colony grows along both sides of a little creek near the lime works at Timboon and it also occurs along the old Timboon to Camperdown railway line, so its earlier "loss" is a little hard to understand.

Geoff concluded his talk with some slides of scenes in the Otways and advice on fern areas to visit:

- there are many relatively undisturbed fern-rich areas along the Aire River.
- Glasgow Falls is a must with its marvellous Dicksonia forest as well as many other ferns. It is rather hard to get to in the wetter months, but in summer it is possible to drive to within 250 metres.
- Mait's Rest in the Otway National Park contains a good colony of Lastreopsis hispida (Bristly Shield-fern) plus a range of other ground ferns and Asplenium flaccidum. This spot was named after Wattie Mait, a forester in the 1920's who kept logging operations away from the area as he liked to eat his lunch there.
- Melba Gully is a small State Park near Lavers Hill with a good walking track and a wide range of ferns; Blechnum fluviatile (Ray Water-fern) is very prolific. Glow worms can be seen in the evening.
- Triplet Falls, which was an early tourist spot at the end of a logging tramway, has a good range of ferns, including Tmesipteris.
- Beauchamp Falls Reserve provides easy access to nearly all the species of Hymenophyllum and has many other species.
- A good range of ferns can be found at nearly all waterfall sites.

President Barry White's thanks to Geoff for substituting as Speaker and providing such an informative address were endorsed by the acclamation of the audience.

SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING - 15th AUGUST, 1991

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

Topic: FERNS and OTHER ASPECTS of ZIMBABWE

Chris began his presentation with some general remarks about Zimbabwe (formerly known as Rhodesia). The country became an independent Republic within the Commonwealth on 18th April, 1980. The present Head of State is Hon. Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's first Executive President. Zimbabwe was colonised only 100 years ago, compared with about 400 years for South Africa.

The population of Zimbabwe is nine million people of whom 830,000 live in the capital Harare (formerly Salisbury) and 470,000 in the second city Bulawayo. English is the official language and is widely spoken, even in remote areas. Ethnic languages are Shona and Ndebele.

The area of Zimbabwe is 390,245 square kilometres (about three times the size of England). Almost the whole country is more than 300 metres above sea level, with four-fifths above 600 metres but less than 1/20 above 1500 metres. The highest mountain is Inyangani at 2395 metres.

Hwange National Park, at which Chris and Lorraine began their tour, is Zimbabwe's largest game reserve and has an area of 14,640 sq km, nearly the same size as Northern Ireland. Movement around the Park is by 4WD vehicle with a Ranger as guide. The Park is regarded as more natural than Kruger in South Africa, which is very commercialised.

The highlight of the trip was the Victoria Falls, which has the largest single curtain of falling water in the world. The width of the Falls is 1708 metres, mean height is 100 metres and at peak flood the volume of water is 500,000 cubic metres per minute. The township of Victoria Falls was originally at river level but was moved further up the hill to reduce the incidence of malaria, which is prevalent in Zimbabwe at lower altitudes.

The pictorial presentation began with scenes in and around the Lodge at Hwange National Park. A native museum displayed various craft activities, including a wood lathe which was turned manually via a length of rubber motor car tubing, Vervet Monkeys climbed in a tree in the grounds and elephants, wilderbeasts and warthogs were seen at the nearby waterhole. Many other animals roam the area, coming close to the Lodge at night.

Most of the waterholes in the Park would normally dry up during the dry period each year and the animals would migrate elsewhere, but the National Parks people have put down bores at the major waterholes to maintain a permanent animal population.

A safari into the Park gave views of more of the animals above plus giraffes, a water buffalo and a Trumpeter Hornbill bird with a long curved beak. Interesting sights in a native village visited on the safari included multi-coloured hybrid corn and the production of axes from car springs by primitive blacksmithing methods.

The next item on the tour was a trip to Victoria Falls, where the first place visited was a crocodile farm. African crocodiles are the second largest in the world after Australian salt water crocodiles. An albino crocodile was seen.

Beautiful Ivory Palms grow along the banks of the Zambesi River in the area of the falls. The name comes from the fact that the inside of the seed is hard and white like ivory. The False Date Palm also grows in the area.

Other slides taken in the region of the Falls included many brilliantly coloured Bougainvilleas which acted as host to a great variety of butterflies. A gecko and a chamaeleon were among the fauna seen.

(The balance of this presentation will be reported in the November Newsletter. As the trip to the Otways will take place before that is posted, priority had to be given in this issue to publishing the talk on Ferns of The Otways in full.)

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SPRING INTO GARDENING!

The Fern Society has accepted an invitation from the City of Prahran to participate in their forthcoming "Spring Into Gardening" Festival on Sunday, 27th October. The Festival will be held in the Victoria Gardens, High Street, Prahran and will be open to the public between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

We have agreed to take part as the Festival seems a good opportunity to publicise the activities of the Society, but will restrict our involvement to a display of ferns and will not offer any for sale.

Would any Members who would like to help with the event by providing ferns for the display, assisting with setting up or staffing the stand for a couple of hours during opening hours please phone Barry White on 337 9793.

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PRESENTATION TO MARGARET RADLEY

Margaret Radley has now been a member of our Committee of Management for ten years continuously and is our longest serving Committee Member. Apart from involvement in Committee activities, Margaret has been a member of our Newsletter despatch team for the whole of this period and has organised the Special Effort at monthly meetings for several years.

This major contribution to the activities of the Society was recognised at the September meeting when President Barry White presented Margaret with a commemorative plate hand-painted with fern decorations and suitably inscribed.

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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.

A booklet on spore collection and cultivation is available for 40 cents, or free to spore donors.

