

**THE
FERN SOCIETY
OF
VICTORIA**

Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 17, Number 3 May, 1995

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

I had a very interesting six weeks in the Philippines, but it is good to be back in Australia. The Philippines is a country with a number of problems - pollution, unemployment, corruption, and a degraded countryside; however the people are great, and are struggling to come to terms with democracy and to overcome their problems. I encountered a reasonable variety of ferns where I was staying in South Luzon, and in some of the places which I was able to visit, although I did not see any outstanding fern areas. I hope to give a talk on my trip later in the year.

The Fern Show was quite successful this year and special thanks go to Don Fuller who was chief organizer. Don put in a tremendous amount of time and the success of the Show was in a large amount due to his efforts. Seven new memberships were taken out at the Show and I look forward to welcoming these new members at our meetings.

The April meeting was very interesting with Terry Turney covering a difficult topic on the Davallia (Haresfoot) group of ferns. I think that the type of information Terry provided warrants a follow up study night where we would have the opportunity to closely examine actual specimens.

May Excursion: Two of our newer members, Mary and Reg Kenealy from Marysville, have invited the Society for a day visit to their area on Sunday, 21st May. This will be an excellent opportunity to take advantage of their local knowledge, and they have also kindly invited us to afternoon tea at their place. I believe that they have a very nice natural fern area in their backyard. Full details of how and when to get there are given elsewhere in this Newsletter.

May Meeting: The May meeting will be a Fern Forum night with Bill Taylor as leader. The contributors will be members from the floor providing information on their experiences, both good and poor, on some of the fundamentals of fern growing such as potting mixes and repotting, fertilisers, aspects of watering, and pests and diseases. It should be a good night for both experienced and new members. The fern competition category for May will be an *Adiantum* (Maidenhair fern).

Fern Competition: Chris Goudey has undertaken the difficult job of judge at our monthly meetings for about the last three years and the Society is very appreciative of his efforts. At his suggestion the

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

(1) THURSDAY - 18th MAY, 1995

Topic: FERN FORUM - FERN GROWING FUNDAMENTALS

Leader: BILL TAYLOR

(2) THURSDAY - 15th JUNE, 1995

Topic: LANDSCAPING WITH FERNS

Speaker: JANE EDMANSON

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

MEETING TIMETABLE:

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

- (1) May - *Adiantum*
(2) June - Fern and Container (judged as an entity)

EXCURSION TO MARYSVILLE

Don Fuller

A day excursion to Marysville has been arranged for Sunday, May 21st. Transport will be by private cars. We will meet at Gallipoli Park by 10.45 a.m. and, after morning tea, proceed via Lady Talbot Forest Drive to a picnic area known as The Beeches, a distance of approximately 14 kilometres.

Lady Talbot Forest Drive is an unsealed road which follows the Taggerty River. We are assured that there are good fern areas around The Beeches.

We will be joined on the excursion by members of the Marysville Garden Club. As the aim of the excursion is to identify the ferns found in the area, please bring pen, paper, magnifying glass and a copy of "Ferns of Victoria", if you have one.

You will also need to bring your own morning tea, lunch, sturdy footwear and wet weather gear in case of bad weather. Mary and Reg Kenealy have invited us to their home in Marysville for afternoon tea.

1995 FERN SHOW

Don Fuller

The Fern Show on 1st-2nd April was again held at the National Herbarium in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Ideal fine and mild weather no doubt contributed to the steady stream of visitors throughout both days. Despite several conflicting activities in the area attendance was good, being approximately 80% greater than last year. This could have been the outcome of the pleasing level of media publicity the Show received.

The Show has provided a reasonable and much-needed profit, a number of new memberships and an excellent opportunity for members to socialise.

Our display area consisted of a central pergola for

hanging ferns with general potted ferns placed underneath, two excellent specialist displays, and separate displays of Adiantums and Australian Indigenous Ferns. The number of members contributing to the general display was lower than last year, thus a little disappointing. The sales area was very well stocked and as usual did good business. There was also a steady stream of inquiries at the Spore Bank and for our recently completed list of recommended ferns for beginners.

