

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER

Volume 36, Number 2

March/April 2014



In this issue:

- Ray and Eva Turner on saving tree ferns
- Barry White on *Blechnum*
- April excursion to Kinglake
- RIP Mary Frost and Dorothy Forte

Fern Society of Victoria Inc.

ABN 85 086 216 704

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web: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/>

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.

President's Note

At our first meeting this year the Committee decided to schedule two excursions in the "bush" for the autumn (a day-trip to the Kinglake vicinity in April – including a visit to Fern Acres Nursery; and a weekend in the Otways in May); and another in late June to the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (where we expect to see the Fern Gully exhibiting the benefits of rehabilitation work which was under way when last we made a group visit to view it nearly three years ago, and subsequent new plantings). By then the trying summer we have been having will be behind us, and we hope that members will consider taking advantage of these opportunities to view ferns, and enjoy them in natural settings, in company with other enthusiasts.

Dates have been proposed for the autumn excursions – it would be good if those who are interested could let Secretary Barry White know, so we can have notice to keep you in touch with final arrangements and timings. The RBG visit date will be set after contact with the Gardens staff. Details of proposed itineraries will be publicised in due course.

In my Note last time I mentioned our preoccupation with fire preparedness at home due to the weather conditions we'd all been experiencing. Just a few days later we complied with an evacuation alert because of a fire that came at us from the south-western corner of Warrandyte. We were fortunate as it was controlled before reaching us and we were spared any damage at our place, but unfortunately several homes proximate to the source were lost. We trust other members have not had worse luck than us.

I should like to acknowledge very much appreciated donations of fern books to our Society Library by Bob Rowlands. At the February meeting Bob was kind enough to donate copies of the following for the benefit of other members :

Australian Ferns and Fern Allies – 3rd edition
1989, D.L.Jones & S.C.Clemesha

Ferns in Australia Common, Rare & Exotic -
1981, D.L. Jones & C.J. Goudey

Maidenhair Ferns in Cultivation- 1985, C.J.
Goudey

Ferns of Victoria and Tasmania – 1955, N.A.
Wakefield

Bob also donated an album of photographs of ferns of Madagascar captured by his late wife Joan on travel there. I have passed scans of selected ones to the Editor to be shared in the Newsletter at his discretion. (*One graces our cover, although I hope to re-use it in colour in a later issue - The Editor.*) Thanks again, Bob.

Barry Stagoll

Cover image: *Marattia fraxinea* photographed at Montagne d'Ambre National Park, Madagascar.
Photographer: the late Joan Rowlands.

Editor's Note

Many members have responded to my call for articles and have made it easy and pleasurable to put this issue together. Many thanks to all contributors.

I was saddened, however, to have to find room for two obituaries, provided with images by Barry White. I am sure all members will join me in offering condolences to the families of Mary Frost and Dorothy Forte, and also, it is apparent, celebrating lives well-lived.

It is always nice to get feedback on the layout and content of the Newsletter and I'm pleased to say that generally I get positive comments. One constructive suggestion I have had a couple of times is "why repeat the list of forthcoming meetings on page 14". It is a fair point so some explanation is called for: My plan was to have the version of the meetings calendar on page 5 with an emphasis on the next two meetings with further detail on the content/location and so on.

The version on page 14 was intended to look ahead for the entire year, except that of course we generally aren't able to plan that far ahead. In any case, I would be happy to consolidate those two pages into a single page, if only I could get enough content to make up the extra page! So far that hasn't been possible, although I came close this issue. Maybe next time!

Lastly, I haven't had a chance to speak with the other Committee members on the subject of membership renewals, so I don't know if it is appropriate to have another reminder notice about paying overdue subscriptions. I guess it won't hurt to leave it one more month and I suspect there will be someone out there who has put it off. Please pay up, it is important to the Society and the subscriptions are very cheap compared with all the other clubs and societies that I am aware of.

Robin Wilson

Membership Renewals Now due

Membership subscription renewals for the year 2013-4 are now due and prompt payment would be appreciated as our financial year commenced on July 1st.

Please use the renewal form included with the July-August newsletter. If you have prepaid a note to that effect would have been enclosed in the July-August newsletter.

Members may also renew their memberships online if they have a Paypal account; instructions are provided on the Society membership web page <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/Member.html>

Fern Society of Victoria meetings — 2014

7:30 pm Thursday 21 March 2014

Kevin Heinze Centre

Don Fuller: *Nephrolepis*

Fern competition: *Nephrolepis* species.

