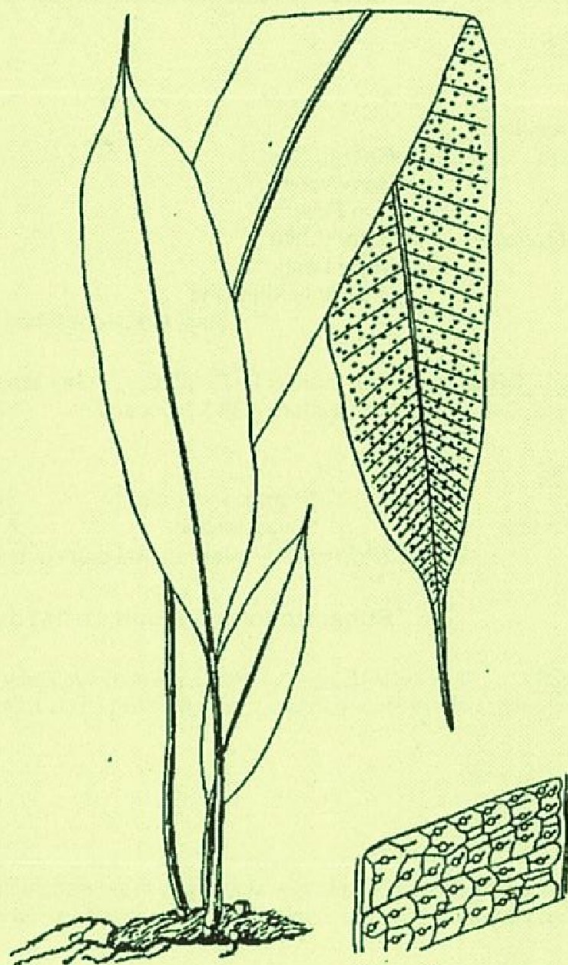


ABN 85 086 216 704

NEWSLETTER

CHICKEN + RICE + SOUP



Campyloneurum costatum

VOL. 28, NUMBER 6
**NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER 2006**

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.

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E-mail: barry_white1@msn.com.au
Web: http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/

Our Society's Objectives.

The objectives of the Society are:

- *to bring together persons interested in ferns and allied plants*
- *to promote the gathering and dissemination of information about ferns*
- *to stimulate public interest in ferns and*
- *to promote the conservation of ferns and their habitats.*

OFFICE BEARERS:

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Jack Barrett 9375 3670, Gay Stagoll 9844 1558,
Norma Hodges 9878 9584. Brenda Girdlestone 9390 7073 and Mirini Lang 9886 6109.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

*Single	\$15.00	*Pensioner/student	\$12.00	*Family	\$17.00
*Pensioner Family	\$14.00	*Organisation	\$17.00		
*Overseas	\$22.00 (Payment by international bank cheque in \$A please. Sent by Airmail.)				

***Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year.**

MEETING VENUES: The Kevin Heinze Garden Centre at 39 Wetherby Road, Doncaster (Melway 47; H1).
Other meetings at members' gardens or as advertised on the following page.

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

Timetable for evening general meetings:

7.30	Pre-meeting activities - sale of ferns. Spore, books, merchandise and special effort tickets. Also library loans and lots of conversation.
8.00	General meeting
8.15	Workshops and demonstrations.
9.15	Fern identification and pathology, special effort draw.
9.45	Supper and another good yarn.
10.00	Close.

CALENDER OF EVENTS 2006

NOVEMBER MEETING

Thursday the 16th, at 8.00pm at the Kevin Heinze Centre Wetherby Road, Doncaster.

Thursday the 16th November, 2006

Guest speaker: Bruce Fuhrer

Subject: Mosses and Lichens

Bruce is a Senior Technical Officer with the departments of Botany and Zoology at Monash University, Victoria. He is noted for his knowledge of natural history and photography. Bruce is the author of "A field companion to Australian Fungi."

If you have ever wondered about fungi or have questions then this is a night not to miss.

Competition category: Fern allies

DECEMBER MEETING

Sunday the 3rd, CHRISTMAS BREAK UP at the Kevin Heinze Centre Wetherby Rd, Doncaster.

This will be our last function for the year, starting at around 11.30am which will be a lunch supplied. You will need to bring with you a plate, cutlery, cup, and any drinks you require (tea and coffee will be supplied). Also bring a plate of afternoon tea which can be shared.

