

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

Volume 34, Number 4
July/August 2012



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

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Subscriptions

Single	\$17.00
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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.

Forthcoming meetings — Fern Society of Victoria

7:30 pm Thursday 19 July 2012

Terry Turney: Fern Curiosities - Fifty Fascinating Ferns

Location: Kevin Heinze Centre, Doncaster (see inside cover for details)

Fern competition: An unusual fern

7:30 pm Thursday 16 August 2012

Don Fuller, Barry White: Ferns of Norfolk Island

Fern competition: fern from Norfolk or Lord Howe Island

See the Calendar of Events on page 14 for details of meetings for September and beyond



Cover image: *Athyrium filixfemina*, from Flora von Deutschland Österreich und der Schweiz (1885) by Otto Wilhelm Thomé. Reproduced here from <http://www.biolib.de/> under the GNU Free Document License. See article by Keith Hutchinson page 7 of this issue.

Above: Informal butyl-lined pond finished with Mintaro slate and native rock - *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern) on bank. See article on Water in the Garden on page 8. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

President's Note

Gay & I took another short camping trip to northern Australia in late May, starting from Cairns and concluding with brief visits to Thursday Island and Horn Island in Torres Strait. Much of our trip was spent in coastal rainforest areas studying the ferns and other plants found there. We also enjoyed visits to the Cairns Botanic Garden and the town of Kuranda and its surrounding forests – after an interval of over 15 years since our previous visit we thought both these destinations were better than we remembered them. The ferns and other plants around Kuranda itself and at the famous Kuranda Railway station certainly looked “better than ever”. We’ll look forward to sharing some fern images and descriptions from our travels in due course.

At Committee we’ve been planning some more excursions for later in the year. In the meantime, we feel it’s probably best (as we’ve done usually in the past) to hold meetings indoors during the winter weather, so that sets the pattern for the next few months. I haven’t used the Newsletter lately to invite suggestions from members for favoured subjects for discussion at meetings, but

please do let us know if you have preferences you’d like to suggest (just phone or email any Committee member).

Ferns (amongst other ancient plant groups) received important coverage in the first episode of the documentary *How to grow a planet* which has been screening on ABC Television over recent weeks, where their role in the creation of the complex atmosphere which ultimately facilitated the evolution of the huge diversity of creatures on the planet was explained. Great publicity for ferns! For those who missed it, it’s bound to be repeated some time. A DVD will be available in ABC Shops also – perhaps we should obtain a copy for our Library.

Try not to miss the July meeting – as you’ll see from the Events Calendar, Terry Turney has offered to talk about *Fern Curiosities - Fifty Fascinating Ferns*. He plans to illustrate and discuss unusual pteridophytes - unusual morphology, reproductive strategies, survival strategies, odd geographic distributions, extreme rarity, etc. It promises to be a very interesting night. Terry’s talks are always good.

Hope to see you there!

Barry Stagoll



Kuranda Railway Station, May 2012. The Kuranga Railway Station platforms and surrounds overflow with very attractive fern displays. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

Editor's Note

Thanks very much to the many members who offered positive comments on the previous full colour issue of the Newsletter. As mentioned in the previous Newsletter, the Committee feels that printing every issue in full colour may be difficult to justify (depending on whether we can assemble sufficient articles and photographs). This issue we are proceeding with what I think is a good compromise, and an affordable one: to have a colour centrefold (pages 7-10). Once again, feedback of course is very welcome, contact details for committee members are on the inside cover of this issue.

Keith Hutchinson's article on page 7 of this issue was written while he was waiting to go into hospital for a knee replacement. I trust that by now Keith is convalescing at home and perhaps has time for writing another in his 'Favourite Ferns' series. Another stalwart FSV member John Hodge has written a note outlining the health challenges facing John and Norma; John's note is on page 6 of this Newsletter and I know all members will be thinking of John and Norma and

we hope they are able to join meetings occasionally after the winter.

Several articles in the pipeline have had to be held over, including Don Fuller's talk from earlier this year - I have a recording of Don's talk but haven't had time to transcribe it for publication. This and other content will appear in one or other of the issues remaining in 2012.

