

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 15, Number 6, July 1993

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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

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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:

Our guest speaker this month will be Peter Bostock from the Queensland Herbarium. Peter will be speaking on the ferns of north-east Australia, an area from whence comes a large number of interesting and unusual ferns, and Peter is an expert on the ferns of this area. This talk is one which not be missed - even a Melbourne winter's evening should not deter one from attending.

Fern Competition: The fern competition last month was well supported and I trust we will have as good support this month. The category is a Blechnum fern. Most members should have at least one which they can bring along to the meeting.

Member's Fern: We have also started a new segment for each meeting in which a nominated member will bring along a fern and present a few details about its features. It will only be a short segment and will operate in conjunction with the Fern Table. As a general reminder to members, the Fern Table is meant to operate as a general facility whereby any member can bring along a fern for any of a number of reasons such as for identification, for diagnosis of a disease condition, or because it has some feature which may be of interest to other members. The Fern Table has not been well supported lately, the Member's Fern segment will not replace it but act as an adjunct to it.

Weekend Excursion: The Society is organising an excursion to the Tarra Valley - Bulga National Park and other Gippsland fern areas for the weekend 20th and 21st November. We will be arranging bus transport and overnight accommodation for the Saturday evening. More details later but mark the dates in your diary now.

A.G.M.: The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held in August. The continued success of the Society is very much dependent on

(continued opposite)

NEXT MEETING

DATE:

Thursday, 15th July, 1993.

TIME:

From 7.30 p.m.

VENUE:

The National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens,

Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. (Melway Directory Ref. 2L A1)

TOPIC:

WANDERING THE FERN WORLD OF NORTH-EAST AUSTRALIA

SPEAKER:

Peter Bostock of the Queensland Herbarium (Our Interstate Guest Speaker for 1993)

MEETING TIMETABLE

7.30 p.m.

Pre-Meeting Activities: - Sales of Ferns, Spore, Books

and Special Effort Tickets; Library Loans.

8.00 p.m.

July General Meeting

8.20 p.m.

Topic of the Evening

9.30 p.m.

Fern Competition Judging

Fern Identification and Pathology

Special Effort Draw

9.45 p.m.

Supper

10.00 p.m.

Close.

FERN COMPETITION: The category for this month is a Blechnum.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: (continued)

new blood coming on to the Committee, to provide new ideas, a fresh outlook and to prevent creeping staleness. Please give consideration to becoming a member of the Committee. Good knowledge of ferns is not a requirement, just a willingness to contribute towards the running of the Society. Let me know if you think you can help, or if you want more details of what is involved.

Regards, Barry White

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DON'T FORGET YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

MURRINDINDI VISIT

by Barry White

On Sunday, 30th May, six car loads of Fern Society members, undeterred by the drizzle and low cloud, met up with George Start at the Toolangi store.

The entourage travelled about two kilometres towards Healesville before turning left into Sylvia Creek Road. About four kilometres along this road is Wirrawilla Reserve where the Forests Commission has created a nominal 15-minute walk, the first half of which is all board walk and suitable for all ages and degrees of fitness. The walk wanders back and forth across Sylvia Creek amid a fern-rich area. The ferns identified along the walk were:

Asplenium bulbiferum
Blechnum chambersii
Blechnum fluviatile
Blechnum nudum
Blechnum wattsii
Cyathea australis
Dicksonia antarctica
Grammitis billardieri
Histiopteris incisa

Hymenophyllum cupressiforme
Hypolepis muelleri
Hypolepis rugosula
Microsorum diversifolium
Polyphlebium venosum
Polystichum proliferum
Pteridium esculentum
Rumohra adiantiformis
Sticherus tener

Continuing on along the road, an unexpected delay occurred when the road was completely blocked by a large branch from a Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) which had been blown down by the strong overnight winds. The trunk of the branch had a diameter of nearly a metre and it was well beyond manual removal. A three-quarter hour delay occurred while George Start did a rapid trip home to Healesville for a chain saw, with which he soon demolished the obstruction and simultaneously loaded his ute with firewood.