Members are welcome to bring non-member friends as guests on this occasion. However, due to the costs of catering, there will be a charge of \$10 for each adult non-member guest. And please make sure that you let **Norma Hodges on (9878 9584)** or **Gay Stagoll on (98441558)** know at least a week before the lunch that you intend to come, and advise them also if you intend to bring a guest or guests.

We are also running our blind auction (these can be any items you wish to donate) if possible wrap in paper (Christmas of course!). Half the money raised is donated to the Kevin Heinze Centre so bring along some money and grab a bargain???

We look forward to seeing you there.

PRESIDENTIAL PERORATION

Since the last Newsletter, Gay & I have travelled to Western Australia briefly to have a look at the marvellous flora of the southwest region. A very large proportion of the species found there is endemic exclusively to this region, which makes it particularly interesting. Many of the plants are quite different in appearance to those seen elsewhere in the world. We include ourselves among those who consider a great many of them very attractive. Not too many ferns to be found though (there are only a very few endemic species). The few treeferns to be found in the wild were escapes. It took a bit of imagination to see landscapes full of grass-trees as having "substitute" treeferns, but these are very attractive and interesting as understory plants nonetheless (and share with treeferns the characteristic of being very long-lived, and getting better and better with age).

We did get to see a marvellous collection of ferns, though, when we visited the property of John Banasiewicz, President of the WA Fern Society, in the south of Perth. We've included a note about this and some pics of his collection elsewhere in the Newsletter.

With the very early onset of summery conditions this year, tightened watering rules, and a generally heightened concern about the adequacy of water reserves in the face of apparent El Nino domination of our weather in the short term and stronger evidence that a "global warming" problem stretches ahead of us, the popularity of plants such as ferns for garden use might be expected to recede. (The welfare of ferns in the wild may well be threatened too, to the extent that in the future the areas which harbour them may shrink further because of adverse climate effects). We'll have to "keep the faith" in the face of any slippage in popularity. At least we don't have to admit that we're only involved with ferns to be in "fashion".

We enjoyed an informative talk about Pteris ferns by Barry White (he and Judy fresh back from a trip to Britain) at the September meeting. And our Melbourne Museum visit in October, courtesy of thoughtful and comprehensive planning by member Robin Wilson (a Senior Curator at the Museum) was rated very highly by all who attended. We can report that the Rainforest Gallery, with its many ferns, is in fine condition and attracting interest from most Museum visitors. Robin's colleague Luke Simkin (Manager Forest Gallery & Live Exhibits) gave us the history of the planning and establishment of the Forest Gallery, and explained its continuing evolution as experience lengthens with the management of this living exhibit. Robin helped us get better acquainted with the breadth of the work of the Museum, including visits to the live exhibits "backstage area" and the Collections area of the Marine Science Department, where he explained intricacies of how and why the various facets of marine environments are studied, and highlighted the high level of discovery of new marine species. Sincere thanks to Robin for going to such trouble to arrange our visit.

If you haven't seen a presentation by Bruce Fuhrer before (illustrated with stunning close-up photography) consider coming to the November meeting, where he will talk about mosses and lichens. Bruce is not only a most interesting speaker, but has authored and co-authored many important books on botanical subjects including native wildflowers and orchids, and fungi.

To those who won't make it along to our Christmas lunch - the final gathering for 2006 - we wish them a merry Christmas season, and all the best for the New Year.

Barry Staggall

FUTURE DATES AND MEETINGS

2007

January: there is no meeting

FEBRUARY

Thursday the 15th February, 2007, 8.00pm at the Kevin Heinze Centre
Eddie and Robyn Sabljak on Growing tree ferns.

FROM THE SHOW COMMITTEE

FERN SHOW 2007 which will be held on the 21st and 22nd of April, competition categories will be:-

- 1.ADIANTUM
- 2.ASPLENIUM
- 3.DACALLIACEAE (restricted)
- 4.FANCY FRONDS (crested or frilled fronds)
- 5.POLYPODIACEAE
- 6.FERN IN CONTAINER 150mm or less
- 7.ANY OTHER FERN (not covered by above categories)

Note: category 4 is our feature display. With the water restrictions coming into force this show will be a challenge for our society so we ask all members if you can select a couple of ferns now, and groom them for display if you are unsure what is required then please don't hesitate to contact one of the show committee members for advise.