Sunday 27th April

Excursion to Kinglake

Meet at 11 a.m. at Eddie and Robyn Sabljak's Fern Acres Nursery, 1052

Whittlesea-Kinglake Rd. Kinglake; opposite Kinglake West Primary School,

Melways Reference Map 510 N11

Picnic lunch at Fern Acres, BBQ facilities will be available.

After lunch visit Mason's Falls in Kinglake National Park, then down past Toolangi to Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk in Sylvia Creek Rd.

(NB no meeting at Kevin Heinze Centre in April)

For details of meetings for May and beyond see page 14

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Saving Tree Ferns

Ray and Eva Turner

Near the end of January this year, Eva and I just happened to be in the right place at the right time (or it could have been the wrong time) and we were offered tree ferns from a property in Beaconsfield that was going to be bulldozed for redevelopment. We arrived at the "soon to be gone" house armed with the necessary equipment only to find someone else hard at work with the same idea as us, ie to "preserve nature".

The ferns were under a pergola and also round a swimming pool which were quite awkward to get at. We ended up with six *Dicksonia antarctica* which I cut off at ground level with a chain saw after cutting off the fronds. The sizes of these tree ferns varied from 3 feet to 8 feet. The one treasure which no one else was interested in, because it was too hard, was a *Cyathea cooperi* which was in a corner and growing out of the top of the pergola. Luckily for us we brought along a couple of extra sets of muscles and which included one with a fair amount of grey matter. After a lot of chopping and digging and quite a bit of manouvering we finally managed to remove it without doing too much damage to it and the root ball. I reckon it will be worth all the effort as it has 3 trunks; one approximately 12 feet, another about 7 feet and the 3rd one about 3 feet.

After more stress and two journeys, we managed to get them all home without further damage. The *Cyathea* was placed upright and tied to a tree near to where we thought it should be planted. The *Dicksonias* were left standing upright under cover in our wood shed. Of course the ferns were all given a hosing down to help relieve their stress.

Two days later when I had regained my breath and a little bit of strength we planted the *Cyathea cooperi* with the help of a neighbour. I dug a big deep hole and put in a fair amount of Eva's carefully nurtured compost, also Saturaid, blood and bone and a lot of water. Its planted a little deeper than it was, hopefully to give it some

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stability. It is also staked in 4 directions and is still being watered daily and the watering will be kept up for some time until the hot weather ends and hopefully some rain arrives.

Anyway the *Dicksonias* were also being watered daily in the wood shed until about a week later when we decided that they would probably have a better chance of survival in the ground than standing in the wood shed. After careful thought about placement, they also went into the ground with the same planting regime.

For those that don't know, we are on 3.5 acres just south of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne and like the Australian Garden there, our place was also used for sand mining and is very hydrophobic. The area we selected for the ferns is at the back corner of our house and is at the bottom of a slope and one of the down pipes from our house exits there. Of course that only helps in one spot if it rains. Over all our block is not a bad site for growing Hakeas but it's not really the ideal fern gully. If we had a gully that is!

I did bring two tall *Dicksonia antarctica* specimens from my previous house 5 years ago and they have survived. I have also planted a few smaller ferns in this area which now I suppose, laughingly, is called our fern garden. The trouble now is that we have recently lost two eucalypts that had given our "fern garden" shelter. To try and compensate for the losses we have planted a couple of Australian rain forest plants there to hopefully give shelter to the ferns but they could take a few years to be of any help in the short term.

If the venture does fade away we still have plenty of common bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*) in this area so it still will be known as our fern garden. These photos were taken on the 14th February, which is less than 3 weeks since they were removed. The growth of new fiddle heads on the tallest *Dicksonia* really amazes me considering the weather we've been having.

Saving Tree Ferns (continued)



Above: The three-trunked *Cyathea cooperi*.

Below: *Dicksonia antarctica* bursting forth with fiddleheads soon after the move.

photos: Ray and Eva Turner



Mary Frost and Dorothy Forte

Barry White

The Fern Society of Victoria has lost two outstanding members this year, Mary Frost and Dorothy Forte. They were close friends; both were members from the beginning of the Society, both excellent growers of ferns, strong supporters of the fern shows and typical country people. Both have ferns bearing their names.

Mary Frost from Killawarra near Wangaratta passed away on 9th January 2014. Mary was a qualified horticultural judge and officiated as a judge at the Fern Show for many years. She had a reputation as a very discerning and meticulous judge. In Wangaratta Mary organised and ran the one and only regional fern show. She was also the main force behind the establishment of a fern garden in a public park in the centre of Wangaratta.

Adiantum 'Frostii' a sterile variant of *Adiantum aethiopicum* was discovered by Mary in north-east Victoria.



Above: Mary Frost.

Below: *Adiantum aethiopicum 'Frostii'*.

