

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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Fern Society of Victoria Inc.

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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

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Subscriptions

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

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

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.

Next Meeting

Thursday 20 May 2010

Barry White

Ferns of Mount Lewis

Fern competition: Queensland Ferns

Sunday 13 June

Tour of The Australian Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne

A guided tour has been arranged for FSV members. Subsidised price for members \$9.05 (only 70c more than the concessional price for entry to the Garden). Time for tour 11.00am to 12.00 midday. The open hours are 9-5, and participants can spend whatever extra time they wish in the Garden. There are few ferns, but it's a magnificent showplace for Australian plants.

The Australian Garden is located in the northeastern corner of RBG Cranbourne, the entrance to which is reached by taking Ballarto Rd, off the South Gippsland Highway a short distance south of Cranbourne township. Take the right fork of the junction just inside the entrance to get to the Australian Garden. More information is available at www.rbg.vic.gov.au/rbg-cranbourne

Those members who wish to arrive in good time to enter before the tour time may like to meet, say between 10 and 10.30am, for some morning tea/coffee (self-catered) in the Australian Garden carpark; or alternatively make use of the Boonerwurrung Café inside the entrance. We'll provide the RBG a list of members for our tour to facilitate entry to the Garden when desired.

After the tour it's proposed that we move our cars to one of the parking areas in the outer garden and have a picnic lunch there (weather being suitable); or those who prefer could lunch in the Boonerwurrung Café (bookings recommended – Tel. 5990 2247). Then after lunch take a walk around the very scenic outer indigenous heathland/wetland/woodland areas. Those interested could drive over to Berwick for a look at Wilson Botanic Park to finish the day (entry is free). Directions for travel there will be made available on the day.

Please contact Treasurer Don Fuller or Secretary Barry White by Thursday 3 June to advise your wish to join the excursion (contact details inside front cover). We are required to pay our deposit 7 days prior to the tour. We'll try to accommodate late acceptances, but these cannot be guaranteed.

See page 14 for a map of Cranbourne RBG and for a calendar of meetings for 2010

Cover caption: An image from the excursion to Don and Margaret Fuller's home and fern collection. See pages 6-9 of this issue for more photographs from the same excursion (photo: Barry Stagoll)

President's Note

Mirini and Russell Lang's open garden weekend (March 20 and 21) went very well. The garden looked great and attracted lots of interest from a large number of visitors. A good proportion made it obvious that they were interested in ferns. Fern sales were strong; and questions about ferns kept coming. We also had a number of visitors ask for further details of our planned September 2010 'Discovering Victorian Ferns' walk at Badger Weir Park.

We enjoyed fine weather for our members' activity for April – visits to Don & Margaret Fuller in Pascoe Vale, and then to Brenda Girdlestone and John McKenzie in Taylors' Lakes, to see their magnificent fern collections. Many thanks to them for hosting such an enjoyable day.

You'll find in our Calendar of Events that we've arranged a visit (including a guided tour) to the Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne for Sunday 13 June (more detail appears elsewhere in this issue). We hope that members will be interested in the visit to this widely acclaimed garden showcasing Australian plants.

In closing this time, I'd like to encourage more members to consider writing for FSV Newsletter. If you've developed a special interest in a particular area (say one fern genus) or had some good results from using particular growing methods, for instance, then your experience could well provide the basis for interesting material you could share with others in this way. Alternatively,

the information you can gain by researching facts about ferns or fern cultivation may not only be useful to you, but of interest to other members – and writing about it can be an excellent way to develop and reinforce your own knowledge base. The same goes for preparing and presenting talks, and volunteers to talk at meetings are always welcome, of course. Our Editor, Robin Wilson, would be happy to help if you'd like to consult him about contributing to FSV Newsletter. Call me, or any other Committee Member, if you have an idea for a talk (whether you have it in mind to consider presenting it yourself, or just feel the subject would merit inclusion in our programme).

