

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 32, Number 1  
January/February 2010





# Fern Society of Victoria Inc.

ABN 85 086 216 704

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## Objectives of the Fern Society of Victoria

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

To promote the conservation of ferns and their habitats

## Office bearers

<b>President</b>	Barry Stagoll	9844 1558	mirra@iimetro.com.au
<b>Vice President</b>	Don Fuller	9740 2724	
<b>Secretary</b>	Barry White	9306 5570	barry_white1@msn.com.au
<b>Treasurer</b>	Don Fuller	9306 5570	
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<b>Librarian</b>	Mirini Lang	9886 6109	
<b>Editor</b>	Robin Wilson	9597 0742	rwilson@museum.vic.gov.au
<b>Committee members</b>	Mirini Lang 9886 6109, Gay Stagoll 9844 1558, Brenda Girdlestone 9390 7073, Warren Simpson 0419 594 524,		

## Subscriptions

<b>Single</b>	\$17.00
<b>Pensioner/student</b>	\$14.00
<b>Family</b>	\$19.00
<b>Pensioner family</b>	\$16.00
<b>Overseas</b>	\$25.00 (overseas subscription

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 endorsement.

payments by international bank cheque in \$Aus, by airmail please)

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

## Meeting venues

The Kevin Heinze Garden Centre, 39 Wetherby Road, Doncaster [Melway 47 H1]

Other meetings as advertised in this Newsletter

## 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** Workshops and demonstrations

**10:00** Close



# Next Meeting

Thursday 18 February 2010

Keith Hutchinson

Potting Mixes & Fertilisers

The perfect opportunity not only to benefit from Keith's extensive experience of growing media and fertilisers, but to take part in and learn from the group discussion on this subject.

Fern competition: Davallias



*Davallia pyxidata* frond (photo: Robin Wilson)

See page 14 for a calendar of meetings for 2010

Cover image: Fern gully with *Cyathea australis* and *Dicksonia antarctica*, Otways National Park, Victoria (photo: Robin Wilson)

Fern Society of Victoria Newsletter Volume 32 number 1, page 3

## President's Note

I hope members had an enjoyable time over Christmas and New Year. I understand that the Society's annual Christmas Lunch, held at the Kevin Heinze Centre on the first Sunday in December, went very well as usual. Gay & I excused ourselves on this occasion as I had to have a hip replacement done some days earlier, so I was supposed to stay pretty much out of action and Gay was making sure that was the case!

Sadly I have to report the passing of two more long-term members in the latter part of 2009: Mavis Potter, and Margaret Radley. Both had been regular attendees at FSV gatherings and events over most of the Society's history, and enthusiastic fern collectors/growers. Margaret performed "door duty" at meetings, and also at our Shows, for many years - right up to the later months of 2009. And amongst the things we appreciated Mavis doing for the Society was her generous donation each year of a home-baked decorated Christmas Cake for the raffle at our Christmas lunches (with the proceeds going to the KHC).

At this juncture I should record the Society's gratitude to Mirini Lang, who was quick to offer to provide the Cake for this year's raffle. Thanks also for the other members of the volunteer helper crew for the lunch, capably led as always by Norma Hodges with John Hodges in charge of "logistics" at the KHC.

Many members will remember Bill Taylor, a former President and now a Life Member of FSV. I learned some days ago that unfortunately Bill suffered a serious stroke and is now in care in a rehabilitation facility. We wish him a fulsome recovery.

We look forward to seeing members at the first of our 2010 activities in February, and hope that in the meantime they all make it through the

summer conditions with their ferns in a healthy state. Won't it be an improvement when, in a couple of years (if we're lucky - going by the to'ing and fro'ing to get the desalination project started) we might all be able to have a bit more flexibility in watering our plants. Assuming, of course, that we're prepared to pay several times the present price?

In September 2010 we plan to organise an excursion (probably to Badger Weir Park near Healesville) to study ferns in a natural location. Can I remind members that such activities provide ideal opportunities for inviting non-members to attend, to share the experience and learn about ferns. The benefits to the Society, of course, are all about extra exposure and respect for ferns. We will be arranging publicity via various avenues, including for instance via the Royal Horticultural Society and direct approaches to selected horticultural and environmental groups. But I mention the intention to arrange this excursion now for a special reason. That is to encourage all members to put their minds to selecting - from their own circle of friends, acquaintances and family - individuals who may be interested in joining an excursion. Then (when the time comes) if members would please extend personal invitations to these persons, this would be a valuable addition to the publicity efforts. As usual, there will be no charge for joining our excursions.