About 10 km further along and just before the Xylophone Bridge (so named because the planks supposedly played a tune as cars drove over it, but subsequent re-planking has heavily muted any such tones) we pulled up at the roadside where *Gleichenia dicarpa* was vigorously growing over other vegetation up to about three metres high, and some large specimens of *Todea barbara* were also relishing the situation.

The next stop was at the Murrindindi Cascades, a spot well worth a visit just for the Cascades. A series of steps leads down to several footbridges across the Murrindindi River at the base of the cascades, a 0.6 km round trip. Ferns were prolific with the best stands being on the far bank, due perhaps to their relative inaccessibility. The stands of Sticherus tener were particularly attractive. According the George, the amount of water in the River was about average although slightly boosted by the previous night's rain. The ferns observed in this area were:

Blechnum cartilagineum
Blechnum wattsii
Ctenopteris heterophylla
Cyathea australis
Dicksonia antarctica
Gleichenia dicarpa

Grammitis billardieri
Hymenophyllum cupressiforme
Pteridium esculentum
Rumohra adiantiformis
Sticherus tener
Todea barbara

SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING - 20TH MAY, 1993

Speaker: Chris Goudey

Subject: CLIMBING FERNS

Chris took a broad approach to the concept of a climbing fern and included some species that are not normally thought of as climbing but which are epiphytic in some circumstances.

He considered climbing ferns in four major categories:

- ferns that germinate on the ground and then climb.
- ferns that germinate as epiphytes or lithophytes and continue to climb.
- ferns that are normally terrestrial but can climb or grow as epiphytes.
- true epiphytes with short creeping rhizomes or tufted rhizomes.

Chris provided an extensive range of specimens from his own collection as a basis for his discussion of the various categories, but emphasised that there were many more climbing ferns not discussed.

1. Ferns that germinate on the ground and then climb.

These are mainly rainforest ferns with long creeping rhizomes that climb up tree trunks into the canopy, attaching themselves to the host plants by roots as they climb.

One beautiful member of this group is Adiantum novo-guineense which has very long pendulous fronds. It occurs in the highland rainforests of New Guinea where it covers trees. It is unusual because not many Maidenhairs grow in rainforests.

Members of the Arthropteris genus follow this mode of growth. There are four in Australia with A. tenella extending the furthest south into southern NSW. It has a very slender rhizome.

Blechnum filiforme from New Zealand (very prevalent in forest areas near Rotorua) creeps over the ground when young and at this stage has short fronds with small rounded pinnae. When its very thin rhizome reaches and climbs a tree trunk the fronds grow progressively longer (up to 60 cm) and the pinnae become elongated and pointed. Fertile fronds are usually not produced until the plant has reached above head height. These have very long narrow pinnae, giving rise to the species name filiforme and the common name Thread Fern.

Another climbing Blechnum is B. oceanicum from New Caledonia. In contrast to B. filiforme, it has a very thick rhizome and very large lanceolate fronds. Blechnum contiguum from Lord Howe Island is very similar (it was previously confused with B. oceanicum) though probably more attractive as it has a beautiful white and green effect on the undersides of the fronds. This fern develops fertile fronds even in a pot. These are very fine and feathery like those of B. filiforme.

Members of the *Lygodium* genus are among the best-known climbing ferns. However, these do not have a long creeping rhizome which roots to a tree trunk. Instead they have continuously extending fronds which scramble high up through the foliage.

The small New Zealand tree-fern *Dicksonia lanata* spreads by means of runners and is often seen creeping up the stems of rainforest trees. Common Victorian ferns which climb by a long creeping rhizome are *Microsorum diversifolium*, *M. scandens* and *Rumohra adiantiformis*.

