

**THE
FERN SOCIETY
OF
VICTORIA**

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 16, Number 3, April 1994

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Single	-	\$15.00	(Pensioner/Student - \$11.00)
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Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Without as yet knowing the degree of success of this year's Fern Show I wish to place on record the thanks of myself and the Society to Don Fuller for his work in organising the Show, and to the many members who assisted in setting up and running the Show. The Fern Show has a number of significant benefits for the Society. It was important that we not miss out on a show for two years running, and therefore the work of all involved this year is greatly appreciated. I trust that there will be obvious tangible benefits flowing onto the Society.

The March monthly meeting a passed a vote of congratulations and thanks to Chris and Lorraine Goudey for their fine display at Garden Week and for the publicity which they gave to the Fern Society and the Fern Show. I am happy to pass the terms of the vote on to Chris and Lorraine.

April Meeting: The meeting this month will be a Members' Fern Night. We ask all members to bring along a fern for display and comment. Bill Taylor will be chairing the discussion on the ferns. All members are requested to bring along at least one fern. The fern competition category is an open one, i.e., all ferns brought along for the meeting will be eligible to participate in the competition.

Excursion: A day excursion to Cement Creek and the Acheron Way has been arranged for Sunday, May 29th. Transport will be by private means. The precise meeting spot and time will be in next month's Newsletter. Anyone wishing assistance with transport please contact me. The last time we visited Cement Creek was on the return trip from Marysville and it teemed rain. This time better weather is being arranged.

Early Warning: The Herbarium will not be available for any meetings for the last three months of the year. The Committee is looking at

(continued opposite)

NEXT MEETING

DATE: Thursday, 21st April, 1994

TIME: From 7.30 p.m.

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

TOPIC: **MEMBERS' FERNS** (see President's Message)

DISCUSSION LEADER: Bill Taylor

MEETING TIMETABLE

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

8.00 p.m. April 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: All ferns brought by members for the discussion will be included in the competition.

The category for May will be a *Davallia*.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: (continued)

alternative arrangements for those months, possibly excursions, with the final Christmas meeting being held in the Botanic Gardens. We will give you full details as soon as they are finalised. At this moment the only certainty is that there will be no meetings at the Herbarium during those three months.

Assistant Editor: The Committee is seeking an Assistant Editor to aid Bob Lee in preparing the Newsletter. Preparation of the Newsletter is an interesting job, and the Newsletter has a vital role in the functioning of the Society. Any interested member can obtain further details from Bob Lee, and the Society would be greatly appreciative of a volunteer.

Regards
Barry White

SPEAKER REPORT - GENERAL MEETING - 17TH MARCH, 1994Speaker: Barry WhiteTopic: NEW GUINEA VISIT*(The following report was written by Keith Hutchinson)*

Barry travelled to New Guinea as a volunteer for AESOP (Australian Executive Services Overseas Program) which consists of active retired people with special abilities. He was there for four weeks to train locals in the artificial insemination of Brahman cattle.

His first stay was in the Ramu-Markham Valley at a sugar plantation 200 kilometres in from Lae. The New Guinea Government was the main shareholder but it was managed by a large international sugar company. They also maintain about 1,700 head of cattle. He then moved to the Munum cattle property 40 kilometres from Lae. Here the property had some magnificent Frangipani trees and these were home to *Drynaria sparsa*, *Microsorium punctatum*, *Pyrrosia longifolia* and a few tatty *Asplenium australasicum*.

Barry suggested a walk into the nearby hills but the management insisted he have an escort each armed with a machete to protect him from rascals (the local term for robbers and thieves). On subsequent walks he went alone and had no trouble. The ferns here were *Pteris umbrosa*, several varieties of *Thelypteris* (one with a very fine frond) and a *Diplazium sylvaticum* (with a very unusual spore pattern). A d'Albertis creeper with beautiful red flowers sheltered a small *Nephrolepis*, the Silver-back Fern, *Pteris tripartita*, and another *Pteris* with long harsh fronds.

It seemed to Barry that many of the locals were pyromaniacs as they were continually lighting fires. He reasoned that the fires would flush out pigs and small animals which would supply the much-needed protein in their diet. Fruit, nuts and greens were abundant. With an annual rainfall of 1100 mm (45 inches) this area was much greener than the Ramu-Markham Valley which had been suffering drought.