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ADIANTUM formosum 7/91	CNEMIDARIA horrida 4/90
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ADIANTUM raddianum 'Pacific Lady' 1/91	CYATHEA medullaris 5/90
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Pacific Maid' 1/91	CYATHEA milnei 11/90
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Splendens' 4/90	CYATHEA robertsiana 3/91
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Triumph' 5/90	CYATHEA woolsiana 3/91
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Variegata Tesselate' 1/91	CYRTOMIUM caryotideum 3/91
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Victoria's Elegans' 1/91	CYRTOMIUM lonchitis 11/90
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Weigandii' 1/91	CYSTOPTERIS filix-fragilis 6/90
ADIANTUM silvaticum 5/90	DICKSONIA antarctica 3/91
AGLAOMORPHA meyeniana 2/91	DICKSONIA herbertii 3/91
ALSOPHILA capensis 4/91	DICKSONIA sellowiana 3/91
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ARACHNIODES standishii 8/91	DIPLAZIUM wercklianum 4/90
ASPLENIUM australasicum 8/91	DIPLAZIUM, dilatatum 2/91
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ASPLENIUM scleroprium 7/91	DRYOPTERIS corleyi 4/90
ASPLENIUM varians 8/91	DRYOPTERIS dilatata 4/90
ATHYRIUM filix-femina 3/91	DRYOPTERIS erythrosora 11/90
BLECHNUM camfieldii 6/91	DRYOPTERIS inaequalis 4/91
BLECHNUM discolor 8/91	DRYOPTERIS patula 06/90
BLECHNUM inflexum 4/91	DRYOPTERIS sieboldii 4/90
BLECHNUM minus x watsii 7/91	GYMNOCARPUM oyense 8/91
BLECHNUM orientale 7/91	HYPOLEPIS punctata 3/91
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CAMPYLONEURON phyllitides 06/90	LASTREOPSIS smithiana 4/90

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MICROSORUM diversifolium 5/90	PTERIS argyreae 7/91
MICROSORUM normale 06/90	PTERIS biaurita 4/90
MICROSORUM parksii 8/91	PTERIS cretica 'Parkeri' 3/91
MICROSORUM scolopendrium 7/90	PTERIS ensiformis 'Victoriae' 3/91
PELLAEA cordata 06/90	PTERIS semipinnata 3/91
PELLAEA falcata 10/90	PTERIS umbrosa 7/91
PELLAEA quadripinnata 4/91	PTERIS vittata 7/90
PELLAEA rotundifolia 12/90	RUMOHRA adiantiformis (cape form) 11/90
PITYROGRAMMA chrysophylla 4/90	RUMOHRA adiantiformis (native) 3/91
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POLYSTICHUM lentum 5/90	TECTARIA trifoliata 12/90
POLYSTICHUM onocolobatum 7/91	THELYPTERIS reticulata 4/90

SPORE DONATIONS

Thank you to the following who have contributed spore : Jack Barrett, Steve Clemesha, Jean Trudgeon, Rosemary Vulcz, Margaret Nimmo-Smith (BPS), Robert Halley (San Diego Fern Society) and 'Rippon Lea'.

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FORTHCOMING GENERAL MEETING

Date: Thursday, 21st November.
Time: Commencing at 7.30 p.m.
Venue: The National Herbarium, South Yarra.
Topic: Group Discussion on "Problem Ferns".

SPECIAL EFFORT WINNERS

September General Meeting

Margaret Radley (2)
 Don Fuller
 Geoff Beilby (Guest Speaker)
 Simon Hardin
 Betty Duncan
 Keith Hutchinson



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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).

Specialising in ferns and indoor plants. Open daily (except Wednesdays) and all public holidays.

Andrew's Fern Nursery - Retail.

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Large range of ferns for beginners and collectors.

Open Sundays only; other days by appointment.

Austral Ferns - Wholesale Propagators. Ph: (052) 82 3084.

Specialising in supplying retail nurseries with a wide range of hardy ferns; no tubes.

Dingley Fern Market - Wholesale and Retail. Ph: (03) 551 1868.

233 Centre Dandenong Road, Dingley, 3172.

Specialising in Ferns, Palms, Indoor Plants, Orchids and Carnivorous Plants. Open daily except Christmas Day.

Fern Acres Nursery - Retail.

Kinglake West, 3757. Ph: (057) 86 5481.

(On main road, opposite Kinglake West Primary School).

Specialising in Stags, Elks and Bird's-nest Ferns.

Fern Glen - Wholesale and Retail. Visitors welcome.

D. & I. Forte, 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 Tuesday, except on public holidays.

Mt. Evelyn Fern Centre - Retail. Mail Orders welcome.

63 York Road, Mt. Evelyn, 3796. Ph: (03) 736 1729.

Ridge Road Fernery - Wholesale and Retail.

Weeaprounah, 3237. Ph: (052) 35 9383.

Specialising in Otway native ferns.

Viewhaven Nursery - Wholesale and Retail.

Avon Road, Avonsleigh (near Emerald), 3782. Ph: (059) 68 4282

Specialists in Stags, Elks, Bird's-nests and Native Orchids.

NEW SOUTH WALES:

Jim & Beryl Geekie Fern Nursery - Retail. By appointment.

6 Nelson Street, Thornleigh, 2120. Ph: (02) 484 2684.

Marley's Ferns - Retail.

5 Seaview Street, Mt. Kuring-gai, 2080. Ph: (02) 457 9168.

QUEENSLAND:

Moran's Highway Nursery - Wholesale and Retail.

Bruce Highway, Woombye (1 km north of Big Pineapple; turn right into Kiel Mountain Road). P.O. Box 467, Woombye, 4559. Ph: (071) 42 1613.