Other plants in this group are *Teratophyllum* species, *Stenochlaena* species (e.g. *S. palustris*, the Swamp Fern of northern Queensland) and the fern ally *Selaginella wildenovii* from Florida.

1(a). Species that climb but do not attach themselves to a host.

Members of this class are often called scrambling ferns.

Gleichenia species or Coral Ferns usually grow in thickets and climb to reach the light. A related species is Diplopterygium longissimum from north Queensland. The Umbrella Ferns (Sticherus species) are also in this group. Pellaea ovata and P. sagittata grow amongst shrubs and the fronds worm their way up amongst the undergrowth. Pellaea falcata is occasionally found climbing over rocks.

2. Ferns that germinate as epiphytes or lithophytes and continue to climb.

Members of this category generally occur in rainforest areas where there is enough moisture for them to germinate on their hosts.

2(a). With long creeping rhizomes.

These form the majority of the category and the group includes species of Colysis, Crypsinus, Oleandra, Pyrrosia, the Filmy Fern genera Cardiomanes, Hymenophyllum and Trichomanes, Davallia species and the related Humata, Araiostegia, Leucostegia and Scyphularia species

Australia has one *Oleandra* species, *O. neriiformis* (the Stilt Fern) from the rainforests of northern Queensland. This germinates in the forks of trees, in staghorns or elkhorns or anywhere there is sufficient moisture. It spreads by long creeping rhizomes which are held away from the branches of the tree (as much as 30 cm) by long stilt-like roots.

Photinopteris speciosa from Malaysia is a very slow growing species with a beautiful white hairy rhizome and remarkable rattly fronds. It needs a lot of light for successful cultivation.

Goniophlebium subauriculatum, which occurs from northern Australia through to China and north India, spreads on a large rhizome and is notable for its long willowy fronds.

Pyrrosia species shown included P. lanuginosa from the Philippines and P. lingua from Japan, a species that has numerous cultivars which are all quite hardy in our conditions. Pyrrosias usually have a very thin wiry rhizome. At least five species occur in Australia.

2(b). With medium to short creeping rhizomes.

This group includes some of the very large ferns in the Polypodium family such as *Drynaria*, *Aglaomorpha* and *Pseudodrynaria* species which come mainly from areas in northern Australia through to Malaysia. Drynarias are dimorphic and the sterile fronds, known as nest fronds,

overlap closely so that they collect moisture plus dust, bird droppings and other debris and channel the food directly to the rhizome and roots. *Pseudodrynaria* has only one type of frond but achieves the same effect by having widened bases to the fronds. *Anglaomorpha superbum* has fronds which overlap so tightly that they will hold water.

This group also contains other ferns such as the Green Grub Fern, Polypodium formosanum, and many Aspleniums such as A. flaccidum (Weeping Spleenwort), A. polyodon (Mare's Tail), A. laserpitiifolium (Johnstone River Fern) and A. hypomelas from Africa.

2(c). Species that climb up or down a host by means of terminal buds.

The terminal buds develop at the apices of the fronds and take root when they come into contact with their host.

A particularly good example of this type is Asplenium prolongatum that occurs from Japan through to Malaysia. Under good conditions it will cover the whole trunk of a tree and out on to the limbs. Others in this group are the African ferns A. sandersonii and A. lunulatum, our Necklace Fern, A. flabellifolium (to which A. sandersonii looks very similar) and A. attenuatum from Queensland, which climbs mainly over logs and up embankments.

2(d) Species that climb on a host by means of adventitious stolons.

Some species of Nephrolepis which are normally terrestrial produce stolons that can grow through the air for some distance before contacting the soil and taking root. This enables them to extend up trees and other hosts. N. cordifolia and N. hirsutula are two Australian species which can be found growing this way. The former is often seen growing on the tops of palm trees, particularly Phoenix canariensis.

N. acutifolia, however, is a true epiphyte and always grows in trees.

(3) Ferns that are normally terrestrial but can climb or grow as epiphytes.