Tony Arthur has been travelling of late and provided the photograph below, and some comments. The full text won't be legible in this reproduction so here is the relevant passage:

"A native to New Zealand and Australia, it [*Acaena novaezelandiae*] has escaped from gardens and is well established in the Ox Mountains in Sligo, changing the vegetation on the mountain and posing a threat to a population of the rare Killarney Fern."

The Killarney Fern referred to is *Trichomanes speciosum*, one of the filmy ferns. It is a reminder that Australian plants can be pest species abroad in the same way that the blackberry and Paterson's Curse (among many others) are a problem here.

Robin Wilson

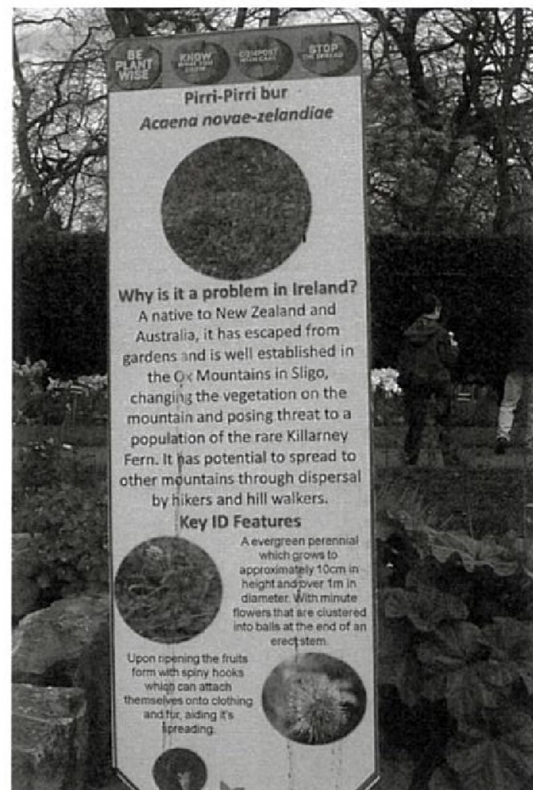
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On the right. Sign about the weed problem in Ireland due to the Australian bur *Acena novaezeelandiae*. Photo: Tony Arthur.



A Message to all our Friends

John Hodges

I am taking this opportunity to let folks know why we are no longer taking an active role in the society.

Unfortunately, Norma was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease early this year. We know there is currently no cure, but she is on medication which hopefully will slow down the advancement and we are attending a "Living with memory loss" program at Alzheimer's Australia run for patients and carers, which is beneficial for us both.

We both thank the many friends we have made over the years in the Society at both general and committee meetings and excursions both locally and to more distant destinations including Tasmanian, New Zealand and Fiji, all with great memories. Unfortunately when this sort of thing comes it changes your lifestyle, but hopefully in the better weather we will make it to a meeting or two.

"Bye fernow"

John Hodges



Another view of Kuranda Railway Station, Queensland. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

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My Favourite Ferns

Keith Hutchinson

No. 11 *Athyrium filix-femina* 'victoriae'

I was touring England in the nineties and as I was walking through a garden with an abundance of magnificent ferns, I noticed the garden-lover nearby. I said you have some lovely ferns here and the look on his face showed his delight in them. He pointed out the different varieties, the first was the common lady fern, *Athyrium filix-femina*, then the 'Tatting Fern' *Athyrium filix-femina* 'frizelliae': "And, you must see this *Athyrium filix-femina* 'victoriae' the criss cross fern as it is unique. Queen Victoria remarked on it so they named it after her." I was rather doubtful on this but he was very knowledgeable so he may have been right! The short time I had with him was very enjoyable.

When I arrived home I planted a criss cross fern and it has thrived. It does look a little tired by the end of May so being a deciduous fern I cut it back to the ground and early September a mass of new fronds appears. It grows to about 40 cm and likes semi-shade with some humus in the soil. It certainly adds interest to my fernery.



Athyrium filix-femina, above, photo by Jesmond Dene, Newcastle, Northumberland, UK; 11 May 2006 and reproduced here from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athyrium_filix-femina under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Generic license. Right, *Athyrium filix-femina* 'victoriae' drawing by Keith Hutchinson.



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Water in the Garden

Secrets of a pond-builder (from a talk given the June 2012 meeting of the FSV)

Barry Stagoll

Why have garden water features?