Barry managed to get into Lae twice but was not impressed. With an annual rainfall of 4,300 mm (170 inches) the roads were in a terrible state, muddy and full of potholes and not able to withstand the heavy mining vehicles. One road leading into Lae had large trees forming an archway and covered with many species of epiphytic ferns. The most attractive area was the War Cemetery, although it was also very depressing to see the graves of so many young people. Adjacent were the Botanical Gardens and, as the guide book said to beware of rascals and enter in groups, Barry was a little apprehensive but entered in a group of one. Being a rainforest area overgrown with creepers there were very few ferns although Barry discovered some *Cyathea*, a palm covered with *Pyrrosia* and a tree with a collection of *Drynaria sparsasora* (with a rhizome 5 cm thick), *Nephrolepis*, *Cyrtomium* and *Asplenium* (one with fronds two metres long). He also saw a very interesting *Vittaria elongata*, the Bootlace Fern. Almost in the centre of Lae a roadside cutting was profuse with the dainty *Adiantum philippense*.

Travelling on to Goroka, Barry noticed a picturesque Pentecostal

Gospel Church by the Yanda River. It was built of bamboo thatched with palm leaves and was the church attended by the family with which Barry stayed. As the country is predominantly Christian there were numerous churches. The inscriptions on the churches were in pidgin English and Barry found translation easy. There are over 700 different dialects but most natives speak three - their own, pidgin and English.

Markets are spaced about every 20 kilometres along the roads and sell just about anything, which made very interesting breaks in the journey. He eventually arrived at the town of Goroka, 4500 metres above sea level. The climate here is ideal with no mosquitoes and little humidity. There was very little barbed wire, indicating no trouble with rascals, and many attractive homes, some belonging to the judiciary.

Hiring a four-wheel-drive vehicle, Barry set out for Mount Gahavasuka and in a provincial park discovered some interesting ferns, including several *Cyatheas* with quite red scales and a stand of *Sticherus*. Many small creeks traverse the road and whilst investigating one of these Barry found a *Diplazium longissimum* with fronds several metres long (like a giant *Sticherus*). Nearby was a *Lygodium* and a *Dipteris conjugata* with bronze fronds, quite an unusual fern.

Butterflies were numerous here but Barry saw none of the renowned giant species. On the downhill return were some giant *Hypolepis punctata* with very large attractive fronds and a *Humata pectinata* growing in a very exposed position, proving what a tough little fern it is.

Moving on to his final stopover at Wau, Barry noticed quite a few bushfires as he descended Mount Kaindi; these are a worry to the farmers of this district.

He said he had thoroughly enjoyed his time in New Guinea and would jump at the chance to go again. He recommends it to anyone if the opportunity arises. By looking around accommodation can be obtained at reasonable prices and 4WD drive vehicles can be hired. Barry did travel on the PMV's (Public Motor Vehicles) several times but did not see any other white people on them. He found them a reasonable form of transport even if punctuality was not their best point. They drive around the markets calling out their destination and commence the journey when full. Fellow travellers were quite friendly and cooperative and he received several gifts - two hard-boiled eggs, some sugar cane and some peanuts. Once two natives carried his luggage two kilometres to his overnight stop, happy to escort him safely there.

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MARCH FERN COMPETITION

The category for the fern competition for the March meeting was a member of the Polypodium family. Congratulations to the following winners:

First:	Ray Harrison	<i>Polypodium australe</i> "Cambricum"
Second:	Keith Hutchinson	<i>Goniophlebium subauriculatum</i> "Knightiae"
Third:	Ian Broughton	<i>Pyrrhosia lingua</i>

The draw for the exhibitors' prize was won by Jack Barrett.