Barry Stagoll

A CORRECTION

Apologies for a goof in my article Ferns in Vertical Gardens in the last issue. In my rush to get the article readied by the publication deadline, instead of quoting *Histiopteris incisa* (Bat's wing fern) in the Ground Ferns listed, I mis-described it as "*H. hispida*".

For those keen readers who noticed: You're right, there's no such fern!

Editor's Note

Our President, Barry Stagoll, who regularly shoulders the lion's share of writing for the newsletter, has done it again this issue. Without him it would have been a pretty thin issue. I can only support and repeat Barry's call to all potential authors to shoulder arms (or pens, pencils, quills, keyboards, iPhones, whatever) and write something. I know that there is a very extensive and diverse range of expertise in ferns and in horticulture generally among FSV members.

Unfortunately, this expertise is apparently matched by a modesty and reluctance to put pen to paper. Please give it a try. As Barry notes, I am all too willing to offer some editorial streamlining if that helps, although this is hardly every necessary, I have found.

It is a particular pleasure to be able to include some photographs (again, thanks to Barry) recording the excursion to the homes and gardens of members Margaret and Don Fuller and Brenda Girdlestone and John McKenzie. I was greatly disappointed that I was unable to join the excursion myself, but it is clear that many did take up the opportunity generously offered by Margaret, Don, Brenda and John. Many thanks.

Barry Stagoll also provided a few images from Mirini and Russell Lang's Open Garden day in March. I have held those over for the next Newsletter.

Strive as I might to avoid it, there is still a need for a couple more of my incessant apologies. Unfortunately I am still waiting to celebrate a totally error-free newsletter (I dare hope that the issue you are reading now might qualify). Last issue somehow a section of Keith Hutchinson's article on potting mixes went missing. Apologies to Keith and to mystified readers - the complete article will appear in the next Newsletter.

Editor's error no. 2 in the previous issue was the crossword, which I managed to make a complete mess of by mixing in some clues from the previous crossword instead. Sorry to those who attempted it. I have put it in again this issue, this time with the correct clues.

Robin Wilson

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Photographs from Sunday 18th April 2010

Excursion to members' gardens



The well stocked fern houses at the home of Don and Margaret Fuller provide an excellent environment for Don's collection, and the garden surrounding the house was looking great. (photo: Barry Stagoll)



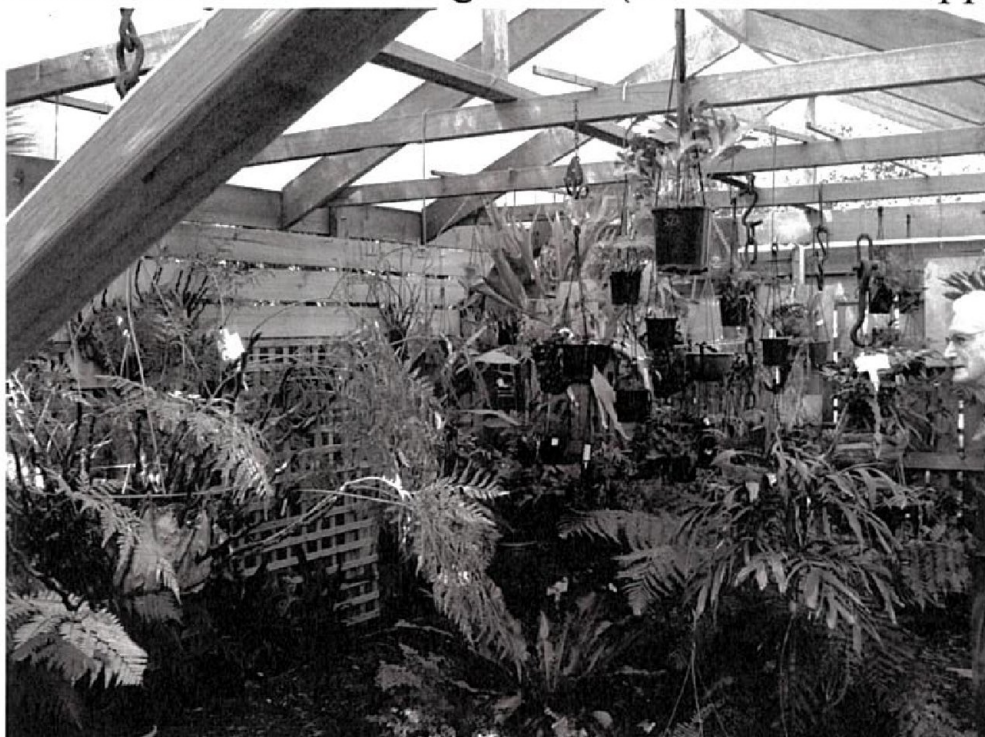
Another image of Don Fuller's collection, a fine result seeing it's all only been established over the last 5 years. (photo: Barry Stagoll)