For those members who attended this years show will know the a special display was set up by John Hodges at the entry into the hall, we are now asking for ideas of displays that can be set up in this area (John's corner).

Again if you have any suggestions then contact a committee member.

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PTERIS FERNS

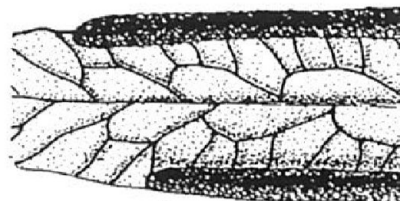
By Barry White

The name comes from the Greek Pteron meaning a wing or feather from the appearance of some ferns and was the general name applied to all ferns. Pteris ferns are often called brakes which along with bracken is an old world name for ferns

The genus *Pteris* belongs to the Pteridaceae family. The only other genus which is present in Australia and is a member of this family is *Acrostichum* (Mangrove Fern), a tropical swamp loving fern which grows in northern NSW and places further north.

Pteris characteristics:

- *Rhizomes are short creeping to upright
- *Rhizomes are scaly not hairy
- *Fronds are clustered at the apex of the rhizome
- *Veins are usually forked and free
- *Sori run along the margin of the segments
- *Sori are covered by a rolled leaf margin (false indusium)
- *Stipe and rachis have a single gutter-shaped vascular bundle
- *The stipe and rachis upper surface is deeply grooved; with continuous groove between primary and secondary rachis



Pteris comans showing marginal spore and a network of veins

There are about 250 to 300 species world wide. There are eight species native to Australia with a further three on Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island.

Victoria has four species: *Pteris tremula*, *comans*, *umbrosa* and *vittata*.

Pteris tremula (Tender Brake, Australian Brake)) Widespread in Victoria, occurs in most states of Australia and some Pacific islands. It is a hardy, commonly grown fern with pale green three times pinnate fronds up to 1.5 metres long. Veins are free and forked. Grows readily and quickly from spore.

Pteris comans (Netted Brake) Occurs widely in Australia and some Pacific Islands although not common. It is a similar fern to *Pteris tremula* but is darker green, has netted veins, broader more membranous fronds, and is less hardy.

Pteris vittata (Chinese Brake) This fern is rare in Victoria occurring in East Gippsland; however it is widely distributed in most parts of the world. It has a short creeping rhizome and pinnate fronds up to 100 cm long, with long tapering pinnae. It likes alkaline conditions and is often found growing on limestone walls. The fern has a special affinity for arsenic and is being investigated as a means of reducing arsenic contamination.



Pteris vittata

Pteris umbrosa (Jungle Brake) This fern is endemic to Australia and occurs in Eastern Victoria, NSW and Queensland. The fronds are mostly pinnate up to 1.5 metres long. The pinnae are broadly attached with the base running down the rachis except for the lowest pair of pinnae which are shortly stalked and divided. The form in Victoria has paler and more membranous fronds, and wider pinnae than that in Queensland. It is a hardy and attractive fern well suited for the garden. It is susceptible to *P. umbrosa* nematode attack which results in typical black banding in the pinnae.



Pteris umbrosa

Continued page 86

Pteris ensiformis (Slender Brake) This small fern occurs in North Queensland and S.E. Asia. It has narrow bipinnate to tripinnate fronds with a rounded apex to the pinnules. The fertile fronds are slimmer. There are two variegated forms 'Victoriae' which has a white band along the midline, and 'Evergeminensis' with the white band covering most of the pinnule.

Other Australian species are *Pteris tripartita*, *pacifica*, and *orientalis*. These ferns are generally found in North East Queensland and Pacific Islands and are more difficult to grow in Victoria.

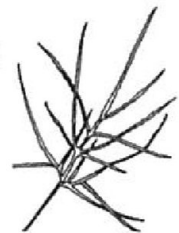
Pteris microptera, endemic to Lord Howe Island and *Pteris zalbruckneriana*, endemic to Norfolk Island are ferns with netted veins closely related to *Pteris comans*. *Pteris kingiana* is endemic to Norfolk Island and is very similar to *P. tremula* which is present on both Islands.



Pteris Macilenta

Pteris macilenta is an endemic New Zealand fern which often sold by nurseries. It is an attractive medium sized fern 3 to 4 times pinnate with deeply toothed pinnae and is hardy in cultivation. *P. tremula*, *comans* and the endemic *P. saxatile* also occur in New Zealand.