With this time of year coinciding with the longest interval each year between activities, I would like to reiterate the points I made last issue on the necessity for us to supplement our Committee numbers. If you could be interested in nominating for one of the present casual vacancies, or in learning more about such things as how often Committee meets and how you might be able to play a part as one of its members, please contact me or another Committee member for a discussion.

*Barry Stagoll*



## Editor's Note

Sharp eyes will have noticed that the format of the Newsletter has changed slightly (again). I am not fiddling with formats for the fun of it, but am endeavouring to overcome some problems that caused me strife and late nights last year trying to work out why the drafts of the Newsletter often did not turn out correctly first time. Or sometimes not even on the twenty-first time. Hopefully now that I am using a proper desktop publishing program then production should go more swiftly in future and I might actually have time to do something in the garden. Such as having a go at division into new plants of a very old *Davallia* specimen (not sure of the species) in a hanging basket that has become moribund.

At a recent meeting a member, unfortunately I forget who, asked me to provide captions for the

images I use on the cover. I admit that I thought about it last year but didn't get around to acting – so thanks for prompting me. Starting with this issue details of the cover image will be provided, at the foot of the third page. Which is a good opportunity to ask anyone who has a striking fern image, preferably with lots of contrast, to post or email the image to me. I would like to have a larger selection of images available for future covers, and for that matter throughout the Newsletter. Colour images if possible please, and I would only ask that you make sure that you own the image, or that you have permission from the photographer to use the image in the Newsletter. And please provide details for the caption: scientific and/or common name, location, and photographer. I look forward to publishing your photographs in future issues.

*Robin Wilson*

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## Austral Ferns

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## Annual subscriptions overdue

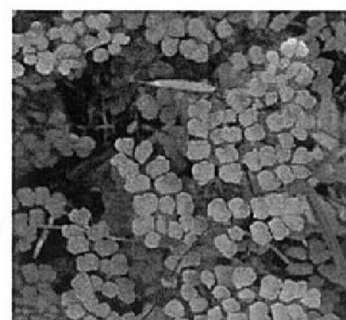
Please check the mailing label of your Newsletter: if your address label had a big blue dot then your subscriptions is overdue. Please consult the inside cover for the correct subscription amount and post a cheque to the Treasurer straight away.





# *Adiantum atroviride*

Barry White

*Adiantum atroviride* is very similar to *Adiantum aethiopicum* but was separated off as a separate species in 1998 by Peter Bostock. *Adiantum atroviride* has a more northern distribution in contrast with the more southern distribution of *A. aethiopicum*. A further variation of *Adiantum atroviride* occurs in Cape York and the Northern Territory. It has been known as *A. aethiopicum* var. *nodosum* and has a tufted appearance with a complete lack of stolons. On Lord Howe Island what has been described as *A. aethiopicum* s *A. atroviride*.



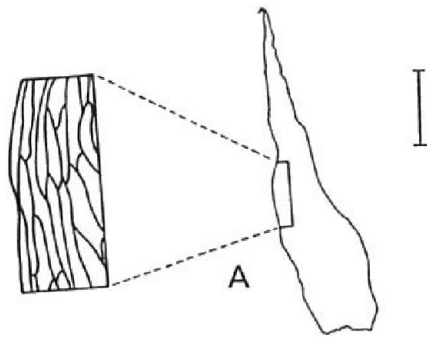
*Adiantum atroviride*  
(photo: Barry White)

Feature	<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	<i>Adiantum atroviride</i>	<i>Adiantum atroviride</i> var. <i>nodosum</i>
General appearance	Mid-green pinnae	Dark green pinnae	Tufted
Rhizome	Creeping	~Erect or short creeping	Very short creeping
Stipe	Gloss glabrous; reddish brown	Blackish, with <u>glandular hairs</u> and pale yellow deposit on young fronds	
Rhizome scales	Thin, yellow, translucent, with <u>entire</u> margins and often spirally curled	Dark brown, semi opaque with <u>toothed</u> edges, may be contorted but not spirally curved	Dark brown or yellow
Stolons	Present	Fewer	Lacking
Margins of sterile lobes	~dentate	denticulate	
Pinnules	Round to flabellate; shallow sinuses	Flabellate, rarely round: deep sinuses	As for <i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>
			