Asplenium bulbiferum is often seen growing on the trunks of tree-ferns and beech trees in Victoria, as is A. terrestre in Tasmania.

A. aethiopicum frequently grows as an epiphyte in the karri forests of Western Australia and Lastreopsis hispida can be found part way up beech tree butts in Victoria and Tasmania.

(4) True epiphytes with short creeping rhizomes or tufted rhizomes.

This category covers a wide range of ferns, including Playceriums, Elaphoglossums, Drynarias, Aglaomorphas, Polypodiums and many Aspleniums such as formosum, laserpitiifolium, australasicum and nidus.

CULTIVATION

Most of the species discussed above do well when grown as epiphytes in an open, well-drained mix in hanging baskets. Fibre-lined wire baskets and tree-fern baskets are suitable and even squat terracotta pots, but not plastic hanging baskets. The last are essentially only elevated

pots and do not provide good enough drainage or allow sufficient air around the roots.

Getting a lot of air around the roots is one of the most important factors in the successful cultivation of epiphytes. Potting medium compacts as it breaks down and with plastic pots sufficient air cannot get to the roots, so stagnation occurs. Tree-fern and fibre-lined baskets allow air to get to the roots even if the soil does compact.

Some species require something to climb on. A wire framework is sufficient for Lygodium and Gleichenia species, Pellaea ovata and other scrambling species. However, most climbing ferns produce roots along their rhizomes and need a moisture-holding support. Examples of this class are Adiantum novo-guineense and Blechnum filiforme. One of the best moisture-holding supports is a piece of tree-fern, which can be obtained in many shapes. The support should be watered every time the plant is. True epiphytes such as small Humatas, Polypodiums and Platyceriums often grow well on slabs of tree-fern or cork.

Chris and Lorraine have developed a very successful technique for propagating climbing ferns from a piece of rhizome, even one which has been stored in a plastic bag for a couple of weeks. Take a tree-fern basket or terracotta squat pot of appropriate size and place some epiphytic medium in the base. Then wrap the rhizome around the inside of the container and pack it in sphagnum moss. Then water and place the whole basket inside a plastic bag and tie up. After 3-4 weeks, depending on the time of year, start opening the bag to let the air in. The rhizome will root quite quickly into the sphagnum.

Sphagnum moss is one of the best rooting media available as it holds a lot of moisture but still with plenty of air space and contains no nutrients. It is valuable for rejuvenating ailing ferns. Potting back is generally the first step if a plant is looking sad, but in bad cases all mix should be washed off and the roots packed in sphagnum. Vigorous roots should then be produced in a few weeks. When mounting Platyceriums, a pad of sphagnum should be placed between the plant and the mount to induce root development and no feed given until roots are established.

President Barry White thanked Chris for his talk and the effort he had put into preparing the selection of interesting ferns provided. Members endorsed his remarks with enthusiasm.

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MURRINDINDI VISIT: (cont'd from page 4)

The final area on our schedule was Wilhelmina Falls, but the delay incurred with the fallen branch meant that this part of the excursion had to be abandoned and we had to be content with a roadside glimpse of the distant falls.

The failure to complete the itinerary, the fact that the miserable weather forecast may have deterred a number of members on the day, and the scenic beauty of the area combine together to warrant organising a similar trip on another day.

KANERLEY FERN EXHIBITION

by Barry and Lyn Hubbard

This may seem like a commercial, but the reason for writing this short article is because, while on holidays last April, we were very impressed with the exhibition area of the Kanerley Fern Nursery. The owner, Coral Lindbeck, is very proud — and rightly so — of this exhibition. The range of ferns is enormous and the quality is very high. We think Coral said there are about 750 different ferns — all named — in the area of approximately 65 metres by 60 metres. All ferns are relatively easy to observe from a board walk which bisects the area with some offshoots to the side. A tape playing bird calls makes the whole area very relaxing.