Annual subscriptions overdue

Please check the mailing label of your January/February 2010 Newsletter: if your address label had a big blue dot, and if you have not since paid, then your subscriptions is overdue. Please consult the inside cover for the correct subscription amount and post a cheque to the Treasurer straight away.

Photographs from Sunday 18th April 2010

Excursion to members' gardens (continued from pp 6-7)



Brenda Girdlestone & John Mackenzie have their collection accommodated in a sheltered courtyard and shadehouses providing excellent protection from the district's strong winds.
(Photo: Barry Stagoll)

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Brenda & John showed off a fine collection of ferns, native orchids, and other favourite plants, including many varieties of *Clivea*. John also has on display a large and interesting assortment of antique tools, implements, machinery parts, and milk churns, etc. (Photo: Barry Stagoll)

Potting Mixes and Fertilisers

Keith Hutchinson

This talk, by Keith at the FSV meeting on 18 Feb 2010, was printed incompletely in the previous Newsletter. It will be reprinted in full in the July/August Newsletter.

Apologies to Keith and to transcriber Mirini Lang for the error. The Editor.

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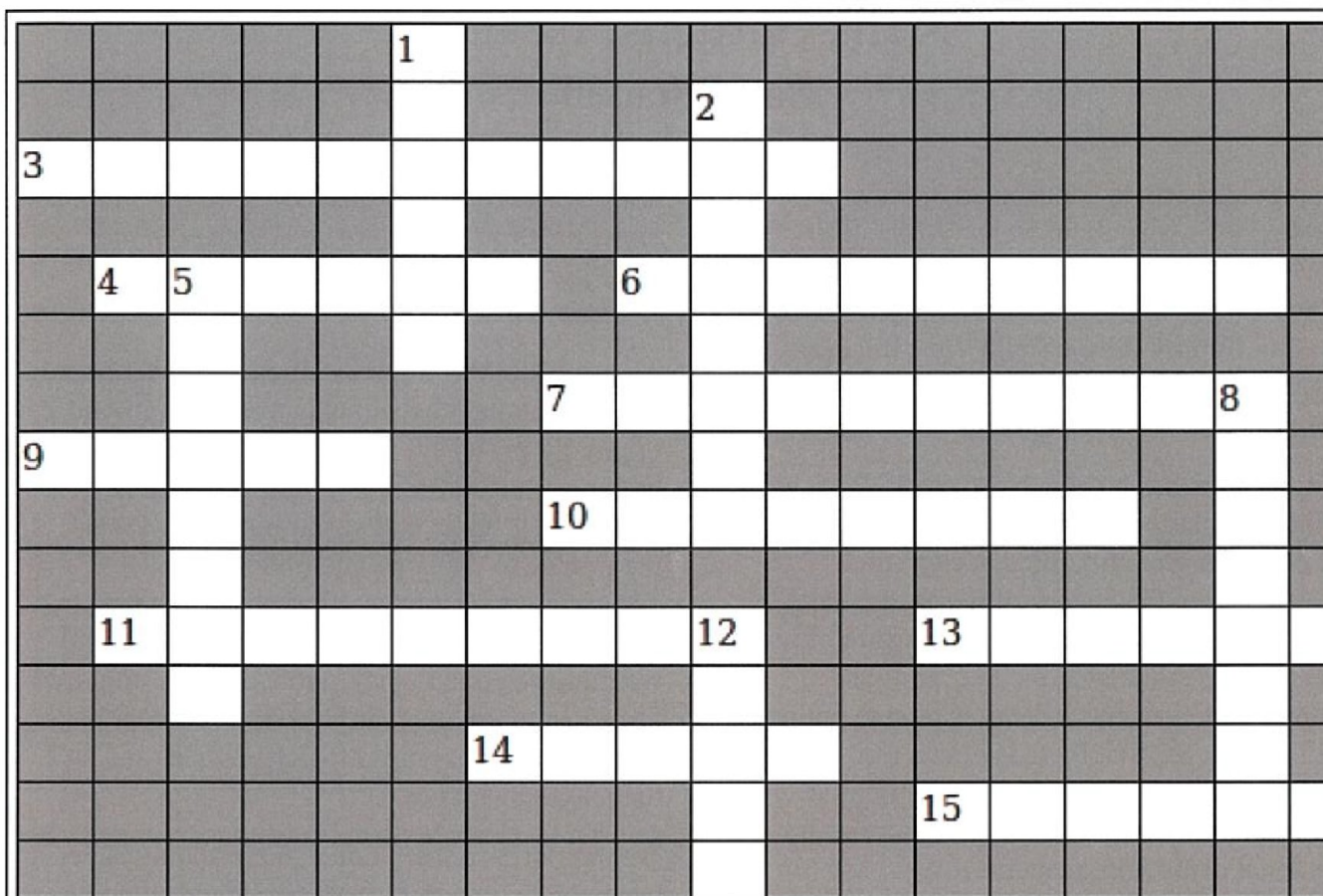


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ACROSS

3. growing in soil (11)
4. brakes (6)
6. common name of a fern of the genus Equisetum (9)
7. stage in fern life cycle after germination of spore (10)
9. both fish and ferns often have them (5)
10. genus name of the oak-leaf fern (8)
11. author of 2 volume "A Handbook to Plants in Victoria" (3,6)
13. small bud through which some ferns reproduce asexually (6)