Junction of pinnule stalk and rachis	No 'nodosities'	Small whitish 'nodosities'	

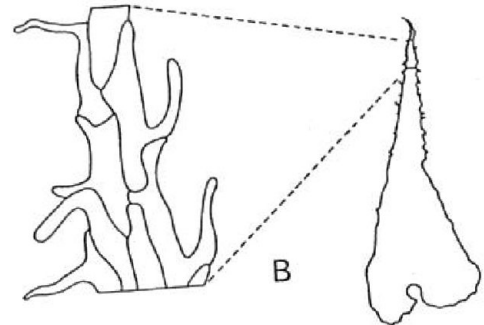


## *Adiantum atroviride* (continued from previous page)

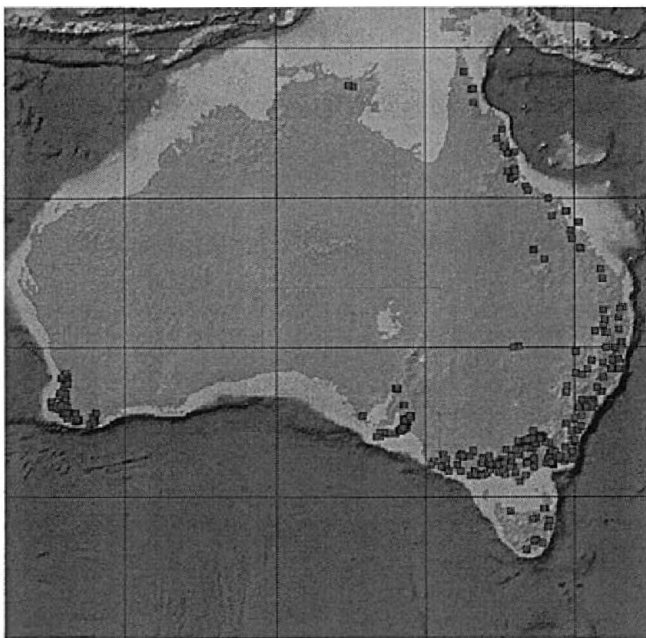
*Adiantum atroviride* and *Adiantum aethiopicum* can also be separated by the form of the rhizome scales, as illustrated by the following images adapted by Barry White from *Flora of Australia* volume 48.



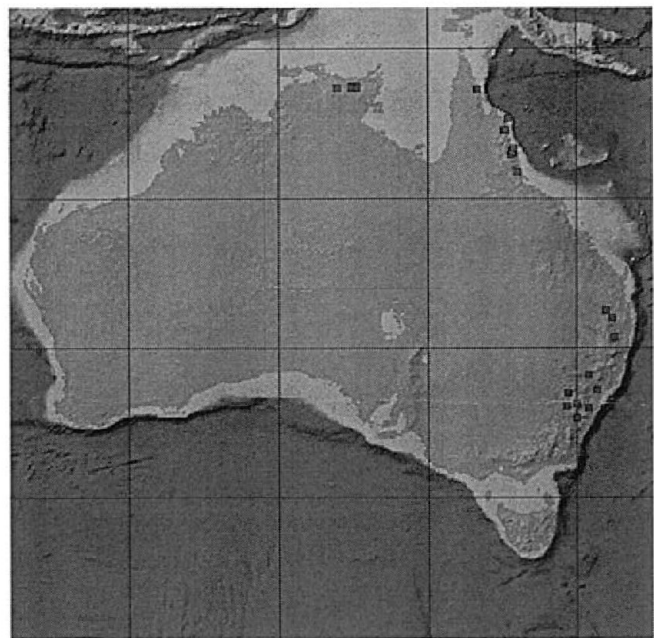
*Adiantum aethiopicum* rhizome scale with enlarged margin



*Adiantum atroviride* rhizome scale with enlarged margin



Distribution in Australia of *Adiantum aethiopicum* (generated from herbarium records via the Tasmanian node of the Australian Virtual Herbarium at <http://avhtas.tmag.tas.gov.au/> - see article on page 12 for further details)



Distribution in Australia of *Adiantum atroviride* (generated from herbarium records via the Tasmanian node of the Australian Virtual Herbarium at <http://avhtas.tmag.tas.gov.au/> - see article on page 12 for further details)



## Images from excursion to Colin Cleak's home

The photographs on this page, all by Barry White, were taken during the FSV excursion to Colin's home in September 2009.



