

**THE
FERN SOCIETY
OF
VICTORIA**

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 16, Number 4, May 1994

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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(25 Ewing Street, Brunswick, Vic., 3056)

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:

The Fern Show this year had a number of very positive features. The display was of a high standard and there was good support by members, both in providing ferns for the display and in making time available to assist in various ways over the weekend. Having the sales and display area side by side was, I consider, very useful in allowing members to move between the two areas and to socialise more freely. The number of visitors was disappointing but we made a useful profit and recruited a number of new members. I think that the overall assessment would be that the show was quite successful but we must look at means of improving public attendance. I thank all members for their support, and especially Don Fuller for his excellent work as Chairman of the Show Committee.

I also thank all the members who brought along a fern to the Member's Fern Night at the meeting last month. We had an impressive display of ferns and a good number of interesting discussions. Bill Taylor did his usual excellent work in chairing the discussion and in the painless extraction of details from members.

May Meeting: The meeting this month will cover aspects of diseases and pests of ferns with a speaker from the Bayer organisation. It is a while since we have had a talk on this subject, and from the look of my ferns such a talk will be quite appropriate.

The fern competition category this month is a *Davallia* (including closely related genera such as *Humata*, *Scyphularia* and *Leucostegia*). Let's see plenty of ferns there.

I had a pleasant visit last week from Bob Halley, Past President of the San Diego Fern Society. Bob is on a cruise of the Pacific and he flew down from Sydney for the day so he could visit Chris Goudey's fernery. Our Society already exchanges newsletters with San Diego and a number of other fern societies. The newsletters are available

(continued opposite)

NEXT MEETING

DATE: Thursday, 19th May, 1994
TIME: From 7.30 p.m.
VENUE: The National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens,
 Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.
 (Melway Directory Ref. 2L A1)
TOPIC: PRACTICAL CONTROL OF PESTS AND DISEASES
SPEAKER: Roger Loveless of Bayer Australia Ltd

MEETING TIMETABLE

7.30 p.m. Pre-Meeting Activities:- Sales of Ferns, Spore, Books
 and Special Effort Tickets ; Library Loans.
 8.00 p.m. May 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 *Davallia*.
 The category for June will be a *Pyrrosia*.

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APRIL FERN COMPETITION

Ferns brought in by members for the discussion session were judged by Chris Goudey for the competition. Chris emphasised that judging was difficult and the winners were all very close. Congratulations to the following:

First:	Dorothy Forte	<i>Trichomanes reniforme</i> (very difficult to
Second:	Nancy Perry	<i>Polypodium loriceum</i> (grow)
Third:	Keith Hutchinson	<i>Goniophlebium subauriculatum</i> 'Knightiae'

The draw for the exhibitors' prize was won by George Start.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: (continued)

through our library. These connections with other societies is something which can be very useful to our Society and should be developed further.

Regards,
Barry White

FERN SHOW 1994

After a break of one year the Fern Show was again held, the dates being Saturday, April 16th and Sunday, April 17th. The venue this year was changed to the National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens.

After lunch on Friday 15th an excellent team of willing members commenced setting up the Herbarium hall into display and sales areas, the front of the hall being used for our display and the rear for fern sales. This was achieved in excellent time.

Our display again featured a central pergola for hanging specimens with general potted ferns placed beneath and around the perimeter. Around the sides of the display area were two excellent specialist displays, one again incorporating a waterfall kindly loaned by L.&N. Gedye, a display of Adiantums and another featured "Victorian Ferns". The number, quality and variety of ferns displayed was felt to be excellent.

The sales area, which included book, basket and spore sales, was also well stocked with a large variety of ferns. Considering the attendance it was very well patronised.

Attendance at the Show by the public was disappointing. Saturday was a beautiful day but after a rush when we opened at 11.00 a.m. the number of visitors fell away and became almost non-existent in the afternoon. On Sunday we opened at 10.00 a.m. and, after a slow start, the number of visitors built up to a steady stream. Unfortunately, this ceased when heavy rain commenced at approximately 3.45 p.m.