- Sights and sounds of water add to the pleasure of being in the garden
- Presence of water encourages/accommodates visiting wildlife (plus introduced, for example pond fish)
- Augment humidity in their vicinity, with favourable effect on plants such as ferns
- An alternative to tanks for saving water which may be used for tending plants, or at least a useful way to make use of water runoff purposefully

- Provide suitable spaces for growing bog & aquatic plants*

*Aquatic plants allied to ferns, such as *Azolla* and *Marsilea* (Nardoo) are interesting floating plants to grow, and many ferns (for instance, native *Blechnum* species) which enjoy high levels of ground moisture grow very happily in boggy garden spaces. Our favourite fern for bog planting is the deciduous *Osmunda regalis* from the northern hemisphere. Other interesting choices for aquatic plants include *Nymphaea* (water lilies) and



Cyathea australis (under 2 years old) self-propagated from spore in moist soil by pond.
Photo: Barry Stagoll.

Water in the Garden (continued)

for bog plants *Papyrus* species.

Water features are not necessarily restricted to ponds, of course. Other interesting and useful possibilities for placing water in the garden are worthwhile considering, including:

- Bird baths
- Miniature streams
- Fountains or cascade features
- Water bowls placed at ground level
- Deer-scarers (a feature of Japanese-styled gardens)



A fountain helps to maintain humidity for plants indoors. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

When it comes to ponds, the choice can be made from many alternative styles, including:

- Informal (irregularly shaped, set into landscape, using natural materials for surrounds)
- Semi-formal: for instance one edge finished with rocks set in a single line

- Formal: for instance built from brick, masonry, or concrete (often above ground level), in a regular shape such as circular or semi-circular, rectangular, or other geometric form; often incorporating a fountain

The principal alternative methods of constructing informal or semi-formal ponds are :

- Where subsoil permeability is low, it may be possible to simply excavate the desired shape and depth (if it does prove necessary to restrict water draining out this could be achieved by “puddling” or trowelling a thick layer of moistened clay across bottom and sides – but be aware that the end result may be that the water clarity in the pond may remain low indefinitely - depending on how much disturbance the pond receives, for instance from rainwater entry).
- The most effective, and easily installed, alternative is to obtain a suitably-sized sheet of butyl rubber pond liner and lay this in the excavated space. Much more expensive than PVC plastic sheet – but that’s not very durable. If the site has sharp rocks under the area excavated, it is recommended to install a layer of “geo-fabric” underneath the butyl to cushion it against possible damage (water is a heavy substance, of course).
- A much more labour-intensive method – again not cheap – is to pour a concrete shell for the



A formal above-ground pond in concrete, brick and river rock, with mini-cascade. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

Water in the Garden (continued)

pond (which will need reinforcing if it is to last). It can be coloured to ensure that the result has a natural appearance (best to use a colouring agent in the concrete mix, rather than to paint its surface, as this will ensure it lasts).

- It may be possible to obtain a suitable pre-formed pond shell to install as a semi-formal pond. These are usually made in plastic these days and a variety of sizes and shapes are available at landscaping suppliers and some plant nurseries. A simple solution if you can find the right one – just excavate a slightly oversized hole and use some sand to bed it in (I recommend “fatty” sand as used for mortar mixes, as it will stay in place better than more “grainy” sand). Place it under the pond shell and then trowel some in around the sides to fill the complete excavation.

If there is to be any pump installed to operate, say, a small cascade or fountain, a weatherproof power outlet will be required – probably best to get this installed before commencing any other work. The pump could be a non-submersible type installed in a suitable protective enclosure beside the pond (in which case an inlet pipe for the pump will need to be placed under the waterline) or a submersible type of pump (usually pretty small capacity, but less trouble to install – and in this case requiring only a plastic tube outlet to pump water from the pond).

To build a formal pond, the pre-formed pond shell method can be used, either in-ground or above ground. In the first case the effect might benefit from, say, a border of glazed quarry tile or other suitable surround. In the latter case the pond could

Fern Competition

Results for 21st June

First: *Adiantum diaphanum*, grown by Don Fuller (right upper)

Second: *Blechnum penna-marina*, grown by Don Fuller (right lower)

Third: *Blechnum moorei*, grown by Barry White (below)



Water in the Garden (continued)

be finished, say, with a full-height brickwork surround, or perhaps a concrete surround with mosaic applied. Another alternative is a timber-crafted surround (maybe with a seat incorporated). Any surround for a raised pond will need to be solidly-constructed and be bedded on a solid footing unless the pre-formed shell is very robust, as otherwise it will need to be safely supported by the surround to contain the weight when filled with water.