Colin Cleak's fernery, September 2009. Photo: Barry White.



*Microsorium scandens* at Colin Cleak's fernery, September 2009. Photo: Barry White.



Colin Cleak's *Cymbidium* house, September 2009. Photo: Barry White.

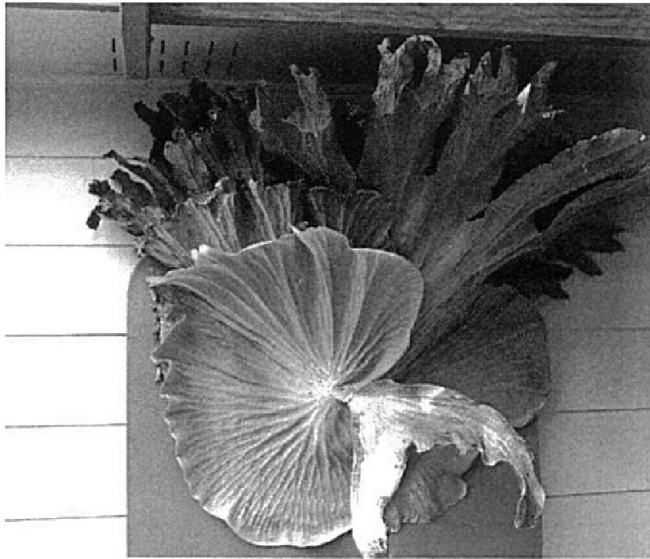


*Asplenium bulbiferum* at Colin Cleak's fernery, September 2009. Photo: Barry White.



## Images from excursion to Colin Cleak's home

(continued from previous page) ... more photos by Barry White taken during the FSV excursion to Colin's home in September 2009.



Elk at Colin Cleak's fernery, September 2009.  
Photo: Barry White.



Some of Colin Cleak's Cymbidiums, September 2009. Photo: Barry White.

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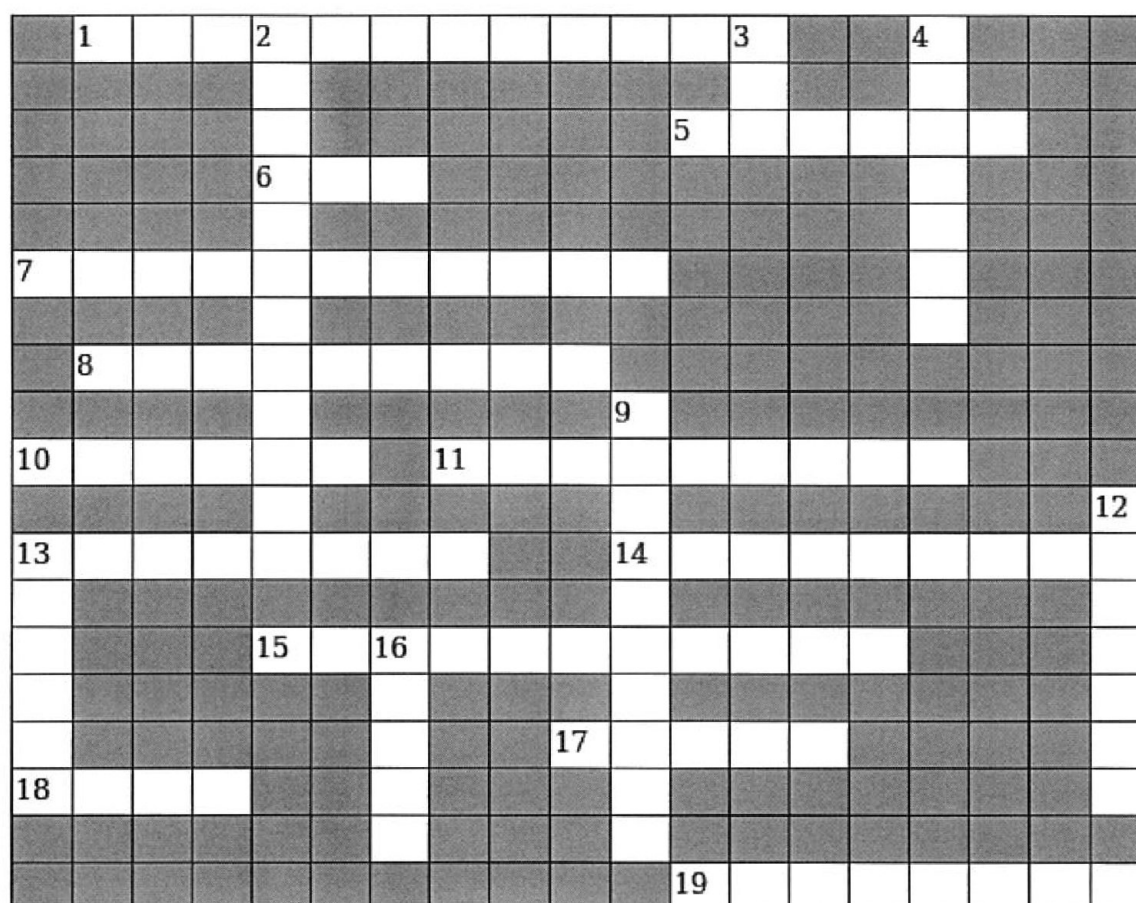
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## A ferny crossword