Pteris multifida (*serrulata*) (Spider Brake) is a small fern which occurs in China and Japan. It has 3 to 7 pairs of pinnae, with long narrow pointed pinnae, and the lower segments may have one or two pairs of large pinnae. The rachis is winged for its full length. There are several varieties cv *Corymbifera* is heavily crested, cv *Cristata* has broad expanded tips to the pinnae.



Pteris multifida

Pteris dentata (Toothed Brake) is a medium to large fern and comes from Southern Africa. The margins of the pinnae are serrated. The light green fronds tend to be clustered and to curl inwards. It is an attractive easily grown fern.

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A 'rare and endangered' lindsaea fern

Member Mary Frost brought to our Committee's attention that *Lindsaea trichomanoides* has been placed on the rare and endangered list. It is supposed to be in the Dandenong Ranges and on Wilson's Promontory. It will assist to create a better picture of its status and range in the wild if any sightings by FSV members could be reported. Please assist if you can.

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Ferns in Western Australia (& a visit to see a fine collection)

BARRY & GAY STAGOLL

We visited the southwest of Western Australia in September to have a look at the wildflowers of that region, and learn more about them. We did find ferns also in the wild, but only a very few species, since there are not many endemic ones to be found.

But we were fortunate to be able to make a brief visit to the home of John Banasiewicz, President of the WA Fern Society, at Jandakot in the south of Perth, on a large allotment where he's built a fine garden over around 20 years, still retaining surrounding areas of native vegetation, which include lots of attractive native endemic species. Unfortunately, we missed the opportunity of meeting John face-to-face, as on the day we went by on our way back into Perth he was away at work. However, he was kind enough to invite us to have a look around his garden, and a look at his most impressive fern collection, in his absence. We were most grateful for this courtesy, and came away with photos (some of which we've selected to share with readers here - with John's kind permission - although none really do the plants or the setting real justice, particularly in black and white).

The large fern house (around 40 feet by 60 feet) is truly impressive, being stocked almost to overflowing with a huge variety of ferns, including lots of large plants of desirable species, and all in magnificent condition. John told us that he wasn't long back from a journey of some weeks overseas, but there was no hint of any evidence of this in the appearance of the fern house or the surrounding garden. Wish we could keep our plants in such good order!



Chatting with John on the phone, we mentioned the five fern species we had encountered on our travels into the Darling & Stirling Ranges, and through much of the southwest region along the length of Albany Highway and many parts to the west (excepting the portion south of Cape Naturaliste down to Cape Leeuwin).

Above: Ferns and palms in John's Fern House,
with the fabulously symmetrical *Blechnum gibbum*
starring in the centre spotlight

Left: Blechnums of all sizes in John's collection.



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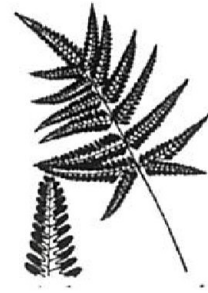
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Pteris fauriei comes from China, Taiwan, Japan and there are two varieties *fauriei* and *minor* with different chromosome numbers. It is an easily grown fern and is often sold through nurseries.



Pteris argyrea (Silver Brake) is a beautiful medium to large fern from India. It has a broad white band down the centre of each pinna. Readily available, it may need some protection in the winter.

Pteris argyrea

Pteris quadriaurita is a widely distributed pan-tropical species. It has large twice divided fronds and there are small spines along the midvein. It does benefit from some protection in the winter.

Pteris biaurita also occurs widely in the tropics. It has broader paler pinnae than *P. quadriaurita* and lacks the spines along the veins. Not all veins are free, at the base of the pinnae some veins do join together. This fern also appreciates protection in winter.

Pteris aspericaulis often called *P. tricolor* is a native of India. It is a medium sized fern requiring protection in winter. It has attractive red colouration of the new growth, and with the colouration persisting in the veins and stipes. It also has small red spines along the midvein. There is the variety *tricolor* which is a true tri-colored fern where the pinnules are white in their basal half.

Pteris hendersonii This may not be a proper name. It is a hardy fern similar to *P. tremula* and it has a distinctive smell.

Pteris wallichiana is a large to very large fern from India and S.E. Asia down to PNG. It is a tall handsome fern which requires only moderate protection in winter.