Although a final figure for the Show is not yet available it will show a profit in excess of \$725, which is similar to the previous Show. Also on the credit side was the gaining of five new memberships, sales of baskets, books, labels and spore (not included in the above figure) and the excellent opportunity for members to socialize, with all members being in the same building and periods of time on their hands.

On behalf of the Show Committee I thank all members who gave their time and effort to the preparation and running of the Show. Thanks and congratulations are also extended to exhibitors on the quality and number of ferns displayed.

The Show Committee would appreciate any comments and suggestions from members. This assists when discussing options for future shows.

Don Fuller
Chairman - Fern Show Committee

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SPEAKER REPORTS

I apologise for not yet publishing reports on the presentations at the February and April meetings. I simply have not had time to write them up from the tapes because of other commitments. As this situation unlikely to improve much in the foreseeable future, could some other members please help to keep this feature of our Newsletter going by writing up an occasional report. The work can be done from home and would be no great load if spread amongst several people. Please phone me on 836 1528 if you can help.

Bob Lee

MY FAVOURITE FERNSby Keith Hutchinson1. DRYNARIA RIGIDULA "WHITEI"

Over the past few years I have enjoyed much pleasure with my *Drynaria*. It grows well without a great deal of attention and certainly features highly with any visitors to my home. I feel all fern enthusiasts could be quite successful in growing this delightful fern if they just take note of these few points.

It grows best in a basket or wide shallow pot in an open soil mix as good drainage is essential. I occasionally top up with a mix of a coarse grade of compost (not muddy) with some leaf mould and Dynamic Lifter. During summer and autumn I feed with a weak solution of Aquasol and Maxicrop about once a month.

About the end of July all the pinnae will drop, leaving long dry arching stipes which I leave until the new croziers commence growth in mid-September.

Each two or three years I will repot it but not in winter. I wait until the fronds are quite firm as the new fronds are quite brittle and will snap off very easily if not carefully handled. Late October is OK for repotting.

I have rarely had to spray it but notice an occasional spot of mites which is easily fixed with Rogor or Folimat.

Unfortunately my plant rarely produces new nest fronds which I find very attractive in their early lime-green stage or the later rusty red colour. I believe these are only produced when the fern is lacking nutriment.

Finally, if you are in a frosty area protection for the winter months is needed and constant water in cold weather is out. I'm sure if you follow these suggestions you will gain great pleasure in growing *Drynaria*.

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EXCURSION TO ACHERON WAY AND CEMENT CREEK

A day-excursion to Cement Creek and the Acheron Way has been arranged for Sunday, May 29th. Transport will be by private means. We will meet at 10 o'clock at the top end of the Acheron Way near St Fillians. To get there proceed up the Maroondah Highway from Healesville, take the Marysville turnoff and a short distance in from the turnoff is the start of the Acheron Way on the right with an old sawmill on the corner. There are many beautiful spots along the Acheron Way and George Start is reconnoitring the route to identify the best fern and parking spots. Good weather Has been requested but bring your wet gear just in case our requests are outweighed by counter requests.

Bring all your own needs for lunch etc.; also a copy of the "Ferns of Victoria ..." book and a magnifying glass will help resolve debates on fern identification.

Barry White

(The following article had fortuitously just been prepared for publication when Keith Hutahinson's arrived. It is taken, with thanks, from the November, 1993 edition of the Newsletter of the Fern Society of South Australia Inc.)

PURCHASING AND BASKETING A DRYNARIA

by Betty Weaver

Drynarias are costly, so care must be taken or you will be left with a dead old rhizome that was planted 24 hours or so before being offered for sale. Most nurseries have rhizomes sent boxed and bare-rooted from Queensland to save cost on freight.

First carefully inspect the rhizome and see if it is old and bald of healthy scales (brown to golden hairs). See if any new side rhizomes are growing healthily from the old piece. Also do not buy one that has less than two fresh fronds. It is false economy to buy a cheaper plant. It will most likely lose its fronds in winter, which is usual, but never grow another.