NAMING FERNS OF HORTICULTURAL INTEREST

by Barbara Joe Hoshizaki

Continued from March issue:-

SUMMARY

1. The majority of fern variants originating from nature or cultivation that are of interest to horticulture are named according to the provisions of the Cultivated Code. Exceptions may be some wild plants and some hybrids which should be named according to the Botanical Code.
2. The two Codes are separate. A plant named under one code has no standing in the other Code regarding rules of priority and so forth.
3. The distinction between a botanical variety (*varietas*) and a cultivated variety (*cultivar*) is important in naming ferns of horticultural interest.
4. The coextensive rule allows two names for a cultivar, the cultivar name and the botanical name.
5. In the trade, common names are often used as though they are cultivar names. Common names have no standing in the Codes and lack the stability the Codes offer.
6. Cultivated varieties named under the botanical variety rank before January 1, 1959 are changed to the cultivar rank.
7. After January 1, 1959 new cultivar names must be in non-Latin form and cannot consist of more than three words.
8. Monstrosities brought into cultivation from nature are best named in the cultivar rank.
9. In regard to hybrids, intergeneric and interspecific hybrids made in cultivation may be given names according to the Botanical Code, but interspecific and infraspecific hybrids may also be given names under the Cultivated Code.
10. Names of cultivars of unknown parentage may be formed by having the cultivar name appear directly after the genus name.
11. Trademark names and cultivar names have different relationships in different countries. The Cultivated Code specifies that cultivar names, in general, may not be registered as trademarks, but trademarks may become cultivar names.
12. Group ranks may be used to group ferns with many cultivars.
13. Systems of group names applicable to various species with many cultivars need to be developed.
14. An International Registration Authority for ferns, needs to be organized, perhaps with subcommittees to register different genera.
15. A simplified version of the Cultivated Code and a glossary worded in easily understood language is overdue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to Dr. K. A. Wilson of the Biology Department, California State University, Northridge, for providing indispensable literature, suggestions, and editing help. It was his interest that kept the momentum going to get this paper completed. Dr. Mildred E. Mathias of the Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden, University of California, Los Angeles, Dr. Edward G. Voss, of the University of Michigan Herbarium, Ann Arbor, and Dr. William Dress of The Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University, Ithaca, helped in interpreting difficult concepts of the nomenclatural rules and bringing them to my attention. I also wish to thank attorney Mr. Harry Le Vine, Jr. and Mr. Allen Amgott for providing interpretations of patent and trademark laws. My husband, Dr. Takashi Hoshizaki, was not only tolerant of my late hours deciphering nomenclatural problems, but also assisted in the tedious aspects of editing.

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GLOSSARY

TAXONOMIC RANKS MOST OFTEN USED
TO CLASSIFY FERN VARIATIONS

GOVERNED BY THE BOTANICAL CODE

species (sp.) - the category of taxa of the lowest principal nomenclatural rank.* (Usually considered to be a group of organisms that interbreed and are reproductively isolated from all other such groups.) Example: *Osmunda regalis*; or the genus understood: *O. regalis*.

subspecies (subsp.) - a subordinate division of a species.* (A subdivision of a species, a distinguishable group occurring within a specified geographical area, a geographical race.** Some species may consist of two or more subspecies, in which case, the first named subspecies repeats the name of the species. cf Fig. 1B.) Example: *Athyrium filix-femina* ssp. *filix-femina* mostly in Europe and *A. filix-femina* ssp. *cyclosorum* in northwestern North America.

variety (varietas, var.) - Nomenclaturally, a rank of taxa subordinate in rank to that of subspecies.* (A botanical variety, a distinguishable group occurring within a specified habitat, e.g., bogs, grasslands, etc.; an ecological race. Sometimes used in the sense of a subspecies.***) Example: *Athyrium filix-femina* var. *californicum*.

form (forma, f.) - A rank of taxa subordinate to species (or variety or subvariety); usually differentiated by a very minor character, and commonly the lowest rank in the hierarchy.* (A minor genetic variant found sporadically but scattered throughout the range of the species.***) Example: *Dennstaedtia punctilobula* f. *crispata*.

GOVERNED BY THE CULTIVATED CODE

group - An assemblage of similar cultivars; intermediate between a species and cultivar in rank. (A group of cultivars with similar character(s).) Example: *Polystichum setiferum* Multilobed group. Example, cited with a cultivar: *Polystichum setiferum* (Multilobed group) cv. Magnificent Plume; or the group name may be omitted: *Polystichum setiferum* cv. Magnificent Plume.

cultivar (cv.) - An assemblage of cultivated individuals distinguished by any characters significant for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, or horticulture, and which when reproduced, retains its distinguishing features. (A cultivated variety which when reproduced retains its distinguishing character(s) and is a selection from any species, infraspecific rank or hybrid.) Example: *Adiantum raddianum* cv. Pacific Maid, or *A. raddianum* 'Pacific Maid', or when the species is understood *A.* cv. Pacific Maid, or *A.* 'Pacific Maid'.