Pteris semipinnata occurs in Asia, China and Japan. It is a distinctive fern with the pinnae, as the name indicates, divided on one side only. It is a medium sized fern requiring moderate protection in winter.

Pteris semipinnata

Pteris sp. (Nepal). This is similar fern to *P. semipinnata* except that the pinnae are divided on both sides.

Pteris cretica (Cretan Brake, Ribbon Brake) occurs widely throughout the world. It is a fern of medium size which is commonly grown and has a similar appearance to *P. umbrosa*. The fronds are pinnate except at the base where the pinnae are divided into three parts. The top pairs of pinnae are broadly attached running down on the rachis. The lower pinnae are stalked. (cf with *P. umbrosa*) The fertile pinnae are narrower than the sterile ones.

There are many cultivars of *P. cretica*

'Albo-lineata' -- broad white central band, easy to grow

'Alexandrae' -- white variegation, incised and curled tips

'Childsii' -- broad pinnae, incised margins, small crested tips. It is sterile and probably a hybrid.

'Distinction' -- deeply lobed pinnae, branched tips, smaller than the species

continued page 89

Continued from page 88

'Gautheri'-- broad pinnae

'Major'--, broad, pinnae deeply incised and united at the base

'Mayii'--like 'Albo-lineata' only with crested tips

'Maxii'--similar to 'Albo-lineata' only more dwarf with narrower pinnae

'Ouvardii'--narrow linear pinnae

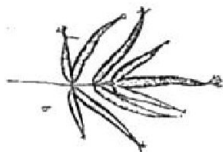
'Parkeri'--Parker's Table Fern, broad, rough fronds, not curled

'Rivertoniana'--Lacy Table Fern, deep, irregular lobed pinnae in 4-5 pairs

'Roweii'--Crested Brake, a frilled 'Parkeri'

'Wimsettii'--Skeleton Table Fern, deep and irregularly lobed pinnae, tips often crested, compact

'Wilsonii'--Fan Table Fern, variously lobed or crested, terminally crested appearing fan-like.



Mayii



Rivertoniana



Roweri



Childsii

continued page 89

Continued from page 87

These were *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* (Rock Fern - widely found, particularly on exposed granite outcrops), *Asplenium aethiopicum* and *Adiantum aethiopicum* (mostly near rivers and creeks in moist forest areas, such as the area around and south of Nannup and Bridgetown), *Lindsaea linearis* (Screw Fern - very widely found where native flora is pretty extensive, such as the wildflower reserves and national parks we visited, usually in ground which appeared to hold a fair amount of moisture from winter and spring rains).

We'd also noticed a few treeferns in a part of the Pemberton National Park, and we didn't really have to think hard to question whether they should have been



there (couldn't get close enough to have a good look). John told us that *Cyathea cooperi* is a known escape in the region (it certainly gets around).

John responded with interest to a suggestion that he, and other Fern Society of Western Australia members, might like to consider visiting the east sometime to look at ferns in the wild, and indicated that they would be grateful for any assistance our Society could provide in this connection.

Above : *Aspleniums* with simple (undivided) fronds, including the variant of *A. australasicum* known as 'Lasagne fern' (the largest specimen in the photo).

Melbourne Water Restrictions

You can water your garden.

A reminder to Melbourne residents that we are now in stage 2 water restrictions, they are:-

Manual watering systems used between 6am and 8am, and between 8pm and 10pm.

Manual watering system is a system that you turn on and off by hand.

Automatic watering systems can only be used between midnight and 4am on alternative days.

Automatic watering system is a system that is set to turn on and off automatically.

Hose fitted with a trigger nozzle, bucket or watering can can be used at any time.

A device that attaches to the end of the hose with either a trigger or a switch mechanism that allows you to instantly start or stop the water flow at the nozzle.

Lawns are banned from being watered at anytime.

Alternate days means that your house number (even or odd) allows you to water on corresponding days of the month being odd or even date.

The months that have 31 days are available to all houses to water following the above restrictions.

Water saving tips this is a great time if you have not mulched already to do so, this will enable your garden and ferns to survive the coming hot months.

If you have any water saving tips please let me know and they can be passed on to our members.

Editors tip this year I have used sugar cane mulch on my pots and hanging baskets, by using the smaller pieces I have been able to mulch even the smallest pots.