### ACROSS

1. Scientific name for the group comprising all true ferns (12)
5. Elongated stem (6)
6. Mammal that has given it's name to a group of ferns (3)
7. Structure in fern life cycle alternating with sporophyte (11)
8. Where botanists collect and study plants (9)
10. Common name of fern eaten by Aboriginal Australians (6)
11. Structure that protects sori in some ferns of arid areas (9)
13. Fern genus literally meaning "unwetterable" (8)
14. Growing on other plants (9)
15. Fern genus name referring to kidney-shape (11)
17. Name given to the stalk of a fern frond (5)
18. Tip (4)
19. Swedish botanist who devised the binomial naming system (8)

### DOWN

2. First botanist to write about Australian ferns (6,5)
3. Type of insect living in association with potato fern (3)
4. Fiddlehead (7)
9. Species name of most recently described Australian *Sticherus* (10)
12. The study of interactions between organisms and their environment (7)
13. A floating fern (6)
16. Part of a divided leaf (4)

(See next Newsletter for the solution)



# Australia's Virtual Herbarium

Robin Wilson

The article by Barry White on *Adiantum atroviride* (pp. 6-7 of this Newsletter) included two distribution maps provided by Barry from the Flora of Australia Volume 48. However, I chose to use instead two maps that I generated myself. My main reason for doing that was that it gave me an excuse to write this article about the web site I used to generate the maps, a web site called Australia's Virtual Herbarium (AVH). Many readers probably know of this already, but some may not. Nearly anyone can get Internet access these days, if not in their own home, then via a local library or similar, so this may be of some interest. Anyone with Internet access can generate

their own distribution maps of any Australian plant that they may be interested in.

But first a little background. Australia's main storehouse of knowledge about where plants can be found in the natural environment is to be found in the collections and databases of the State museums. Each State, and the Northern Territory, has its own herbarium. The Federal Government also supports the Australian National Herbarium in Canberra. These collections are studied by botanists who research the identity and classification of the flora of Australia. Since plants vary so much across their range, and (continued next page)



## AVH nodes

- [Adelaide, SA](#)
- [Brisbane, Qld](#)  
(under construction)
- [Canberra, ACT](#)
- [Darwin, NT](#)
- [Hobart, Tas](#)
- [Melbourne, Vic](#)
- [Perth, WA](#)
- [Sydney, NSW](#)

## About the AVH Project

- [About the AVH project](#)
- [Promotional flyer \(PDF\)](#)
- [Participants](#)
- [Priority taxa](#)
- [Copyright and disclaimer notice](#)

## ABRS - Flora

- [ABRS Flora of Australia Online](#)

## Plant Checklists

- [Australian Plant Census](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Western Australia](#)

## Assistance

- [AVH Help](#)
- [AVH Webmaster](#)

## Technical

- [HISCOM](#)
- [HISPID](#)
- [SourceForge](#)

## Progress

- [Activity report](#)

Screenshot: main page, Australia's Virtual Herbarium <http://www.anbg.gov.au/avh.html>



## Australia's Virtual Herbarium (continued)


since it is not always clear where to draw the line between species, botanists collect herbarium specimens from many localities, and have been doing so since the start of European exploration of Australia. The combined collections of Australia's herbaria now amount to over 6 million records.

Not so long ago, the best catalogues of the content of these collections were ancient leather-bound ledgers and a multitude of drawers of index cards. But the advent of computers, and then the Internet, mean that the managers of herbaria have been able to convert their collection data into computer databases that can be combined and searched – this is the AVH. Botanists regularly consult the AVH but there is also a public version which can be found at

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/avh.html>. (The main difference between the public version and the


“restricted access” version is that precise information about some rare plants such as orchids is omitted from the public version. The botanists don't want to make it easy for unscrupulous collectors to illegally remove rare species from their natural populations.)