Photo: Barry White.



Dorothy Forte of Garfield passed away on 13th February 2014. Dorothy hosted a number of visits to her fernery and to the fern gulley which ran up the back of her property. She had a wide collection of ferns and was a keen propagator.

Adiantum raddianum 'Fortei' is a cultivar which appeared among the sporelings in Dorothy's fernery, it is a very attractive form with smallish pear shaped pinnae.

Both ladies will be sadly missed but with fond memories.



Above: Dorothy Forte.

Below: *Adiantum raddianum 'Fortei'*.

Photo: Barry White.



On the genus *Blechnum*
Barry White



Above: *Blechnum cartilagineum* with new growth.

Below: *Blechnum nudum* at Melba Gully. Photos: Barry White.

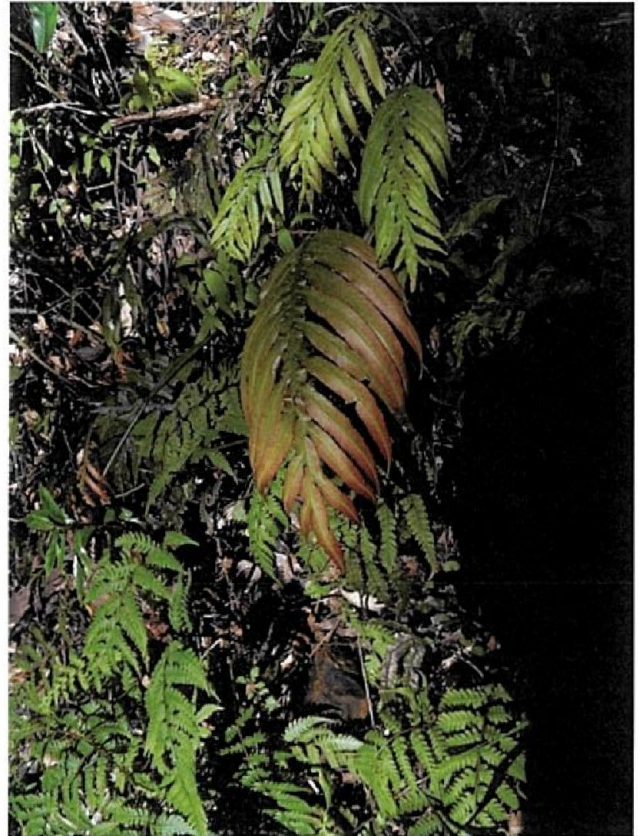


On the genus *Blechnum* (continued)



Above: *Blechnum chambersii* at Grey River Reserve.

Below: *Blechnum fluviatile* at Bulga National Park. Photos: Barry White.



Above: *Blechnum patersonii* at Springbrook National Park. Photo: Barry White.



On the genus *Blechnum* (continued)

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The derivation of the genus *Blechnum* is from the Greek word bleknon, meaning a fern. Common names are Water fern pr (in the USA), Hard fern.

Fronds are usually pinnate, occasionally bipinnate. In some forms of *Blechnum patersonii* all the fronds may be simple (e.g. on Lord Howe Island). The sori are in a continuous line on either side of the midrib protected by a linear indusium and opening inwards towards the midrib. Veins are free or weakly anastomising.

Most species have markedly different fertile and non-fertile fronds (dimorphic) with the pinnae on the fertile fronds very much reduced, often being only wide enough to contain the sori. Mostly terrestrials, a few climbers, often grow in wet situations, along banks of streams or in swamps, some with a spreading underground rhizome can form large colonies, often produce colourful new fronds.

Lomaria is an old name for blechnums with dimorphic fronds.

The genus *Blechnum* world-wide includes nearly 200 species, only two occur in the north temperate hemisphere. *Blechnum spicant* occurs in Europe and North America, *Blechnum niponicum* occurs in Japan. There are 18 species in Australia, 11 of which are endemic. Five species occur on Lord Howe Island of which four are additional to those on the mainland and three are endemic. A further one occurs on Norfolk Island (*Blechnum norfolkianum*).

Most species adapt well to cultivation; they are not fussy about soil type, but prefer acidic well drained soils. They like plenty of water but persistent wetness of the fronds particularly when there is lack of air movement can cause the fronds to go black.

Some notes follow on the Blechnums of Victoria, of which there are nine species.

Blechnum patersonii (Strap Water-fern). Dark green fronds often simple strap-like fronds. Widespread in Australia.