A formal pond can also be constructed by pouring a reinforced concrete shell (in a somewhat scaled-down version of a concrete swimming pool). It will be necessary to consult about building permit requirements excepting for quite a small one – especially for an above ground level pond. And the construction is quite a serious

project, of course. Again, for the sake of appearance it would be usual to use a decorative facing on the exterior of the walls of an above-ground pond. One practical approach is to construct the external facing first (say of brickwork) and use these as the outside of the “form” into which to pour the concrete (with removable form liners in place inside until the pour and the curing is complete).

Gay & I have built many water features using most of the methods I’ve mentioned. We’ve had great fun doing so, and enjoyed the long-term results even more.

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Barbara Joe Hoshizaki the noted American fern expert and author passed away on May 30th this year aged 83.

Barbara was well known to many Victorian fern growers. She visited Victoria in October 92 when she gave a talk to the Society and along with some other American fern lovers accompanied us on a weekend excursion to the Otways.

Barbara is the author of "The Fern Growers Manual" published in 1975. This was revised and expanded with co-author Robbin Moran in 2001; and is one of the best general publications on ferns. Other publications have included articles on Platyceriums, Pyrrosias, Adiantums, Davallias and Polypodiums. Barbara has also held prominent positions in many botanical organizations.

Barbara will be sadly missed but her work lives on.

Betty Allgood a long time member of the Society passed away on the 10th of June at the age of ninety. Betty was a foundation member of the Society, and was heavily involved in many of the Society's activities. She will be fondly remembered by many of our members.

Barry White



Barbara Joe Hoshizaki. Photo: Barry White.

Fern species lists - Fern Society of Victoria excursions

April 2012

compiled by Barry White

The following species were noted during our excursions.

Powelltown Reid's Mill Walk 29/4/201:

Asplenium bulbiferum ssp. *gracillimum*
Blechnum cartilagineum
Blechnum nudum
Blechnum wattsii
Blechnum patersonii
Calochlaena dubia
Cyathea australis
Dicksonia antarctica
Grammitis billardieri
Histiopteris incisa
Hymenophyllum cupressiforme
Lastreopsis acuminata
Polyphlebium venosum
Polystichum proliferum
Pteridium esculentum
Rumohra adiantiformis
Sticherus urceolatus
Tmesipteris parva
Todea barbara

Glen Nayook Fern List 29/4/2012:

Pteridium esculentum
Polystichum proliferum
Histiopteris incisa
Microsorium pustulatum
Cyathea australis
Dicksonia antarctica
Blechnum wattsii
Grammitis billardieri
Hymenophyllum rarum
Rumohra adiantiformis
Polyphlebium venosum
Asplenium flabellifolium
Lastreopsis acuminata
Asplenium bulbiferum
Hymenophyllum australe
Hymenophyllum cupressiforme
Pellaea falcata
Blechnum patersonii
Hymenophyllum flabellifolium
Blechnum chambersii
Hypolepis muelleri

The following ferns are also reported from Glen Nayook but were not seen on the April excursion:

Diplazium australe
Sticherus tener
Tmesipteris obliqua
Hypolepis rugosula
Lastreopsis hispida

2012 Calendar of events — Fern Society of Victoria

7:30 pm Thursday 19 July 2012

Terry Turney: Fern Curiosities - Fifty Fascinating Ferns

Location: Kevin Heinze Centre, Doncaster (see inside cover for details)

Fern competition: An unusual fern

7:30 pm Thursday 16 August 2012

Don Fuller, Barry White: Ferns of Norfolk Island

Location: Kevin Heinze Centre, Doncaster (see inside cover for details)