The results of the Fern Competition held in conjunction with the Fern Show Display were as follows:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Prize</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Fern</u>
<i>Adiantum</i>	First	Dorothy Forte	<i>Adiantum raddianum</i> cv. Goldelse
	Second	Chris Goudey	<i>Adiantum raddianum</i> cv. Lawsonianum
<i>Asplenium</i>	First	Chris Goudey	<i>Asplenium shuttleworthianum</i>
	Second	Chris Goudey	<i>Asplenium pteridoides</i>
Australian Indigenous	First	Don Fuller	<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>
	Second	Chris Goudey	<i>Blechnum nudum</i> cv. Furcans
<i>Platynerium</i>	First	Bill Taylor	<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i>
	Second	Bill Taylor	<i>Platynerium superbum</i>
<i>Pteris</i>	First	Don Fuller	<i>Pteris tremula</i>
	Second	Dorothy Forte	<i>Pteris argyrea</i>
Fern in Hanging Container	First	Don Fuller	<i>Davallia plumosa</i>
	Second	Don Fuller	<i>Polypodium formosanum</i> cv. Cristatum
Fern - Other/ Minor Genera	First	Ian Broughton	<i>Cheilanthes myriophylla</i>
	Second	Don Fuller	<i>Lygodium japonicum</i>
Best Fern in Show		Don Fuller	<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>

The success of the Show requires a lot of work by many people and thanks are extended to all those members who contributed to the display and gave their time and effort to the setting up, running and cleaning up of the Show. Thanks also to our competition judge.

The Show Committee would appreciate any comments and suggestions that may assist with the planning of any future shows. Please put them in writing and pass them on.

The following is the list of recommended ferns for beginners referred to in Don Fuller's report on our 1995 Fern Show. The Society banner and address have been omitted here.

FERNS SUITABLE FOR BEGINNERS

The following information is provided to assist those developing an interest in growing ferns. The ferns suggested are hardy, easy to grow, and ideal for beginners.

CONDITIONS

POSITION: Most gardeners have an area suitable for hardy ferns. While some ferns will grow in conditions varying from full sun to full shade, most prefer filtered sun or early morning sun. Protection from strong winds and draughts is also required. This can be achieved by the use of shade cloth, trellis or trees.

SOIL: Ferns require well drained, slightly acidic and well mulched soil. The use of leaf mould, cow manure, peat moss and other mulching materials will be of benefit.

POTTING MIX: Use a good quality potting mix. For epiphytes in baskets the mix can be made more porous by the addition of orchid mix.

FERNS

The following ferns are grouped according to their suitability for garden, baskets or indoors.

<u>Botanical Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Comments</u>
GARDEN FERNS:		
<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	Native Maidenhair	20-60 cm Ground cover
<i>Asplenium australasicum</i>	Bird's Nest Fern	50-200 cm
<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	Hen & Chicken Fern	50-120 cm
<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i> hybrids	Maori Princess, Island Beauty	75 cm
<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>	Shining Spleenwort	30-120 cm
<i>Blechnum cartilagineum</i>	Gristle Fern	60-150 cm
" <i>nudum</i>	Fishbone Water Fern	60-100 cm
" <i>patersonii</i>	Strap Water Fern	30-80 cm
" <i>penna-marina</i>	Alpine Water Fern	15-30 cm Ground cover
" <i>wattsii</i>	Hard Water Fern	30-125 cm
<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	Japanese Holly Fern	30-50 cm
<i>Doodia aspera</i>	Prickly Rasp Fern	20-45 cm Good colour
" <i>caudata</i>	Small Rasp Fern	10-25 cm
" <i>maxima</i>	Giant Rasp Fern	50-100 cm
" <i>media</i>	Common Rasp Fern	20-70 cm
<i>Dryopteris atrata</i>	Shaggy Shield Fern	20-40 cm
" <i>erythrosora</i>	Autumn Fern	20-45 cm Good colour
" <i>filix-mas</i>	Male Fern	60-150 cm Part Deciduous
<i>Lastreopsis acuminata</i>	Shiny Shield Fern	30-90 cm
" <i>decomposita</i>	Trim Shield Fern	50-90 cm Ground cover
" <i>marginans</i>	Glossy Shield Fern	60-120 cm Dark green
<i>Nephrolepis cordifolia</i>	Fishbone Fern	40-80 cm Very hardy
" " cv. Plumosa	Plumed Fishbone Fern	" " "
<i>Pellaea falcata</i>	Sickle Fern	10-60 cm Ground cover
" <i>rotundifolia</i>	Button Fern	5-20 cm Ground cover