GOVERNED BY THE BOTANICAL OR CULTIVATED CODE

hybrid - The offspring of the sexual union of plants belonging to different taxa.* (The hybrid name is expressed as a formula name or binary name and applies to all the offspring of all identical crosses. If a grower desires to recognize individual offspring, each may be named as a cultivar.)

intergeneric hybrid - hybrids between species of different genera. (Named under the Botanical Code in Latin form using a formula name or its equivalent binary name.) Example of a formula name: *Aglaomorpha coronans* X *Drynaria rigidula*. Example of an equivalent binary name: X*Aglaonaria robertsii*. Example when cited with a cultivar name: (*Aglaomorpha coronans* X *Drynaria rigidula*) cv. Santa Rosa, or X*Aglaonaria robertsii* cv. Santa Rosa.

interspecific hybrid - hybrids between species of the same genus. (May be named under the Botanical Code in Latin form or under the Cultivated Code in non-Latin form without use of a formula name.) Example of a formula name under the Botanical Code: *Platynerium elephantotis* X *P. stemaria*. Example of an equivalent binary name to the above, named under the Botanical Code: *Platynerium Xelemaria*. Example of a Botanical Code name cited with a cultivar: (*Platynerium elephantotis* X *P. stemaria*) cv. Sanchez, or *Platynerium Xelemaria* cv. Sanchez. Example of a Cultivated Code name: *Pteris* Ekstrand Hybrids, for all the offspring between parents *Pteris ensiformis* and *P. tremula**** Example of a Cultivated Code name cited with a cultivar: *Pteris* (Ekstrand Hybrids) cv. John, or *Pteris* cv. John.

intraspecific hybrid - hybrids between ranks lower than a species, such as subspecies, variety, form, or cultivar. (Generally not named under the Botanical Code. Under the Cultivated Code named only if worthy of recognition and then placed in a group rank or a particular offspring named as a cultivar.) Example when named as a group: *Pteris* Victoria Star group, for all the offspring from the cross between *Pteris ensiformis* var. *ensifformis* and *P. ensiformis* cv. Victoriae. Example when a particular offspring is named as a cultivar: *Pteris* (Victoria Star group) cv. Gem, or *Pteris* cv. Gem.

* Definitions from McVaugh et al. (1968).

** From Stacy (1989).

*** *Pteris* examples mostly hypothetical.

FIGURE 1. ORIGIN OF CULTIVARS

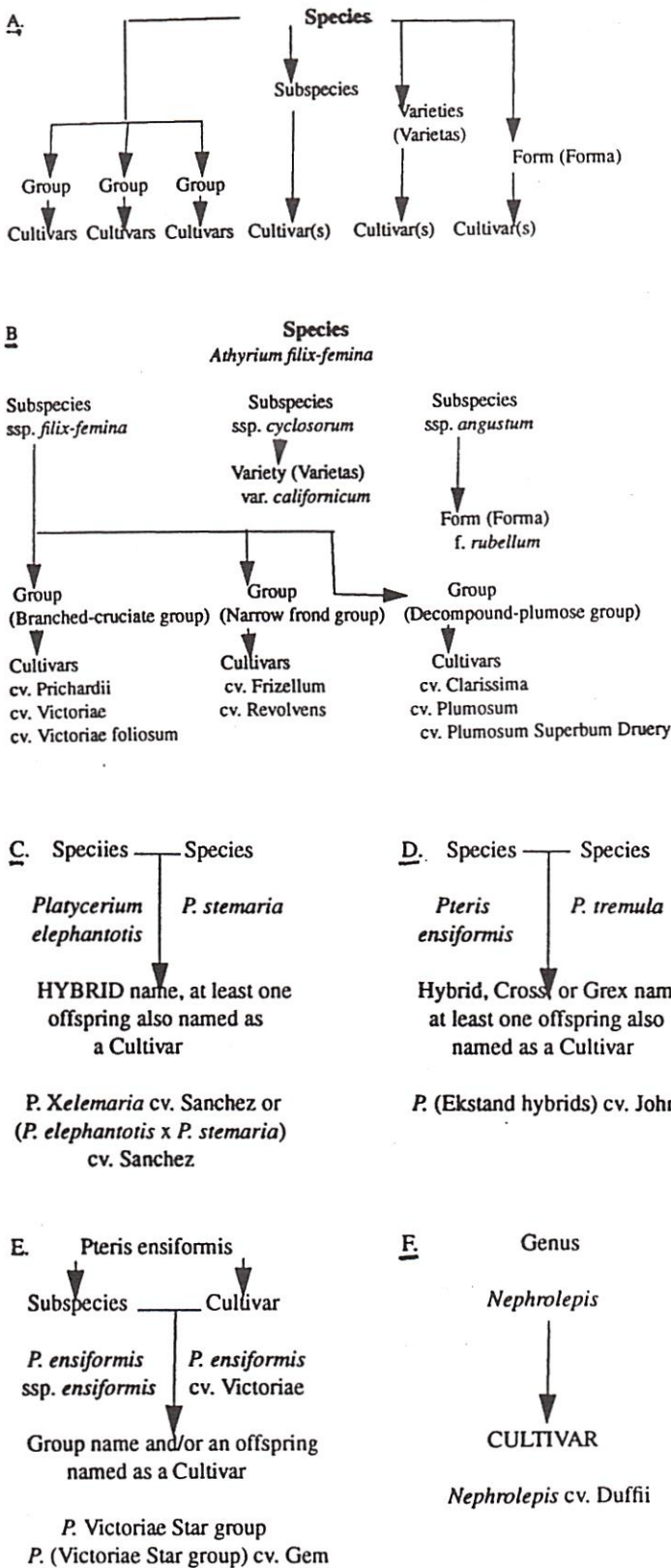
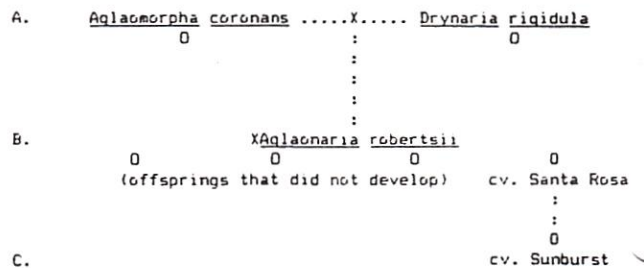