Fern competition: fern from Norfolk or Lord Howe Island

7:30 pm Thursday 20 September 2012

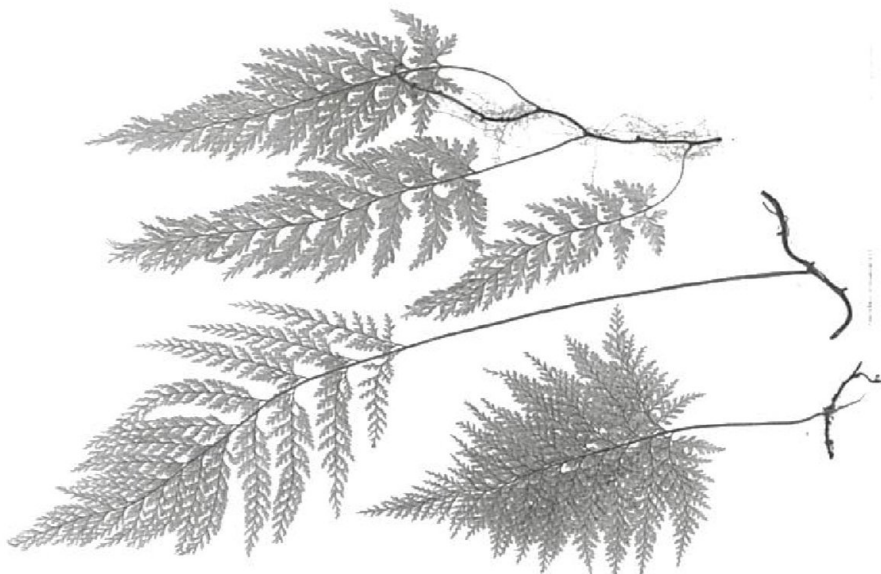
speaker and title to be confirmed

Location: Kevin Heinze Centre, Doncaster (see inside cover for details)

Sunday 21 October 2012

Excursion to Mount Dandenong, including the Fern Gully at the National Rhodendron Gardens, Olinda; William Ricketts Sanctuary, Mount Dandenong Tourist Road; plus side visits to Pirianda Garden near Olinda, and Perrins Creek, Sassafras for those interested. Further details, meeting place and proposed timing to be advised in the next newsletter.

Further details for events for September to December will be advised in future newsletters.



Trichomanes speciosum.
Nature-printed public
domain image from The
ferns of Great Britain and
Ireland (1857) by Thomas
Moore via
<http://no.wikipedia.org>.

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 50 cents per sample, non-members \$1, 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 are being phased out in favour of PayPal via the FSV website. Overseas non-members may purchase spore at three packets for each International Reply Coupon, plus two coupons per order to cover postage and handling. There is a limit of 20 packets per order. Some spores are in short supply please include alternatives. Queries can be emailed to: Barry White barry_white1@msn.com.au. The following list is current as of June 2012, but consult the web page at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/Sporlist.html> for updates and for details of payment options for spore purchases. Thank you to the spore donors who are listed on the web page.