If you find a healthy growing piece, prepare your basket by lining it with fibre. I think this is best as the plant can easily find its way through the sides and lower edge in a few years and make a magnificent specimen and the showpiece of your collection. A medium-size basket is best, one you will always be able to lift and manage; it will grow for 20 years or more in this size. Once basketed it is best never to disturb it again and interrupt its growth.

The soil mix I use for Drynarias and all epiphytes is half quantity of my own regular soil mix and half tree-fern fibre or elk fibre (mulched) or a mixture of these last two fibres. To this I add a generous amount of granulated charcoal and the same of pulverised cow manure. The charcoal is important as it not only sweetens the soil mix but opens it up, and the nutrients are absorbed by the charcoal and in turn the roots cling to it and grow healthily.

Drynarias like high light and no wind, and even full sun for several hours, especially morning sun. Remember in their natural state they grow on rocks and trees and drain freely. In summer in Queensland it rains most days, so keep damp during hot weather. During winter up there they are often without even showers for three or four months, but in the mountains and gullies where they are found it is also very cold on winter nights and a heavy dew forms and runs into the plant enough moisture to keep it growing during its dormant cycle. At this time the rhizome often grows deep into the basket. Plenty of sun is needed in winter.

September is when I start to feed and I fully immerse the basket in a container of water almost as deep as the basket itself and add any high nitrogen fertilizer; leave overnight. I use Aquasol one time and Phostrogen the next, and by October new shoots should be appearing if you chose a healthy growing plant.

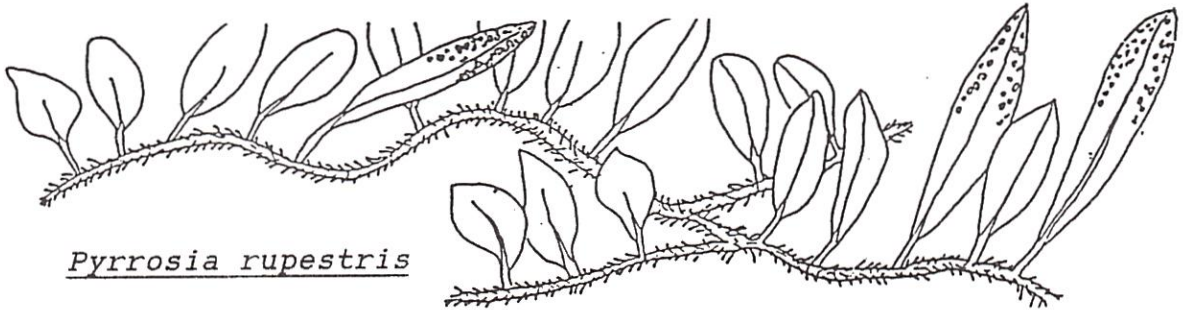
Good Luck with this most rewarding fern.

(The following article is taken, with thanks, from the December, 1989 issue of the Newsletter of the S.G.A.P. Fern Study Group. It is another in the "Ferns of the Rain Forest" series by the author originally published in the Newsletter of the SGAP Far North Coast Group in NSW.)

PYRROSIA

by Calder Chaffey

Members of the genus *Pyrrosia* (in the family Polypodiaceae) are amongst the commonest epiphytic ferns in the rain forest or wet sclerophyll forest growing on trees or rocks. However, they are little known and inadequately covered in most fern books. I have often known people refer to a specimen as an orchid, a parasite or even a mistletoe but rarely a fern. But on examination they will be seen to have all the structures of ferns: rhizomes, roots, fronds, vascular conduction systems and spores for sexual reproduction.



Pyrrosia rupestris

The rhizome is creeping, slender, long, often tortuous and persistently scaly. There are usually papery peltate (see Glossary at end) scales at the bases of the fronds. Fronds are attached to the rhizome by a phyllopodium.

Fronds of the Australian species are simple, fleshy with a surface covered with stellate hairs. Some species are dimorphic. Sori are on the ventral surface of the apical half of the fronds.