FIGURE 2. GENEALOGY OF TWO CULTIVARS



- A. Parents of an intergeneric cross.
- B. Hybrid, the name applies to all the offspring of the cross, even if only one has been developed. A cultivar name is given to an offspring, even if only one offspring is known.
- C. A cultivar that is a later selection from the hybrid cultivar.

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BUYER'S GUIDE TO NURSERIES

Please note that The Bush-House Nursery of Naringal, near Warrnambool, has been added to the list.

(The following article is taken, with thanks, from the February, 1994 edition of "The Fern World", the newsletter of the San Diego Fern Society.)

FERNS - LIVING FOSSILS

by Brigitte Feucht

Ferns go back into prehistory. They were not the earliest plants; that niche was occupied by bacteria, algae and fungi which lived in the water. It is thought that a long, long time ago life began in the sea, and for a long time that life in the sea was all the life there was. The land was barren; there were plains and deserts and mountains, but no plants or animals lived on them.

Millions of years ago mountains erupted and seas lay over the continents' deserts. Most of the land was swamp. But slowly plants found ways to live on land, and a mantle of vegetation spread over the earth - a great green invasion that changed the history of life. The food and shelter provided by plants made possible the development of land animals, and the earth became more of a place like it is today with plants and animals in the seas, lakes and rivers, along the seashore and on the land.

Vascular Plants

The oldest plants are preserved in cherts from North America, Africa and Australia. Life on the land was a comparatively late development. Life on the land involved major changes. Because they were able to live on land, ferns and fern allies take a special place in the evolution of plant life. There are a number of characteristics that are common to all ferns and their allies: (1) they are all green plants without flowers or fruits; (2) they all reproduce by means of spores; and (3) they are all true vascular plants.

Vascular plants are those which contain bundles of vein tissue which carry water and nutrients to all parts of the plant and give them, among other benefits, the rigidity and the ability to grow erect. This is typical of most plants as we know them today. What sets ferns and the plants we call fern allies apart and links them with the dawn of life on earth is that they were the first plants to struggle up out of the water and develop this vascular system through which nourishment could be drawn and distributed. This was a major evolutionary advance which enabled these plants to colonise land.

Ferns and their allies are as ancient as land plants go. Fossils show that ferns and their allies grew to the dimension of trees during their heyday, the "Age of Coal" - some 300 million years ago. The climate must have been warm and steamy or rainy. Great tree ferns and giant horsetails along with other plants formed extensive forests in the swamps that covered much of North America, Europe and China.