<i>Polystichum proliferum</i>	Mother Shield Fern	50-100 cm	
" <i>setiferum</i>	Soft Shield Fern	60-150 cm	Many cultivars
<i>Pteris tremula</i>	Tender Brake	60-120 cm	
" <i>umbrosa</i>	Jungle Brake	60-120 cm	
<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>	Leather Fern	60-150 cm	
<i>Todea barbara</i>	King Fern	50-150 cm	

TREE FERNS:

		* Tolerates Sun	# Fast Growing
<i>Cyathea australis</i>	Rough Tree Fern	100-300 cm	*
" <i>brownii</i>	Norfolk Is. Tree Fern	200-500 cm	#
" <i>cooperi</i>	Scaly Tree Fern	200-500 cm	* #
" <i>medullaris</i>	Black Tree Fern	200-500 cm	#
" <i>robusta</i>		100-300 cm	#
" <i>tomentosissima</i>	New Guinea Tree Fern		*
<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>	Soft Tree Fern	100-300 cm	
" <i>fibrosa</i>	Wheki-Ponga	100-300 cm	
" <i>squarrosa</i>	Wheki	100-300 cm	

BASKET FERNS:

Best in Plastic Basket * Best in Porous Basket

<i>Adiantum raddianum</i>	Maidenhair	15-60 cm	#
(Weeping cultivars - Micropinnulum, Grandiceps, etc.)			
<i>Davallia mariesii</i>	Hare's Foot Fern	Coarse Mix	*
" <i>plumosa</i>	" " "	" "	*
" <i>pyxidata</i>	Cup Hare's Foot Fern	" "	*
<i>Drynaria rigidula</i> cv. Whitei		Cold sensitive	*
<i>Microsorium diversifolium</i>	Kangaroo Fern	Coarse mix	*
" <i>scandens</i>	Fragrant Fern	" "	*
<i>Nephrolepis cordifolia</i>	Fishbone fern		#
" " cv. Plumosa	Plumed Fishbone Fern		#
" <i>exaltata</i> cv. Bostoniensis	Boston Fern		#
" <i>exaltata</i>	Golden Boston Fern,		#
cv. Bostoniensis Aurea	(Chantilly Gold, Fandancer)		#
<i>Nephrolepis exaltata</i> cvs. Gretnae, Suzi Wong and Verona			#
<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	Ring Fern	Must keep moist	#
<i>Phlebodium aureum</i>	Golden Polypodium	Coarse mix	*
<i>Polypodium formosanum</i>	Green Grub Fern	Coarse mix, Best in	
" " cv. Cristatum	Club Footed Grub Fern	tree-fern log or basket	
<i>Pyrrosia rupestris</i>	Rock Felt Fern		*
" <i>lingua</i> & cultivars	Japanese Felt Fern		*

INDOOR FERNS:

<i>Adiantum raddianum</i>	Maidenhairs	Well lit position with some air flow. Winter sun is ideal, avoid summer sun and very dry air
Suggested cultivars (avoid very fine ones):		
cv. Elegans	cv. Frangans	cv. Fritz Luth
cv. Gracillimum	cv. Grandiceps	cv. Pacific Maid
cv. Pacottii	cv. Triumph	cv. Victoria's Elegans
<i>Asplenium australasicum</i>	Bird's Nest Fern	Coarse Mix
" <i>bulbiferum</i>	Hen & Chicken Fern	Very Hardy
" " hybrids	Maori Princess, Island Beauty	
<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	Japanese Holly Fern	Very Hardy

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The following item is a combination of two articles taken, with thanks, from the Newsletter of the S.G.A.P. Fern Study Group - No.67, December, 1994 and No.68, March, 1995. Hopefully, it will complement the talk to be given by Jane Edmanson to our June meeting.

FERNS IN GARDEN DESIGN

Some time ago, Diana Snape, Leader of the ASGAP Garden Design Group, asked Study Groups to list plants (in our case ferns) that are valuable for garden design. In endeavouring to help Diana, some information was gathered together and is recorded here. In the past our Group has paid little attention to questions of design even though several of our Study Group members are obviously interested in the subject and have joined the Garden Design Study Group. It is an important area that needs to be developed and all members are invited to make a contribution to our store of knowledge by advising their thoughts on the subject of ferns in garden design and/or providing comments regarding the suitability or otherwise of particular fern species.