Why sugar cane mulch? I have found that this mulch is cheap enough to use on large area and does not produce weeds at the end of the season as some other products that I've use previously.

September winners

Competition winners

- 1st **Pteris tricolour "aspericaulis"**
Barry White
- 2nd **Pteris sp.nepal**
Barry White
- 3rd **Pteris dentatta toothed**
Barry White

Raffle winners

Caroline Simpson
Keith Hutchison
Ken Hall
Mauvis Potter x3
Mirini Lang

LEATHERLEAF FERN DISEASE

Reprinted from unknown source

The Leather leaf fern which is quite popular as a commercial product is now under a disease watch.

Rumohra adiantiform is the Leather leaf fern, is quite frequently used as an accessory in floral arrangements. It is widely cultivated for commercial purposes in Central Florida and throughout the Caribbean.

As of September 1995, an all out watch had identified a curious deformity appearing on the new fronds of *R. adiantiformis*. Current findings reveal that a species of the fungus *Colletotrichum* was found in many Florida ferneries causing a severe anthracnose disease.

The disease was first noticed in the summer of 1993, by 1994, the disease began to attract serious attention. However, by June 1995, 11 % of the fern acreage in Central Florida had been afflicted.

It is believed that the pathogen is spread easily and is difficult to control once it is established. The pathogen has also been tentatively identified as *colletotrichum gloeosporioides* or a close relative. A similar, if not identical anthracnose disease of Leather leaf fern has been reported by plant scientists and growers from Costa Rica and other areas of Central America, and is suspected that it may be in the Caribbean.

It is sometimes difficult to recognize this anthracnose. Usually, there seems to be a necrosis (death) on portions of the unfurling frond. As the frond unfurls and expands, it appears severely burned and can not grow normally.

Although new fronds are affected, mature foliage does not seem to be susceptible.

Because the pathogen may exist in mature fern foliage, early detection may be overlooked. However, by the time new fronds unfurl, the disease is already established and possibly affecting the area.

Scientists have noticed that symptoms of anthracnose can be easily confused with injuries caused by fertilizer or other chemicals.

The anthracnose development requires hot, humid, rainy weather to flourish. As *Colletotrichum* spores (conidia) are released, they are transported by water (a splash) or by wind. The conidia are also transported by hands, tools, clothing, animals, insects, or by moving infected ferns throughout a fernery.

After the conidia is in contact with young *R. adiantiformis* tissue, germination is possible if mois-

ture is available.

Scientists have been trying to determine an effective control strategy, but before that is possible, understanding the biology of the disease is necessary. However, preliminary findings indicate that preventing movement of the pathogen into uninfected ferneries and isolating infected ferns will help to contain the disease. The Florida Department of Agriculture recommends decontamination of personnel, equipment and vehicles when travelling from one fernery to another. Ammonium based disinfectants are recommended. They also recommend that infected fronds, clippings, cuttings, or debris should be disposed of far from the fernery location, or burned to destroy fungal inoculum and prevent the spread of the disease.

As we find out more about this new problem affecting the Leather leaf fern, we will keep you posted.

(This article was compiled from data gathered from articles received from Leslie Wilber at the Bureau of Plant and Apiary Inspection, Plant Inspection Section, Division of Plant Industry and Robert H. Stamps, Ph.D., The University of Florida, Professor Of Environmental Horticulture, Central Florida Research and Education Center) - RNW