14. all the plant species of a region (5)
15. toothed (7)

DOWN

1. remains of a living organism preserved in rocks (6)
2. science of classifying living things (8)
5. geological period that ended 199 million years ago (8)
8. floating fern that is a weed in many tropical countries (8)
12. cluster of sporangia

[Apologies to everyone who attempted the crossword in the previous issue. This time I have provided the correct "down" clues! The Editor]

Kells Gardens, Ireland

Barry Stagoll

In a previous article contributed to FSV Newsletter I wrote about Kells Garden (also known as Kells Bay Gardens) regarded as one of Ireland's most significant gardens from Victorian times, in County Kerry, South West Ireland, which Gay and I visited in 2007. Kells contains abundant ferns of many species.

A friend who was born in Northern Ireland, and retains associations with both the north and Eire, made us aware of additional background information on the history of the gardens and the estate they occupy after becoming aware of our interest. This stimulated me to investigate whether there was more detail available online, and I discovered that there is now a website, at <http://www.kellsgardens.ie>. I thought that it would be interesting to share some of the additional detail with readers.

When we saw Kells it had been open to the public for only a few months. A great deal of work had been done over some years prior to this, and additional refurbishment and improvements have been ongoing since. The estate was purchased in 1837 by Rowland Blennerhasset of Tralee, but the house was built by his grandson, also Rowland Blennerhasset, an MP (at Westminster) who also began the gardens. He completed the Ladies Walled Garden, Tree fern forest, the Long Drive and some of the paths throughout the garden.