When arriving at the nursery we had decided we had only about half an hour to spare, as we had to make our way back to Parkes before nightfall. We spent just over two hours there and didn't really want to leave then.

We can recommend to any of our members who are anywhere near the Newcastle NSW area you must not miss this exhibition. A small entry fee is charged but the exhibition is more than worth it.

(Details of the location of the Kanerley Fern Exhibition and Nursery can be found on the back cover.)

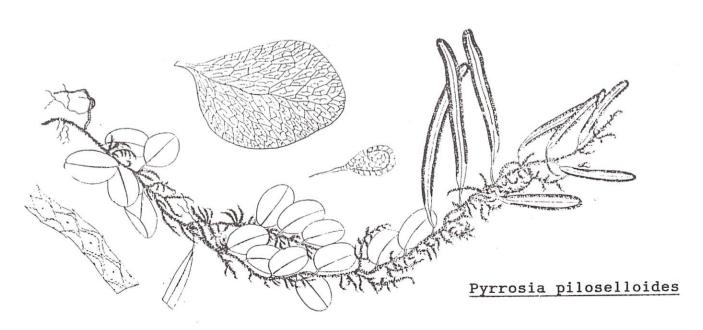
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DYNAMIC LIFTER

With Dynamic Lifter being mentioned frequently as a successful fertiliser for ferns, the following item from the Melbourne "Sunday Age" may be of interest:

Q. Are you able to use Dynamic Lifter on all plants? Or do some react badly to it?

A. No, you can't on all plants because of its high lime content (high pH). All plants that require an acid soil should not be fertilised with Dynamic Lifter or any similar products (i.e. pelletised chicken manure). The plants in this category include rhododendrons, camellias, daphne, azaleas and pieris.



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 to 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.

ADIANTUM aleuticum 6/92 ADIANTUM concinnum 3/92 ADIANTUM raddianum 'Weigandii' 3/92 ADIANTUM whitei 3/92 ANEMIA phyllitides 3/93 ARACHNOIDES miguelliana 6/93 ARTHROPTERIS tenella 5/93 ASPLENIUM milnei 4/92 ASPLENIUM scleroprium 3/93 ASPLENIUM scolopendricum 3/93 ATHYRIUM felix femina 3/93 ATHYRIUM niponicum v. pictum 3/93 BLECHNUM braziliense 3/93 BLECHNUM chambersii 10/92 BLECHNUM discolor 5/93 BLECHNUM fluviatile 10/92 BLECHNUM minus 6/92 BLECHNUM nudum 5/93 BLECHNUM wattsii 10/92 BLECHNUM wattsii x minus 3/93 CHRISTELLA dentata 5/93 CIBOTIUM cumingii CONIOGRAMME intermedia 6/93 CYATHEA australis 3/93 CYATHEA brownii 3/93 CYATHEA cooperi 10/92 CYATHEA howeana 10/92 CYATHEA tomentosissima 5/92 CYRTOMIUM falcatum 3/92 DICKSONIA antarctica 3/93 DICKSONIA berteriana DICKSONIA herbertii 10/92 DICKSONIA sellowiana 10/92 DICKSONIA youngiae 2/93 DIPLAZIUM australe 5/93 DIPLAZIUM centripetale 2/92 DOODIA aspera 1/92 DORYOPTERIS pedata 6/92 DRYOPTERIS atrata 3/93