There are about 100 *Pyrrosia* species most of which occur in tropical Asia with some in Africa and South America, while five occur in Australia, two of which are very common and wide spread. Both of these occur widely in our north eastern N.S.W. rain forests.

Pyrrosia ferns are very hardy and drought resistant. In times of drought they will shrivel and curl up, but after rain they swell and resume their normal appearance. There are two structures which aid these ferns against lack of water. Firstly the fleshy fronds are lined with a layer of large cells which contain little but water. Secondly the surfaces are lined with hairs. These hairs distinguish *Pyrrosia* from all other Polypodoid ferns except *Drymoglossum*. They are stellate in form all over the young fronds and this form usually persists throughout life on the under surfaces. The structure of the hairs is similar to those of *Platyserium* and because of this some think the two genera are related. It is therefore easy to see why members of this genus have adapted to survival on rocks or over tree trunks and branches where water is often minimal.

Cultivation of the five Australian species of *Pyrrosia* is very easy. They also make excellent fern house or forest specimens. I have often

wondered why they are not cultivated by more people. It is quite rare to see them

in any collection. They can all be grown on slabs and most will even grow on rocks. They can be grown successfully with other epiphytes such as Staghorns, Elkhorns or orchids. They may be cultured in pots or hanging baskets where the potting mix must be very well drained. A good mix is 30% coarse river sand and 70% coarse organic material such as 2 cm pine bark or macadamia shells. However, they look their best twining up a log or a tree trunk. When introducing them to branches or trunks make sure the tree is suitable for epiphytic culture. A good rule of thumb is to choose a tree which is growing moss or lichens, Stags, other ferns or orchids.

A. *Pyrrosia confluens* - Robber Fern.
Horseshoe Felt Fern.

The rhizome has dark brown scales bordered with short teeth. The fronds may only just be distinguished as dimorphic. The sterile fronds are 8-20 cm long while the fertile fronds are 8-25 cm. This species is distinguished by the sori which are 1.5 mm in diameter and restricted to a horseshoe-like area surrounding the edge of the apex of the fertile frond. As the sori age they become confluent, forming a complete horseshoe.

It grows on trees, principally in rain forests but extending to open forest, often associated with other epiphytes. Occasionally it grows on rock faces. In the shade the fronds are long and dark while in the sun they are dwarfed, bleached and leathery.

Distribution is from N. Queensland to north of Newcastle, from sea level to about 1000 metres. It also occurs on Lord Howe Island, Norfolk Island and New Caledonia. Excellent specimens can be seen on trees along the road near Bellingen and in many places in the Big Scrub. Also in Keen St., Lismore opposite the Catholic Cathedral.

B. *Pyrrosia rupestris* - Rock Felt Fern.

The rhizome has pale papery scales. The fronds are markedly dimorphic, spoon-shaped to elongated with white to reddish stellate hairs sometimes giving the fern a rusty appearance. The sterile fronds are rounded and small, 2-6 cm long and the fertile fronds are narrower and 4-20 cm. Sori are 1-3 mm in diameter and are irregularly distributed in up to four rows each side of the midrib in the distal half of the frond. With age they tend to become confluent.

This is an extremely common fern with distribution from N. Queensland to S.E. Victoria, from the coast to the edge of the tablelands. As well as growing on rain forest and open forest trees it is very common on rock faces. Spectacular masses can be seen along the Wilson River valley west of Mullumbimby and in the rain forest remnants around Bangalow and the Big Scrub.

The three other Australian species will also grow in this district (NSW north coast) and thrive as long as they are in a no-frost area. A brief description of these follows:

C. *Pyrrosia delsii* - Silvery Felt Fern.

Rhizomes broad and lanceolate, fronds dimorphic, very thick and leathery with silvery stellate hairs, occasionally lobed. Sterile

fronds oblong to elongated and 3-8 cm, fertile fronds 3-12 cm. Sori 3-5 mm in a regular line each side of the midrib. Confined to S.E. Cape York, Atherton and Evelyn Tableland. It is usually found on trees on the edge of the rain forest.