Strictly speaking the AVH is actually comprised of 8 separate nodes or access points, each of which is available through a different herbarium. Each is supposed to “mirror” the same data, so it should not matter which node is used. The design is robust because if one or other node is not accessible for technical reasons then it is simple to search via another node instead. For example, when I wanted to illustrate Barry's *Adiantum* article, the Melbourne Herbarium node was down, so I used the one in Hobart instead. The first of two “screenshots” accompanying this article lists all the nodes, and gives some idea of the other resources that are available online, (continued next page)



### Map Search Interface

Tasmanian Herbarium (HO) public version



Genus	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Species	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Search the Following Herbaria

- ☒ Canberra
- ☒ New South Wales
- ☒ Northern Territory
- ☒ Queensland
- ☒ South Australia
- ☒ Tasmania
- ☒ Victoria
- ☒ Western Australia

Turn On the Following Overlays

- ☒ Terrain
- ☐ Temperature (Av. Max Annual)
- ☐ Rainfall (Annual)
- ☒ States
- ☐ Ibra regions
- ☒ Lat/Long Grid

Display Options

- ☒ Show By Herbaria
- ☐ Show By Species
- ☐ Show By Precision
- ☐ Do Not Separate

☒ Use Cached Data as much as Possible ( = faster searches )

Screenshot: Australia's Virtual Herbarium search page (Tasmanian Herbarium node)  
<http://avhtas.tmag.tas.gov.au/cgi-bin/avh-2-1-1/avh.cgi>



## Australia's Virtual Herbarium (continued)

including plant checklists, background on the project and participants, and some technical information about the database side of things for those so inclined.

The second "screenshot" shows a typical search page with genus and species fields to enter scientific names of the plant(s) to be searched.

Click the "submit query" button and your computer screen will then display a map just like the two that I copied into page 7 of Barry White's article. Other information can also be selected.

The search can be restricted to individual herbaria (botanists use this option to discover which herbarium has the most suitable collection to solve a particular taxonomic problem).

Various map overlays can be used, for example rainfall (if you select this option you will discover what we already know: that most ferns occur in wet parts of the country). Future versions of the AVH will allow different kinds of searches and overlays, and are bound to be useful in discovering less obvious correlations. And in the not-too-distant future, botanical databases will be combined with zoological databases (generated in the same way by the State natural history museums) in a project called the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA). When it is working, the ALA will allow such things as distributions of animals and plants to be overlaid to see if there is any correlation. For example this may reveal overlapping distributions with interesting explanations: communities of species with particular ecological requirements, for example, or even closer associations like an insect that only pollinates a single species of plant.

The Atlas of Living Australia will be used by all sorts of people, but Australia's Virtual Herbarium can be used right now, to discover where different plant species occur. Or just to plan your next fern outing. Give it a try.



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- Minimise transplanting shock
- Harden plants during periods of stress





# Calendar of meetings for 2010

Thursday 18 February 2010

Keith Hutchinson

Potting Mixes & Fertilisers

The perfect opportunity not only to benefit from Keith's extensive experience of growing media and fertilisers, but to take part in and learn from the group discussion on this subject.

Fern competition: Davallias

Thursday 18 March

Barry Stagoll

Ferns of Western Australia and Queensland

Fern Competition: Adiantums

Saturday and Sunday 20-21 March

Mirini Lang's Open Garden

Sunday 18 May

Visit to members' gardens: Don fuller, Barry White and Brenda Girdlestone

Thursday 20 May

Barry White

Ferns of Mt Lewis

Look for further details of these coming events, and for details beyond May, in the next Newsletter



## Fern Society of Victoria Spore Bank

Fern spore is free to members of the Fern Society of Victoria who donate spore. Otherwise the cost is members 20 cents per sample, non-members 50 cents, plus \$1.00 to cover postage and handling. Available at meetings or by mail from Barry White, 34 Noble Way, Sunbury, Vic. 3429 Australia, Ph. (03) 9740 2724. There is no charge for spore for overseas members, however to cover postage two International Reply Coupons would be appreciated; or alternatively spore may be exchanged. International Reply Coupons can be purchased at most Post Offices. Overseas non-members may purchase spore at three packets for each International Reply Coupon, plus two coupons per order to cover postage and handling. Alternatively spore