Design in gardens like most things is either good or bad depending on personal preference, but obviously a well-designed garden will be perceived as such by the majority of viewers. To be considered "well-designed" gardens probably need to exhibit the following features:

- Be of attractive or pleasing appearance
- Look natural or complementary to the environment
- Suit a range of outdoor uses
- Be relatively easy to maintain.

One of the challenges in gardening is to maintain form and appearance of the garden without it being an all-time-consuming occupation. This is not easy because the garden is a living entity. It grows and matures, fades and has to be renewed. Of course, there are many attractive gardens based largely on annuals - and such gardens have their appeal and place in the order of things, but they demand a lot of time and energy to maintain. A well-designed garden has a certain stability and permanency and in any case, for most gardeners annual renewal of their garden is not an enticing prospect. Ferns, once settled in the right spot, endure beyond the cycle of seasons.

Ferns come in such variety that they offer enormous possibilities in design and capacity to fill various niches in the garden. Ferns range from tiny filmy ferns to giant tree ferns, terrestrial ferns, epiphytes, some that live in trees and on rocks, climbers, others that live in parched desert-like conditions, some which

thrive in bogs and some that float on water. But the Garden Design Study Group is seeking a list of ferns for "ordinary" garden conditions. The use of a shade house may be the very best way to display a wide variety of ferns but for this project we are simply interested in ferns which merit a place in gardens and grow without requiring special care.

It seems that the ferns to be included should:

- Be reliable and amenable to cultivation
- Be attractive in form and appearance .
- Not be prone to pests and disease
- Be available from nurseries.

A worthwhile approach is to grow our plants as in nature. We should use ferns that fit into garden aspects similar to those in which they evolved. Ferns are a natural for a shady position, a frequently wet area, the dark corner or to cover a moist rock face. Keep the garden design in harmony with what is natural in the Australian bush, don't struggle against nature. In two popular garden themes, those featuring pools of water and mini pseudo-rainforests, ferns are not just an integral part, but the ideal bonding that ties the garden together and greatly enhances the atmosphere of coolness and serene tranquillity.

We begin our list of ferns considered to be valuable in garden design with comments on one fern species, *Adiantum aethiopicum*. Hopefully, with suggestions from other members, more ferns will be listed next Newsletter.

Adiantum aethiopicum:

This has to be one of the most popular and widely used ferns but it can easily be confused with some of the numerous cultivars of *Adiantum raddianum*. This latter fern has fewer scales and has notable stilt-like roots elevating it above the soil level. *Adiantum aethiopicum* is hardy and tolerant of a great range of climates and can spread quickly by way of underground rhizomes. It grows into large clumps and can be invasive if not confined to its garden situation with a log, rock barrier or the edge of a path. But this is not necessarily a negative trait, it provides opportunities to pot up the invasive piece of rhizome

and accompanying fronds - it forms an excellent potted or basket specimen.

- Form: Rhizome creeping and much branched, forms large clumps
- Size: 25 to 50 cm tall
- Soil Type: Moist, rocky sites
- Aspect: Semi-protected; resents total shade
- Watering: Likes plenty of moisture but not on its fronds.

Two other ferns considered valuable in garden design are:

Adiantum formosum:

A tall handsome fern with lovely verdant green fronds so evocative of rainforest and deep gullies. The name "formosum" means beautiful and this is particularly apt when viewed from above as a sward of dark green. It is a vigorous fern and forms large colonies spreading by means of deep, long creeping rhizomes. Up close an individual frond borne on a tall, stiff, black stipe, is just as attractive, and examined in silhouette it is easy to see why it has been used so extensively in dried floral arrangements.

- Form: Erect fronds, rhizome creeping and branched, forms large colonies
- Size: 60 to 110 cm tall
- Soil Type: Slightly acid, deep, alluvial loam
- Aspect: Shaded position
- Watering: Likes moisture but grows happily with infrequent watering if soil kept well composted

Adiantum hispidulum:

This is perhaps the easiest of the maidenhair ferns to grow and tolerates strong light and minimal watering when grown among rocks where it can get some protection for its root system. It is not invasive and requires only an occasional pruning of dead fronds to remain attractive. The young fronds are shades of pink or redder in more exposed positions.