Subsequent owners further developed the gardens, which today proudly lay claim to *'one of the foremost collections of Southern Hemisphere plants in Europe, assembled from Australia originally but more recently from New Zealand and South America.'*

As the Kells website recounts, locals consider it *'reasonable to speculate that the Southern Hemisphere exotics that are the unique feature of the gardens were carried as ballast on ships of the 19th century returning from Van Diemen's*

land. The corollary of this assumption is that the outward cargo was made up members of the local populace convicted at the local petty sessions' (!).

As I noted in the previous article, Gay & I found this yarn about how and why tree ferns arrived originally in Ireland (and Britain) probably no more than inventive storytelling. We had it related to us again and again in Ireland. I took the trouble to explain patiently on many occasions - with a huge effort not to appear condescending - that no-one in their right mind would have gone to the trouble of harvesting tree ferns just to use them as ballast; this would have involved huge exertions to collect them and cart them to the wharves.

We can surmise that, in fact, there should have been ample reward for harvesting and shipping them with a view to selling for profit, as there was much interest in the exotic, newly-discovered plant species of the Southern hemisphere, and those with the wherewithal and desire to have examples for themselves would have been prepared to pay well for them, either to pursue a scientific interest or just to try growing them in gardens. Perhaps the story had its origins in some ship's captain who didn't succeed in getting a good price complaining loudly in a pub that they "turned out to be nothing but expensive ballast" (?)

Whatever the circumstances of their transport to Ireland, Kells has a very considerable number of large tree ferns, mostly of Australian origin, which were planted there from around the mid nineteenth century. In parts of the gardens, these plants simulate quite effectively a natural forest gully in Australia replete with Cyatheas and Dicksonias.

The Kells website aptly describes The River Walk as *'a* (continued next page)
delightful stroll

Kells Gardens, Ireland (continued)

alongside a fast running stream through delightful native and imported species. Some of the southern ferns here are spectacular in their health, with the vigour of their new growth when the unfurling croziers appear, a testament to the suitability of the local conditions. Some of the larger fronds are over 10 feet from tip to trunk. Dotted among the almost ubiquitous Dicksonia antarctica, particularly on the right-hand side of the pathway, are some wonderful examples of ferns from the Americas, collected throughout the course of the current owners' fanaticism, and now currently acclimatising well to their new home.'

As an aside, the website also opines that: *'In horticultural circles ferns are an exotic speciality, the British Pteridological Society has only a handful of members (rather more than FSV, of course). To (Billy) Alexander (the present-day owner) they are an obsession that have caused him to spend considerable sums observing them from the Juan Fernandez Islands*

off Chile, in the bogs of Connemara, the forests of South Africa and the carefully tended gardens of Japan. He has spent further fortunes importing containers of them and proselytizing on their behalf at shows throughout these islands. Alexander has assembled a small team of dedicated people to recover from the neglect of the intervening decades what has been hidden and bring it to public attention.'

In the way of many other fine gardens, Kells' development continues. Since 2007 a Palm and Succulent garden has been developed, 'approximately 200 tonnes of rock being imported from a local quarry to augment existing rock bed and rock faces', and a Bamboo Glade, incorporating 'hundreds of metres of root barrier to curtail the spread of these plants in future years'.

If you should visit Ireland, try to look in on Kells. In the meantime, you may like to have a look at the garden on the web! (<http://www.kellsgardens.ie>)