On the genus *Blechnum* (continued)

Blechnum patersonii includes two subspecies

Blechnum patersonii patersonii found found in S E Q and further south, fronds thin, edge crenate,

Blechnum patersonii queenslandicum N E NSW and further north, fronds thick, edge entire

Blechnum cartilagineum (Gristle Fern), the only Blechnum in Victoria which does not have dimorphic fronds. Pinnae attached by a broad base. Moderately harsh foliage, pinnae not markedly reduced towards the base of the frond. Widespread in Australia, also in the Philippines.

Blechnum minus (Soft water-fern) (minus = small). The term 'minus' is misleading as the fronds may be up to 2 metres long. Pinnae have a short stalk. Pinnae are much smaller towards the base of the frond. Requires plenty of water. Widespread in Australia.

Blechnum nudum (Fishbone water-fern). Erect rhizome, sometimes forming a trunk. Pinnae mid-green colour, stipe black and shiny, Pinnae attached by broad base, longest pinnae in the middle of the frond, lower pinnae much reduced, likes moist conditions, widespread in Australia.

Blechnum watsii (Hard water-fern). Creeping rhizome and frequently forms large colonies. Pinnae shortly stalked, little reduced towards the base. Fronds dark green and harsh. Widespread in Australia.

Blechnum penna-marina (Alpine water-fern). Small fern, rhizome creeping to semi-erect, pinnae about 1 cm. long, attached by a broad base, common in the alpine area of Victoria, also occurs in N.S.W., Tas., New Zealand and South America (where it is a larger form and a different sub-species).

Blechnum vulcanicum (Wedge water-fern), Erect rhizome, lamina wedge shaped, pinnae curved, attached by a broad base, lower pinnae deflexed. Very rare in Victoria, found in the Wonnongatta River; common in Tasmania and New Zealand, also on a number of Pacific Islands.

Blechnum fluviatile (Ray water-fern) Common, non-fertile fronds tend to lie flat in a rosette (more so with ferns in cultivation), with the fertile fronds standing more erect. Widespread in Australia also occurs in New Zealand.

Blechnum chambersii (Lance water-fern) Common, can be difficult in cultivation, often hangs down in a curtain on creek banks. Pinnae dark green, curved, attached by a broad base. Stipe pale to brown. Widespread in Australia, also in New Zealand, and on some Pacific Islands.

To be continued...

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Competition results (subject: the genus *Blechnum*)

These are the results from the competition at the February meeting (all photos Barry White).



Above: *First place, Blechnum gibbum* grown by Don Fuller.



Above: *Second place, Blechnum discolor* grown by Barry White.

Below: *Third place Blechnum penna-marina* grown by Barry White.



Fern Society of Victoria meetings — 2014

7:30 pm Thursday 21 March 2014

Kevin Heinze Centre

Don Fuller: *Nephrolepis*

Fern competition: *Nephrolepis* species.

Sunday 27th April

Excursion to Kinglake

Meet at 11 a.m. at Eddie and Robyn Sabljak's Fern Acres Nursery, 1052

Whittlesea-Kinglake Rd. Kinglake; opposite Kinglake West Primary School,

Melways Reference Map 510 N11

Picnic lunch at Fern Acres, BBQ facilities will be available.

After lunch visit Mason's Falls in Kinglake National Park, then down past Toolangi to Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk in Sylvia Creek Rd.

May (date to be confirmed)

Excursion to Otways

June (date to be confirmed)

Excursion to Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens

(NB no meeting at Kevin Heinze Centre in April, May or June)