- Form: Upright, rhizome short creeping
- Size: 25 to 45cm tall
- Soil Type: Light to heavy soils but needs to be well drained
- Aspect: Semi protected, good among rocks.
- Watering: Tolerates dry conditions if root system protected

Editor's Note: The use of ferns in the garden is a subject that would be of interest to nearly all our members and most will have some experience in the area. Could we please have some contributions about members' experiences (successes or failures) with ferns as garden plants, covering such items as bed design and preparation as well as types of ferns. It would be nice to publish some information that could be of interest to members of other Societies; the flow tends to be one-way from other newsletters to ours at present.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(continued from page 30)

Committee will be reviewing the method of judging, looking at perhaps a vote by all members or, alternatively, a panel of judges who will rotate the judging.

The main purpose of the monthly competition is, in my opinion, to encourage a good array of ferns at the meeting to provide interest and atmosphere to our meetings. Some ferns may not be up to show standard but nevertheless are still welcome additions to the display because they are unusual or just help illustrate the variety amongst ferns. The judging of the ferns is a useful secondary aspect and gives recognition to

persons with well-presented ferns and shows other members what can be done.

Book Sales: Stephen Ziguras, our Book Sales Officer for the last two years, has resigned because of pressure of his studies. I thank Stephen for his work and wish him well with his studies. I also welcome Ivan Traverso who has volunteered to take over Book Sales from Stephen. Ivan has good contacts in the book world and some interesting ideas for the future.

Barry White
Acting President

The following historical extracts were kindly provided by Mary and Reg Kenealy. Barry White compiled the explanatory notes on fern names following the extracts.

MARYSVILLE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VISITORS' BOOK OF KEPPEL'S AUSTRALIAN HOTEL, MARYSVILLE ENTRIES OF BOTANICAL SIGNIFICANCE

19 JANUARY, 1877

Arrived here in company of Rev'd Julian Tenison Wood and Mr A.R. Wallis and visited the Falls and Cumberland Creek. Found following ferns: *Lomaria patersonia*, *Lomaria fluviatilis*, *Lomaria lanceolata*, *Blechnum cartilagineum*, *Doodia caudata*, *Pelleae falcata*, *Grammitis australia*, *Hymenophylla tunbridgensis*, *Alsophila excelsius*, *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Todea africana*, *Asplenium flabellifolium*, *Pteris aquilina*, *Pteris incisa*, *Gleichenia flabellata* and *Gleichenia dicarpa* - also a species of *Trichomanes*. Part were observed at Falls and part on road to Cumberland Creek.

W.H. Archer

16 DECEMBER 1877

My first visit to Marysville. Country simply magnificent. The Falls on the Steavenson are worth journeying hundreds of miles to see - also Cumberland Creek and Mount Bismarck.

The flora and fauna of this district are most interesting. Amongst the ferns I may enumerate *Pteris incisa*, *P. tremula*, *Aquilina falcata* (*Pellaea*), *Gleichenia circinalis*, *dicarpa* and *flabellata* (the latter called by the good folk of the mountain region the Star Fern), *Alsophila australia*, *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Asplenium brownii* and *flabellifolium*, *Aspidium aculeatum* and *acuminatum*, *Lomaria discolor*, *fluviatilis*, *lanceolata* and *carpensis*, *Doodia caudata* and *aspera*, *Davallia dubia*, *Blechnum cartilagineum*, *Hymenophylla tunbridgensis*, *Trichomanes venosum*, *Polypodium australis*, *negosolum* and *scandens*.

Orchids mostly out of flower - specimens of *Caledonia carnea*, *Thelymitra ixiodes*. Five rare species of *Pterostylis* were however taken.

In mosses *Dawsonia superba* was most abundant.

In plants of the Orders: *Bedfordia saligna*, *Prostanthera walteri*; *Pomaderris* several species; *Stackhousia monogryma*; *Eurybia* several species.

Poa ramifera and numerous other plants were found in flower.....

[Bird and insect sightings were also listed at length]

....To naturalists I would say come in the latter part of November.....

C. French M.B.C.

16/12/77

[Curator of Melbourne Botanical Gardens after Baron Von Mueller]

Notes on the above fern names:

Lomaria = *Blechnum*. Blechnums with the much-reduced spore-bearing fronds were put into the *Lomaria* genus.