DRYOPTERIS erythrosora 1/92 DRYOPTERIS hondoensis 11/92 DRYOPTERIS sieboldii 12/92 ELAPHOGLOSSUM alatum GYMNOCARPUM oyense 12/92 HYPOLEPIS glandulifera (punctata) 11/92 LASTREOPSIS hispida 6/92 MACROTHELYPTERIS torresiana 1/92 NIPHIDIUM crassifolium 5/92 OSMUNDA regalis (Brazil) 4/93 PELLAEA cordifolia 6/92 PELLAEA falcata nana 3/93 PELLAEA falcata 3/93 PELLAEA hastata 2/92 PELLAEA viridis v. macrophylla 2/92 PITYROGRAMMA calomelanos v. aureoflava 7/92 PLATYCERUM superbum 5/92 PNEUMATOPTERIS pennigera 3/92 POLYPODIUM californicum 2/93 POLYPODIUM rhodopleuron 3/93 POLYSTICHUM acrostichoides 4/92 POLYSTICHUM formosum 3/92 POLYSTICHUM lentum 3/93 POLYSTICHUM munitum 6/92 POLYSTICHUM proliferum 11, POLYSTICHUM retroso-palea PTERIS quadri POLYSTICHUM proliferum 11/92 POLYSTICHUM retroso-paleaceum 10/92 POLYSTICHUM tsus-simense 3/92 PTERIS biaurita 6/93 PTERIS hendersonii 3/93 PTERIS quadriaurita cv argyrae 10/92 PTERIS semipinnata 3/93 PTERIS wallichiana 3/93 RUMOHRA adiantiformis (native) 5/93 RUMOHRA adiantiformis (S.Africa) 3/92

SPORE DONATIONS

Thank you to the following who have contributed spore: Jean Trudgeon, Bill Taylor, Phyllis Bates, Margaret Nimmo-Smith and Jocelyn Horder. More spore wanted, please.

STICHERUS lobatus 6/92

WOODWARDIA unigemmata /92

STICHERUS tener 5/93

Barry White

JUNE FERN COMPETITION

The category for the fern competition for the June meeting was an Asplenium. Congratulations to the following winners:

First:

Don Fuller

Asplenium polyodon

Second:

Diana Mayne

australasicum

Third:

Fran & Ray Harrison

boltonii

The draw for the exhibitors' fern prize was won by Lexie Hesketh.

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BUYER'S GUIDE TO NURSERIES

Please note the following changes to the Buyer's Guide to Nurseries on the back cover:

(1) Coach Road Ferns has been added. The proprietors are Brenda and Lindsay Marshall.

(2) Peter Tann has relocated his nursery, which is now known as Kawarren Fernery (formerly Ridge Road Fernery).

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DON'T FORGET YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

SPECIAL EFFORT WINNERS

June General Meeting

George Start (2)

Nancy Perry

Liz Snell

Don Fuller

Margaret Radley

Maxicrop

Maxicrop

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- * 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

Opinions expressed in articles in this Newsletter are the personal views of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by the Society, nor does mention of a product constitute its endorsement.

BUYERS' GUIDE TO NURSERIES

VICTORIA:

Andrew's Fern Nursery / Castle Creek Orchids - Retail.

Goulburn Valley Highway, Arcadia, 3613. (20 km south of Shepparton).

Large range of ferns and orchids for beginners and collectors.

Open daily 10 am - 5 pm except Christmas Day. Ph: (058) 26 7285.

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

Coach Road Ferns - Wholesale. Monbulk. Ph: 756 6676.

Retail each Saturday and Sunday at the Upper Ferntree Gully Market (railway station car park), Melway Ref. 74 F5. Wide selection of native and other ferns. Fern potting mix also for sale.

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

Fern Acres Nursery - Retail. Kinglake West, 3757. (On main road, opposite Kinglake West Primary School). Ph: (057) 86 5481. 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.

<u>Kawarren Fernery</u> - Wholesale and Retail.
<u>Situated on the Colac</u> - Gellibrand Road, Kawarren (20 km south of Colac). Ph: (052) 35 8444.

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.

Kanerley Fern Exhibition and Nursery - Wholesale and Retail. 204 Hinton Road, Nelsons Plains, via Raymond Terrace, 2324. Ph: (049) 87 2781. Closed Thursdays and Saturdays. Groups of more than 10 must book in advance, please.

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
Keil Mountain Road). P.O. Box 47, Woombye, 4559. Ph: (074) 42 1613.