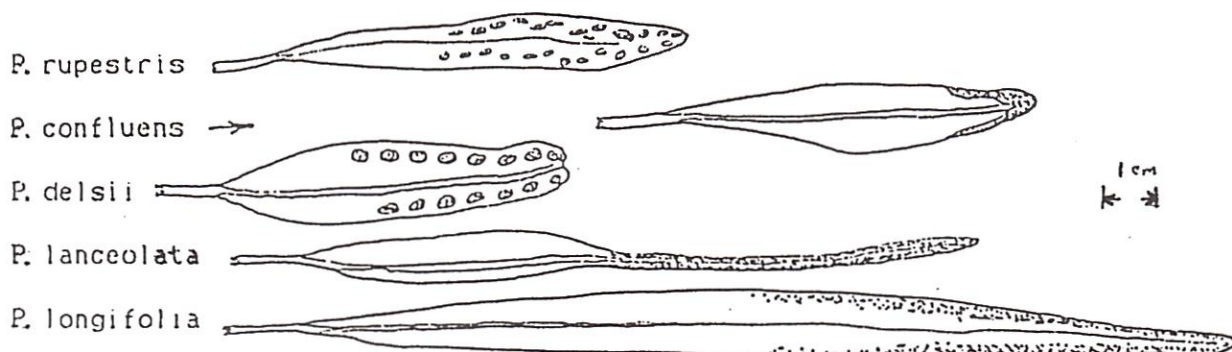
D. *Pyrrosia lanceolata*

Long creeping branched rhizome, dimorphic fronds - sterile fronds 5-9 cm usually lanceolate, fertile fronds 10-17 cm and narrower, the distal half tapering abruptly to a linear-caudate structure covered with irregularly crowded elevated sori becoming confluent with age. Confined to N. Queensland and extending to Malaysia, India and S. China.

E. *Pyrrosia longifolia*

Rhizome long and branched. Fronds very long, dimorphic, silvery-green, thick and leathery, 40-60 cm. Sori 0.5-1.5 mm scattered irregularly along the distal half in irregular rows towards the edges. Distribution N.E. Queensland, sea level to 500 m, Malaysia and Polynesia. A good place to see this fern is on the trees along the waterfront of Trinity Bay just north of the wharves of Cairns, where it completely covers the whole trunks and branches.

A simple way to identify the five Australian species is by the fertile fronds and distribution of the sori:



GLOSSARY:

caudate - resembling a tail

dimorphic - producing two types of fronds

distal - away from the point of attachment towards the free end

Drymoglossum - a genus related to *Pyrrosia*, differing by having linear continuous sori. Six species are distributed from Madagascar through N.E, India and S.E. Asia to New Guinea. There are none in Australia.

lanceolate - lance-shaped

peltate - shield-like, stalk attached near the centre of the frond

phyllopodium - an outgrowth joining the stipe to the rhizome

stellate - star-shaped, with several arms

ventral - the undersurface.

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Pyrrosias will be discussed further at the June meeting, which will feature talks by Chris Goudey and Terry Turney on the characteristics and cultivation of *Pyrrosias* and *Platycterium*s.