Lomaria lanceolata = *Blechnum chambersii*

Grammitis australia = *Grammitis billardieri*

Hymenophylla tunbridgensis = *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*

Alsophila excelsius = *Cyathea australis*

Todea africana = *Todea barbara*

Pteris aquilina = *Pteridium esculentum*

Pteris incisa = *Histiopteris incisa*

Gleichenia flabellata = *Sticherus flabellata*

Asplenium brownii perhaps = *Asplenium bulbiferum*

Aspidium aculeatum = *Polystichum proliferum*

Aspidium acuminatum = *Lastreopsis acuminata*

Lomaria discolor = *Blechnum nudum*
Lomaria carpensis = *Blechnum wattsii*
Davallia dubia = *Calochlaena dubia* (*Culcita dubia*)
Trichomanes venosum = *Polyphlebium venosum*
Polypodium australe = *Grammitis billardieri*
Polypodium scandens probably = *Microsorium diversifolium*
Polypodium negosolum = ???

COMPETITION RESULTS

The results for the Fern Competitions and the Special Effort draws for the March and April meetings were as follows. Congratulations to the various winners.

FERN COMPETITION:

March: (Category - A Favourite Fern)

First:	Dorothy Forte	<i>Arthropteris tenella</i> (on tree-fern)
Second:	Keith Hutchinson	<i>Drynaria rigidula</i> 'Whitei'
Third:	Dorothy Forte	<i>Adiantum raddianum</i> 'Fortei'
	Diana Mayne	<i>Polystichum proliferum</i>

April: (Category - *Davallia*)

First:	Chris Goudey	Crested <i>Davallia tyermanii</i> (prev. <i>Humata tyermanii</i>)
Second:	David Radford	<i>Davallia plumosa</i>
Third:	Anne Bryant	<i>Davallia fejeensis</i>

SPECIAL EFFORT:

March: Ivan Traverso (2), Margaret Radley (2), Lexie Hesketh, Bernadette Thomson.

April: Cheryl Shelton, Lyn Gresham, Margaret Radley, Simon Hardin, David White, Jean Boucher

FERNS SUITABLE FOR BEGINNERS

(continued)

INDOOR FERNS: (cont'd)

<i>Davallia mariesii</i>	Hare's Foot Fern	Coarse mix
" <i>pyxidata</i>	Cup Hare's Foot Fern	Coarse mix
<i>Goniophlebium subauriculatum</i>		Beautiful large
" " cv. <i>Knightiae</i>		basket ferns
<i>Nephrolepis cordifolia</i>	Fishbone Fern	Like well lit, slightly
" " cv. <i>Plumosa</i>	Plumed Fishbone Fern	dry spot
" <i>exaltata</i> cv. <i>Bostoniensis</i>	Boston Fern	Warm spot
" <i>exaltata</i>	Golden Boston Fern	Warm spot, ideal for
cv. <i>Bostoniensis Aurea</i>	(Chantilly Gold, Fandancer)	sun room
cv. <i>Fluffy Ruffles</i>	Ruffled Sword Fern	
cv. <i>Suzi Wong</i>		Avoid wetting very
cv. <i>Verona</i>	Verona Lace	fine foliage

The following article is taken, with thanks, from the *Bulletin of the South Florida Fern Society Inc.*, January, 1995, which acknowledges the original source as a *LALFS Journal* in 1975 (author unknown).

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOSTON FERN

The parent form of the Boston Fern is the Sword Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*), common in Florida and the tropics, which was first introduced into cultivation in 1793 from Jamaica. Eventually it became one of the common greenhouse ferns - not noted for variability.

But about 100 years ago, in 1894, a florist near Boston found among his sword ferns a new sort with softer, more graceful and more numerous leaves. This variety, which is believed to have arisen as a sport from the Sword Fern, came to be known as the Boston Fern. It grew rapidly in public favour, and at the end of a few years hundreds of thousands were being sold annually by florists throughout the United States. The plants were "thrifty", tolerant of ordinary conditions within doors, and easily cared for.

Then the Boston Fern started its mad career. Almost simultaneously there appeared in widely separated greenhouses, among the many thousands of normal young Boston Ferns, an even half dozen plants which differed strikingly in several ways, especially in having the pinnae dwarfed, ruffled or again divided in the form of miniature fronds.