Further details for May and June meetings will be provided 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 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 December 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>Microsorium punctatum</i> 1/09
<i>Adiantum concinnum</i> 4/11	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> (Blue Stipe) 1/11	<i>Oenotrichia pinnata</i> 7/11
<i>Adiantum formosum</i> 1/12	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 'Brentwood' 3/08	<i>Ophioglossum pendulum</i> 7/08
<i>Adiantum hispidulum</i> 6/12	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 'Cinnamon' 4/11	<i>Pellaea cordata</i> 7/09
<i>Adiantum raddianum</i> 'Le Grand Morgan' 6/12	<i>Cyathea exilis</i> 12/12	<i>Pellaea falcata</i> 1/11
<i>Adiantum raddianum</i> 'Triumph' 6/12	<i>Cyathea leichhardtiana</i> 8/12	<i>Pellaea hastata</i> 5/10
<i>Aleuritopteris kuhnii</i> 6/10	<i>Cyathea macarthuri</i> 10/10	<i>Pellaea viridis</i> 5/12
<i>Amphineuron opulentum</i> 7/11	<i>Cyathea medullaris</i> 10/12	<i>Phegopteris decursive-pinnata</i> 3/12
<i>Amphineuron queenslandicum</i> 4/12	<i>Cyathea rebecca</i> 8/12	<i>Pityrogramma calomelanos</i> 8/11
<i>Anemia phyllitides</i> 4/12	<i>Cyathea robusta</i> 9/10	<i>Platycterium bifurcatum</i> 'Venosum' Mt Lewis 10/07
<i>Anemia tomentosa</i> 8/11	<i>Cyrtomium caryotideum</i> 8/10	<i>Platycterium superbum</i> 4/08
<i>Angiopteris evecta</i> 11/09	<i>Cyrtomium fortunei</i> 6/10	<i>Pleisioneuron tuberculatus</i> 1/11
<i>Arachniodes aristata</i> 4/12	<i>Cyrtomium juglandifolium</i> 6/12	<i>Pneumatopteris sogerensis</i> 7/11
<i>Arachniodes mutica</i> 10/08	<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i> 8/12	<i>Pneumatopteris costata</i> 6/11
<i>Arachniodes standishii</i> 10/12	<i>Diplazium australe</i> 1/12	<i>Polypodium formosanum</i> 10/12
<i>Asplenium aethiopicum</i> 10/12	<i>Diplazium assimile</i> 7/12	<i>Polystichum aculeatum</i> 7/09
<i>Asplenium milnei</i> 10/10	<i>Diplazium dilatatum</i> 12/10	<i>Polystichum australiense</i> 10/12
<i>Asplenium nidus</i> 5/08	<i>Diplazium dilatatum</i> x <i>Deparia petersenii</i> v. <i>congrua</i> 3/11	<i>Polystichum formosum</i> 11/12
<i>Asplenium nidus</i> cv.5/08	<i>Doodia australis</i> 2/12	<i>Polystichum proliferum</i> 12/10
<i>Asplenium pellucidum</i> 3/11	<i>Dryopteris affinis</i> 'Cristata' 1/12	<i>Polystichum retroso-paleacum</i> 10/12
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> (red stipe) 12/10	<i>Dryopteris cycadina</i> 11/12	<i>Polystichum tsus-simense</i> 11/11
<i>Athyrium otophorum</i> 1/12	<i>Dryopteris erythrosora</i> 1/12	<i>Polystichum whiteleggei</i> 10/10
<i>Blechnum ambiguum</i> 1/08	<i>Dryopteris guanchica</i> 11/12	<i>Pronephrium asperum</i> 1/11
<i>Blechnum braziliense</i> 1/12	<i>Dryopteris sieboldii</i> 3/11	<i>Pteris aspericaulis</i> 8/10
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i> 4/12	<i>Dryopteris sparsa</i> 11/12	<i>Pteris biaurita</i> 3/12
<i>Blechnum discolor</i> 8/12	<i>Dryopteris watsii</i> 11/12	<i>Pteris dentata</i> 12/10
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i> 9/11	<i>Histiopteris incisa</i> 12/11	<i>Pteris hendersonii</i> 12/10
<i>Blechnum minus</i> 3/12	<i>Hypolepis glandulifera</i> 1/12	<i>Pteris pacifica</i> 12/12
<i>Blechnum patersonii</i> 4/11	<i>Hypolepis muelleri</i> 3/12	<i>Pteris stenophylla</i> 4/11
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> 1/12	<i>Lastreopsis acuminata</i> 10/12	<i>Pteris tremula</i> 11/10
<i>Blechnum watsii</i> 9/11	<i>Lastreopsis decomposita</i> 1/12	<i>Pteris umbrosa</i> 8/12
<i>Cheilanthes myriophylla</i> 3/12	<i>Lastreopsis marginans</i> 3/12	<i>Revwattsii fragile</i> 3/11
<i>Chingia australis</i> 11/12	<i>Lastreopsis microsora</i> 11/12	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i> (Cape form) 2/12
<i>Christella dentata</i> 3/12	<i>Lastreopsis nephrodioides</i> 4/12	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i> (native) 4/12
<i>Christella hispidula</i> /09	<i>Lastreopsis rufescens</i> 3/11	<i>Sphaerostephanos heterocarpus</i> 7/11
<i>Christella parasitica</i> 5/11	<i>Lastreopsis tenera</i> 3/11	<i>Teratophyllum brightiae</i> 8/11
<i>Christella subpubescens</i> 4/12	<i>Lygodium japonicum</i> 2/10	<i>Thelypteris patens</i> 9/09
<i>Cyathea australis</i> 1/12	<i>Lygodium reticulatum</i> 11/12	
<i>Cyathea baileyana</i> 11/12	<i>Macrothelypteris torresiana</i> 4/12	
<i>Cyathea brownii</i> 10/12	<i>Microlepis firma</i> 1/12	

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