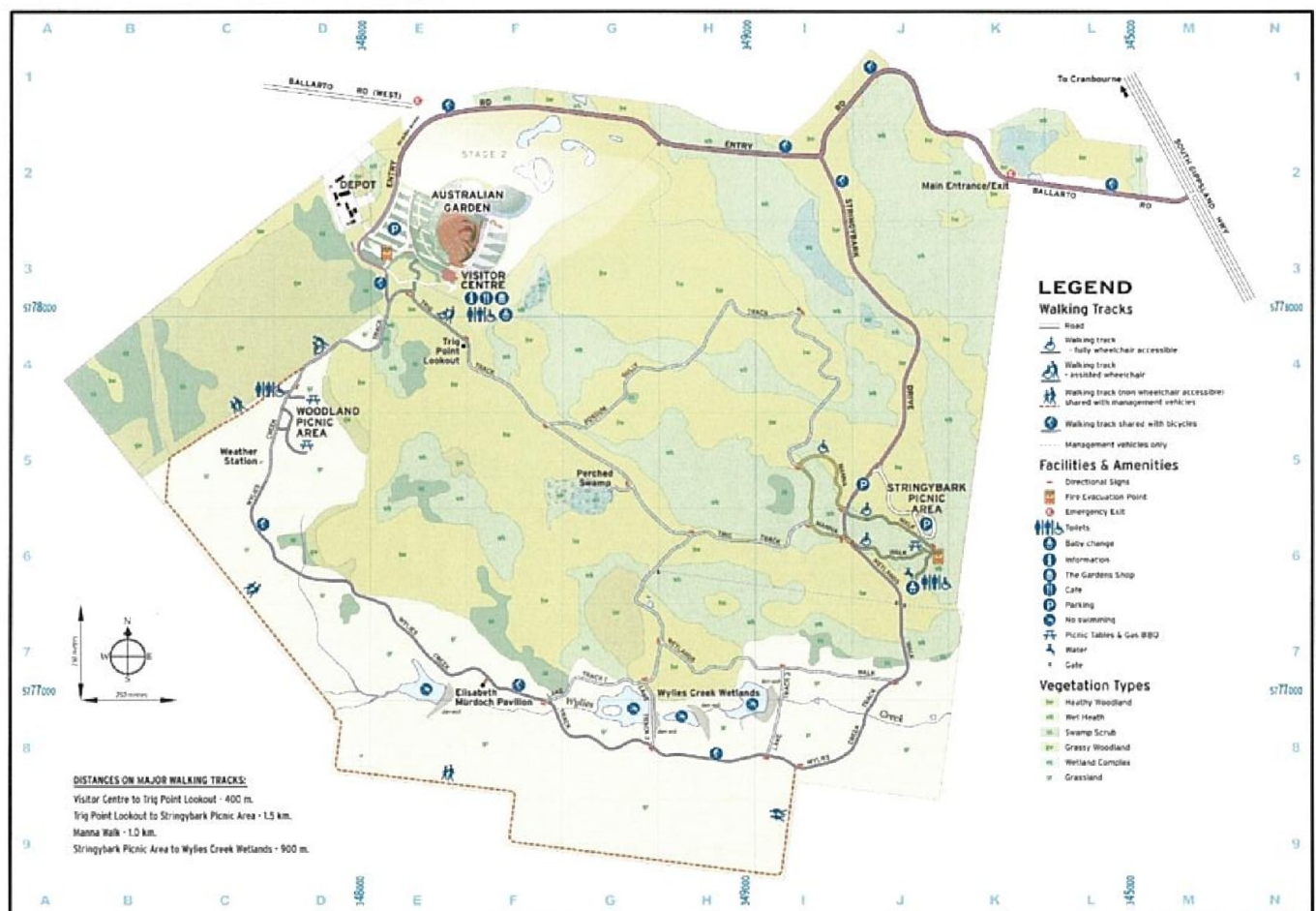
Kells treeferns, Ireland. (photo: Barry Stagoll)

Calendar of meetings for 2010

Thursday 20 May
Barry White
Ferns of Mt Lewis

Sunday 13 June
Tour of The Australian Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.
Bookings essential. See details on page 3. Map below.

Details of meetings July onwards will be provided in the July-August Newsletter, and on the FSV website
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/>



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>Pleioneuron 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 humulata</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 cv.</i> 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 sp.</i> (Nepal) 3/07
<i>Blechnum fluviale</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>Revwattsi</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 schiedei</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>.

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