The horticultural value of these sports was evident enough. They were at once multiplied, and from that time to the present there has been a constant succession of new and improved varieties. All, so far as is definitely known, have arisen as "bud-sports" - that is, from buds developing upon the numerous "runners" (stolons) given off by mature plants.

One of the most remarkable forms of all ('Trevillian') is a little plant whose fronds appear like tiny balls an inch or two thick, consisting of a mass of irregularly forking green strands of varying length and breadth. In this one direction it seems as if the Boston Fern could vary no further. Scientifically, no less than horticulturally, the Boston Fern is of extreme importance, serving as the basis of experimental studies in evolution, the causes underlying the appearance of new forms, their significance and the

possible control of their production. All in all, a remarkable performance for a single tropical fern.

A normal Sword Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*) bears fertile spores but the Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata* 'Bostoniensis') is sterile. Its various forms can only be multiplied by division or by stolons. Five lacy varieties (all sterile and derived from the Boston Fern as "bud-sports") are:

'Piersonii'	(once to twice pinnate)
'Barrowsii'	(twice pinnate)
'Whitmanii'	(thrice pinnate)
'Smithii'	(four times pinnate)
'Craigii'	(five times pinnate)

Nephrolepis exaltata is one of the commonest *Nephrolepis* species, and as the parent of the Boston Fern has produced a most prolific number of exceedingly popular basket ferns, with the following the most common of its cultivars:

Anna Foster	Norwoodii
Childsii	Ostrich Plume
Elegantissima	Piersoni
Dorothy T.	Rooseveltii
Fluffy Ruffles	Smithii
Gloria	Splendida
Hillii	Trevillian
M.P. Mills	Verona
Muscosa	Wanamaker

Nephrolepis cordifolia is another species commonly called Sword Fern and characterised by the bearing of tubers on the stolons. Some of the *Nephrolepis cordifolia* types are the variety Florida and the cultivars 'Tessellata' and 'Duffii'. The latter is a densely-crowned, dwarf, compact fern with downy scales at the base, the erect wiry stalks sometimes tasselled, and closely set with tiny rounded, toothed, leathery leaflets, upright to 12 inches long, and tender.

BUYERS' GUIDE TO NURSERIES

VICTORIA:

Andrew's Fern Nursery / Castle Creek Orchids - Retail. Phone (058) 26 7285
Goulburn Valley Highway, Arcadia, 3613 (20 km south of Shepparton).
Large range of ferns and orchids for beginners and collectors. Open daily 10am - 5pm except Christmas Day.

Austral Ferns - Wholesale Propagators. Phone (052) 82 3084.
Specialising in supplying retail nurseries with a wide range of hardy ferns; no tubes.

Coach Road Ferns - Wholesale. Phone (03) 756 6676. Monbulk 3793.
Retail each Saturday and Sunday at 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. Phone (057) 86 5481. Kinglake West, 3757.
On main road, opposite Kinglake West Primary School. Specialising in Stags, Elks and Bird's-nest Ferns.

Fern Glen - Wholesale and Retail. Phone (056) 29 2375.
D. & I. Forte, Garfield North, 3814. Visitors welcome.

R. & M. Fletcher's Fern Nursery - Retail. Phone (059) 64 4680.
62 Walker Road, Seville, 3139. (Look for sign on Warburton Highway, 300m east of Seville shopping centre).
Closed Tuesday, except on public holidays.

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

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

NEW SOUTH WALES:

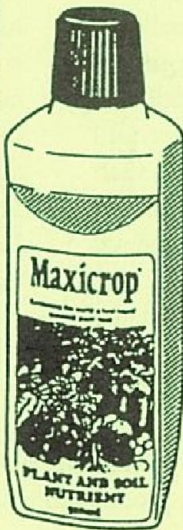
Jim & Beryl Geekie Fern Nursery - Retail. Phone (02) 484 2684.
6 Nelson Street, Thornleigh, 2120. By appointment.

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

Marley's Ferns - Wholesale.
Phone (02) 457 9168.
5 Seaview Street, Mt. Kuring-Gai, 2080.
All Fern Society members welcome. By appointment.

QUEENSLAND:

Moran's Highway Nursery -
Wholesale and Retail.
Phone (074) 42 1613.,
Bruce Highway, Woombye (1 km north
of Big Pineapple; turn right into
Kiel Mountain Road).
P.O. Box 47, Woombye, 4559.



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