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 concinnum 4/94	DIPLAZIUM australe 5/93
ANEMIA mexicana 8/93	DOODIA aspera 1/94
ARACHNOIDES miguelliana 6/93	DOODIA maxima 1/94
ARTHROPTERIS tenella 5/93	DRYOPTERIS affinis 'cristata' 1/94
ASPLENium australasicum 4/94	DRYOPTERIS atrata 1/94
ASPLENium bulbiferum ssp.gracillimum 2/94	DRYOPTERIS erythrosora 1/94
ASPLENium milnei 7/93	DRYOPTERIS sieboldii 1/94
ASPLENium oblongifolium 1/94	DRYOPTERIS wallichiana 1/94
ASPLENium scleroprium 1/94	ELAPHOGLOSSUM alatum /
ASPLENium scolopendrium 1/94	ELAPHOGLOSSUM muelleri 7/93
ATHYRIUM felix femina 3/93	GYMNOCARPUM oyense 1/94
ATHYRIUM niponicum var. pictum 3/94	HUMATA griffithiana 11/93
BELVISIA mucronata 4/93	LLAVEA cordifolia 4/94
CAMPYLONEURON angustifolium 1/94	MICROLEPIA strigosa 9/93
CHEILANTHES austrotenuifolia 11/93	MICROSORUM parksii 1/94
CHEILANTHES farinosa 10/93	PELLAEA cordifolia (Texas) 4/94
CHRISTELLA dentata 5/93	PELLAEA falcata 09/93
CONIOGRAMME intermedia 1/94	PELLAEA quadripinnata 4/94
CYATHEA australis 1/94	PELLAEA rotundifolia 7/93
CYATHEA brownii 4/94	PELLAEA sagitata 7/93
CYATHEA cooperi 'Brentwood' 5/93	PLATYCERIUM superbum 11/93
CYATHEA cooperi, blue form 7/93	POLYPODIUM californicum 2/93
CYATHEA cooperi 1/94	POLYSTICHUM lentum 4/94
CYATHEA dealbata 10/93	POLYSTICHUM tsus-simense 4/94
CYATHEA intermedia (New Caledonia) 6/93	PTERIS biaurita 6/93
CYATHEA medullaris 11/93	PTERIS sp. (Nepal) 3/94
CYATHEA princeps 9/93	PTERIS tremula 1/94
CYATHEA sp.(P.N.G.) 6/93	PTERIS umbrosa 4/94
CYATHEA woolsiana 6/93	PTERIS vittata 1/94
DICKSONIA antarctica 4/94	RUMOHRA adiantiformis 7/93
DICKSONIA berteriana /	SELLIGUEA feei 8/93
DICKSONIA fibrosa 10/93	THELYPTERIS navarrensis 4/94
DICKSONIA youngiae 2/93	

SPORE DONATIONS

Thank you to the following members who have contributed spore: Don Fuller, Bob Halley and Lorraine Deppeler.

MORE DONATIONS WANTED

The spore list this month is shorter than usual. This is due to the deletion of older spore from the list. Your assistance in providing spore to build up the list again would be much appreciated.

Barry White

BOOK LIST**MAY, 1994**

The following books are currently in stock and may be purchased at monthly meetings or by contacting Stephen Ziguras at the address and phone number listed inside the front cover:

<u>AUTHOR & YEAR</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
* Best, R.	Growing Ferns	\$5.50
* Brooklyn Botanical Gardens (1983)	Ferns; A Handbook (U.S.A.)	\$4.00
* Brownsey, P.J. and Galloway, T.N. (1987)	A Key to the Genera of N.Z. Ferns and Allied Plants	\$6.00
* Chinnock, R.J. (1981)	Common Ferns and Fern Allies	\$5.00
* CSIRO (1979)	Organic Matter and Soils	\$3.00
* CSIRO (1979)	When Should I Water?	\$3.00
* Davenport, E. (1977)	Ferns for Modern Living	\$8.00
* Duncan, B. and Isaac, G. (1986)	Ferns and Allied Plants of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia	\$35.00
* Dunk, G. (1983)	Ferns for Home and Garden	\$15.00
* Goudey, C. (1985)	Maidenhair Ferns in Cultivation	\$43.00
* Jones, D. and Clemesha, S. (1980)	Australian Ferns and Fern Allies	\$16.00
* Jones, D. (1985)	Ferns in Colour	\$7.00
* Martin, R.W.	Ferns for Ferneries (N.Z.)	\$13.00
* Thomas, D.	What To Do About Ferns	\$2.00

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SPECIAL EFFORT WINNERS**April General Meeting**

Barry White (2)

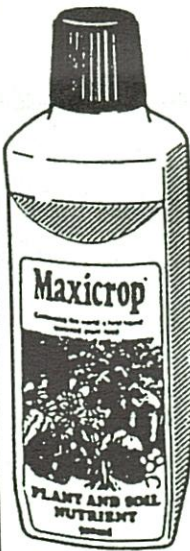
John Hooper

Jean Trudgeon

George Start

Bill Taylor

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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.