<i>Acrostichum speciosum</i> 4/09	<i>Cyathea cunninghamii</i> /07	<i>Platynerium superbum</i> 4/08
<i>Adiantum formosum</i> 3/08	<i>Cyathea felina</i> 10/08	<i>Platynerium veitchii</i> 10/07
<i>Adiantum pedatum</i> 2/07	<i>Cyathea gleichenioides</i> 2/07	<i>Pleisoneuron tuberculatus</i> 12/08
<i>Amphineuron opulentum</i> 4/09	<i>Cyathea incisoserrata</i> /07	<i>Pneumatopteris sogerensis</i> 12/08
<i>Anemia tomentosa</i> 8/08	<i>Cyathea intermedia</i> 2/07	<i>Pneumatopteris costata</i> 12/08
<i>Arachniodes simplicior</i> 1/09	<i>Cyathea lunulata</i> /07	<i>Polypodium formosum</i> 10/07
<i>Asplenium aethiopicum</i> 12/07	<i>Cyathea medullaris</i> 11/08	<i>Polystichum formosum</i> 6/09
<i>Asplenium australasicum</i> 1/08	<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i> 'Butterfieldii' 3/08	<i>Polystichum proliferum</i> 11/08
<i>Asplenium nidus</i> 5/08	<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i> 8/08	<i>Polystichum retroso-paleacum</i> /08
<i>Asplenium nidus</i> cv.5/08	<i>Dicksonia fibrosa</i> 10/07	<i>Polystichum setiferum</i> 'Congestum' 12/07
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> (red stipe) 12/08	<i>Diplazium australe</i> 4/08	<i>Polystichum vestitum</i> 2/07
<i>Athyrium niponicum</i> 'Pictum' 2/08	<i>Doodia australe</i> 12/08	<i>Polystichum xiphophyllum</i> 3/08
<i>Blechnum ambiguum</i> 1/08	<i>Dryopteris affinis</i> 'Cristata' /08	<i>Pronephrium asperum</i> 2/07
<i>Blechnum braziliense</i> 3/08	<i>Dryopteris wallichiana</i> 1/09	<i>Pteris dentata</i> 1/09
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i> 9/07	<i>Hypolepis glandulifera</i> 12/08	<i>Pteris</i> sp. (Nepal) 3/07
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i> 9/07	<i>Hypolepis rugosula</i> 2/07	<i>Pteris umbrosa</i> /08
<i>Blechnum gregsonii</i> 4/09	<i>Lastreopsis acuminata</i> 12/08	<i>Revwattsii</i> fragile 12/08
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> 7/08	<i>Lastreopsis decomposita</i> 6/09	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i> (Cape form) 2/08
<i>Blechnum wataii</i> 12/08	<i>Lastreopsis glabella</i> 4/07	<i>Sphaerostephanos heterocarpus</i> 7/08
<i>Chingia australis</i> 12/08	<i>Lastreopsis marginans</i> 1/07	<i>Stenochlaena palustris</i> 2/07
<i>Christella parasitica</i> 4/09	<i>Microsorium punctatum</i> 1/09	<i>Thelypteris navarrensis</i> 1/07
<i>Christella subpubescens</i> 12/08	<i>Nephrolepis falcata</i> 3/08	
<i>Cibotium schiedeii</i> 1/07	<i>Ophioglossum pendulum</i> 7/08	
<i>Cyathea australis</i> 4/08	<i>Pellaea cordata</i>	
<i>Cyathea baileyana</i> 12/08	<i>Pellaea sagittata</i> 3/07	
<i>Cyathea brownii</i> /07	<i>Pellaea viridis</i> 1/08	
<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 1/09	<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i> 'Hula Hands' 10/07	
<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> (blue stipe) 1/07	<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i> 'Venosum' (Mt. Lewis)	
<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 'Brentwood' 3/08	10/07	

Thank you to the following spore donors: Marco Calvimonte, Brenda Girdlestone, Don Fuller, Warren Simpson Nada Sankowsky, Sheila Tiffin, Werner Neumeuller, Frank Hardung, Kylie Stocks, Neville Crawford, Wendy Johnston, Claire Shackel, Dot Camp, and Crosby Chase.

The above list was current as of June 2009. Updates can be found at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/Sporlist.html>.



**NEWSLETTER**

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