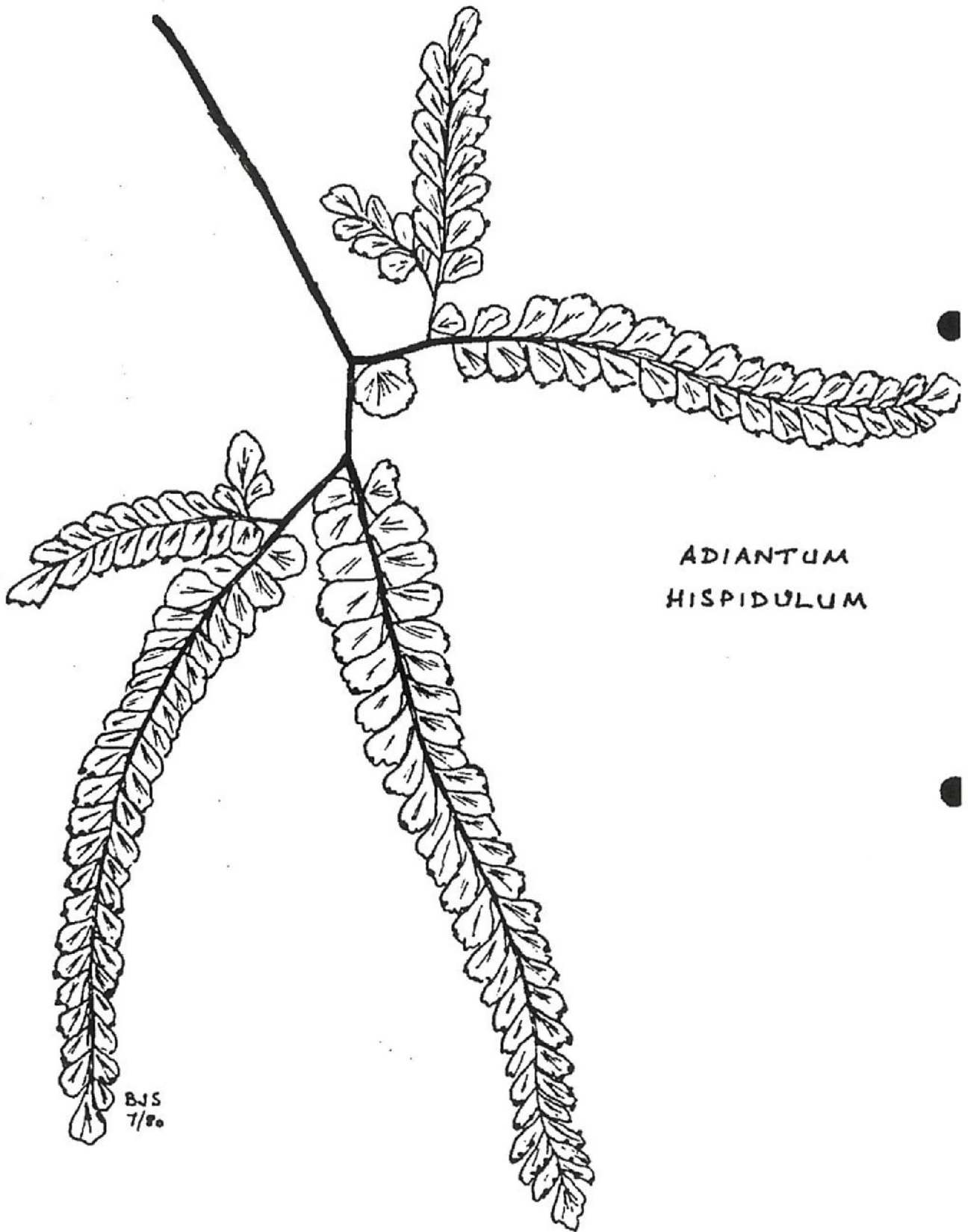
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ADIANTUM
HISPIDULUM

BJS
7/80

Continued on page 93

ADIANTUM HISPIDULUM SWARTZ

By Barry Stagoll

The Rough Maidenhair Fern is almost cosmopolitan in its distribution. It ranges from South Africa through India, Malaya and Indonesia to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, and has also become naturalised in the south eastern United States of America.

In Australia, it occurs in the three eastern states as well as Central Australia. *Adiantum hispidulum* is a very hardy and extremely variable fern throughout its range. Some forms are tall and straggly in appearance. Where as others often have compact fronds with large overlapping pinnae; one such form has been named *Adiantum tenue*.

The species *Adiantum whitei* which occurs throughout Queensland is thought to be a hybrid between *Adiantum hispidulum* and *A. formosum*.

Adiantum hispidulum also displays quite a considerable variation in the colour of new frond growth, ranging from an attractive red through various shades of bronze to a pale green.

This fern is often sold in the trade as *Adiantum pubescens* and is easy to cultivate. It will tolerate more exposure than most other species of Maiden Hair and makes an attractive specimen in any fernery.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

The President and committee Members of the Fern Society of Victoria would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their support throughout 2004. We look forward to serving the members with a bigger and brighter 2007.

We wish all our members and their families a happy and prosperous Christmas and New Year, we look forward to seeing many of you throughout the year.



NEWSLETTER

If undeliverable return to:
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