These plants used the sun's energy in building their tissues from the simplest materials: water and carbon dioxide. They grew prodigiously, spent their lives and sank into the mud.

As the dead plant tissues piled up, the mixture of plants and mud thickened and became peat. This in time was covered by layer after layer of sand and clay and shell, and finally the increasing weight of these layers compressed it into coal.

Swamp Forests of the Carboniferous Era

During Carboniferous time the swamp forests reached giant proportions. Most of the land was swamp where giant horsetails and clubmosses spread their huge fronds over the ferns beneath to catch the little light that filtered through the canopy. Under the ferns lay the steaming earth clothed in the earliest forms of plant life - the mosses and lichens.

All must have been very quiet, for no insects buzzed and whirred through the air and no birds or mammals called to each other. Everything was green and gloomy - no flowering plants declared their presence in the shades of the rainbow, and no birds flashed by in bright plumage.

The climate was much milder than it is today. The world was shrouded in mists and rain was almost constant. In this warm atmosphere the ancient fern-type plants thrived and grew to giant proportions.

Towards the end of the Carboniferous Age, the world's climate changed, and conditions were not as congenial for these huge plants. Many of the watery places dried, and the plants' reproduction (dependent as it was on water) was not as prolific. The mists cleared and subsequently the appearance of the vegetation changed too: leaves did not have to be as big to capture light so vital to life-energy and smaller plants evolved. Competition from the new sophisticated seed-bearing plants (cycads, conifers and pines and all their relatives) became stronger. All these new plants were able to reproduce with less water. The ferns for the most part were driven into areas where the conditions of their beginning still existed - the swamps, streams and moisture-laden mountainsides.

By the time of the Mesozoic Era (which began approximately 225 million years ago), the modern fern families with their characteristic fiddleheads and acropetal growth were well established. Fossil records of this time show the existence of several families that are alive and flourishing today, i.e., Schizaeaceae, Marattiaceae, Osmundaceae and Gleicheniaceae.

Geologic Times, Fossils

The basis of our understanding of the history of life - animals and plants alike - is the fossil record. The major divisions of geologic time are based principally upon the life that characterized them, as revealed by the fossil content of the rocks. Fossils are the markers of geologic time. When speaking of fossils, one usually refers to the remains of organisms that lived long ago. They are lifeless and have become relics of the past. Rocks in widely separated localities containing a similar flora and fauna of the same time are designated to belong to the same era. Fossils are of many kinds and are formed by various processes.

Under certain anaerobic conditions - in bog, peat or marine mud - and in the absence of petrifying minerals, deposits of plant tissues slowly turn to coal. Portions of plants that are well separated from each other by sand or mud during deposition give rise to fossils known as mummifications or compressions.

The diagram shows the durations of the various periods in the history of the earth and the probable times of the origination of the various plant groups.

Era	Period	Estimated age in millions of years	Probable time of origin of plant groups	Man
History begins				
Recent	Quaternary	1		
	Tertiary	1.5		
Mesozoic	Cretaceous	132		
	Jurassic	180		
	Triassic	225		
Palaeozoic	Permian	275		
	Carboniferous	350		
	Devonian	405		
	Silurian	430		
	Ordovician	485		
	Cambrian	600		
Pre-Cambrian		1700		
		2000	Life begins	
		4750	Age of Earth	

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SPECIAL EFFORT WINNERS

March General Meeting

Alison Whytecross

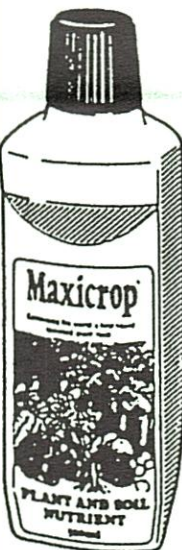
John Hodges

Don Fuller

Jack Barrett

Fran Harrison

* * * * *



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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.

Austral Ferns - 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.

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.

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

The Bush-House Nursery - Wholesale and Retail.
Cobden Road, Naringal (35 km east of Warrnambool). Ph: (055) 66 2331
Ferns - trays to advanced. Visitors welcome.

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 - Wholesale.
5 Seaview Street, Mt. Kuring-Gai, 2080. Ph: (02) 457 9168.
All Fern Society members welcome. By appointment.

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.