<i>Acrostichum speciosum</i> 4/09	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 1/09	<i>Oenotrichia pinnata</i> 7/11
<i>Adiantum concinnum</i> 4/11	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> (Blue Stipe) 1/11	<i>Ophioglossum pendulum</i> 7/08
<i>Adiantum formosum</i> 1/12	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 'Brentwood' 3/08	<i>Pellaea cordata</i> 7/09
<i>Adiantum hispidulum</i> 6/12	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 'Cinnamon' 4/11	<i>Pellaea falcata</i> 1/11
<i>Adiantum raddianum</i> 'Le Grand Morgan' 6/12	<i>Cyathea exilis</i> 7/11	<i>Pellaea hastata</i> 5/10
<i>Adiantum raddianum</i> 'Triumph' 6/12	<i>Cyathea felina</i> 10/08	<i>Pellaea viridis</i> 5/12
<i>Aleuritopteris kuhni</i> 6/10	<i>Cyathea howeana</i> 10/10	<i>Phegopteris decursive-pinnata</i> 3/12
<i>Amphineuron opulentum</i> 7/11	<i>Cyathea macarthuri</i> 10/10	<i>Pityrogramma calomelanos</i> 8/11
<i>Anemia phyllitides</i> 6/09	<i>Cyathea robusta</i> 9/10	<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i> 4/11
<i>Anemia tomentosa</i> 8/08	<i>Cyathea rebecca</i> (crested) 9/10	<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i> 'Venosum' Mt Lewis 10/07
<i>Angiopteris evecta</i> 11/09	<i>Cyrtomium caryotideum</i> 8/10	<i>Platynerium superbum</i> 4/08
<i>Arachniodes aristata</i> 4/12	<i>Cyrtomium fortunei</i> 6/10	<i>Pleioneuron tuberculatus</i> 1/11
<i>Arachniodes nutica</i> 10/08	<i>Cyrtomium juglandifolium</i> 6/12	<i>Pneumatopteris sogerensis</i> 7/11
<i>Arachniodes standishii</i> 8/11	<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i> 9/10	<i>Pneumatopteris costata</i> 6/11
<i>Asplenium aethiopicum</i> 4/12	<i>Diplazium australe</i> 1/12	<i>Polystichum aculeatum</i> 7/09
<i>Asplenium athertonense</i> 7/11	<i>Diplazium assimile</i> 6/09	<i>Polystichum australiense</i> 4/12
<i>Asplenium milnei</i> 10/10	<i>Diplazium dilatatum</i> 12/10	<i>Polystichum formosum</i> 4/12
<i>Asplenium nidus</i> 5/08	<i>Diplazium dilatatum</i> x <i>Deparia petersenii</i> v. congrua 3/11	<i>Polystichum proliferum</i> 12/10
<i>Asplenium nidus</i> cv. 5/08	<i>Doodia australis</i> 2/12	<i>Polystichum retroso-paleacum</i> 12/11
<i>Asplenium pellucidum</i> 3/11	<i>Dryopteris affinis</i> 'Cristata' 1/12	<i>Polystichum tsus-simense</i> 11/11
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> (red stipe) 12/10	<i>Dryopteris erythrosora</i> 1/12	<i>Polystichum whiteleggei</i> 10/10
<i>Athyrium otophorum</i> 1/12	<i>Dryopteris guanchica</i> 11/11	<i>Polystichum xiphophyllum</i> 3/08
<i>Blechnum ambiguum</i> 1/08	<i>Dryopteris sieboldii</i> 3/11	<i>Pronephrium asperum</i> 1/11
<i>Blechnum braziliense</i> 1/12	<i>Dryopteris sparsa</i> 5/11	<i>Pteris aspericaulis</i> 8/10
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i> 4/12	<i>Histiopteris incis</i> 12/11	<i>Pteris baurita</i> 3/12
<i>Blechnum discolor</i> 4/12	<i>Hypolepis glandulifera</i> 1/12	<i>Pteris dentata</i> 12/10
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i> 9/11	<i>Hypolepis muelleri</i> 3/12	<i>Pteris hendersonii</i> 12/10
<i>Blechnum minus</i> 3/12	<i>Lastreopsis acuminata</i> 4/11	<i>Pteris pacifica</i> 6/10
<i>Blechnum patersonii</i> 4/11	<i>Lastreopsis decomposita</i> 1/12	<i>Pteris stenopylla</i> 4/11
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> 1/12	<i>Lastreopsis marginans</i> 3/12	<i>Pteris tremula</i> 11/10
<i>Blechnum wattsi</i> 9/11	<i>Lastreopsis microsora</i> 6/10	<i>Pteris umbrosa</i> 1/12
<i>Blechnum wurmum</i> 7/11	<i>Lastreopsis nephrodoides</i> 4/12	<i>Revwattsi</i> fragile 3/11
<i>Cheilanthes myriophylla</i> 3/12	<i>Lastreopsis rufescens</i> 3/11	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i> (Cape form) 2/08
<i>Chingia australis</i> 8/11	<i>Lastreopsis tenera</i> 3/11	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i> (native) 4/12
<i>Christella dentata</i> 3/12	<i>Lastreopsis tinaroense</i> 7/11	<i>Sphaerostephanos heterocarpus</i> 7/11
<i>Christella hispidula</i> /09	<i>Lygodium japonicum</i> 2/10	<i>Teratophyllum brighiae</i> 8/11
<i>Christella parasitica</i> 5/11	<i>Macrothelypteris torresiana</i> 6/10	<i>Thelypteris patens</i> 9/09
<i>Christella subpubescens</i> 12/08	<i>Microlepis firma</i> 1/12	
<i>Coniogramme intermedia</i> 3/12	<i>Microsorium australiense</i>	
<i>Cyathea australis</i> 1/12	<i>Microsorium punctatum</i> 1/09	
<i>Cyathea baileyana</i> 3/11		

NEWSLETTER

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