



THE FERN
SOCIETY OF
VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

A record crowd attended our March Meeting to hear David Jones speak on Tropical Ferns in Australia. Members attended from as far away as Wangaratta, Carbour, Colac, Bendigo and Gippsland. We also had three guests from the Fern Society of South Australia. Alan Mortimer (President S.A.F.S.) and Dan and Bev Jaeger (Committee members S.A.F.S.).

We all learned a great deal about the ferns of tropical Australia and the environment in which they grow. Our thanks go to David for his very informative talk, and his excellent colour slides.

If anyone is interested in joining the South Australians on their Fern Society tour to Binna-Burra, Laminton National Park they can obtain further details from me. The return airfare and booking 30 days in advance is \$329.30 per person depending on the type of accommodation required.

Please Note: There will be no more competitions at our monthly meetings; instead we have what we hope will be of more interest to members. We will set up a specimen table and ask you to bring in any fern you like, ie, your best fern, or anything unusual, or perhaps a fern you want identified, or any problem plants.

BOOKS: We have the following books for sale on our book sales table, these books are also available to country and interstate members.

Postage and packaging prices are listed also, but PLEASE NOTE these prices do not apply for interstate orders. Please write to Lorraine Goudey for interstate prices.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PRICE</u>	<u>POSTAGE & PACKAGING</u>
Australian Ferns & Fern Allies	by Jones & Clemesha	\$15.40	please add \$2.05
Exotic Ferns In Australia	by Jones & Clemesha	\$11.50	please add \$2.05
Fern Growers Manual	by B.J. Hoshizaki	\$9.00	please add \$2.10
Growing Ferns	by Ray Best	\$3.20	please add \$1.40
Ferns of Victoria & Tasmania	by N.A. Wakefield	\$3.00	please add \$1.30
Flora of N.E. N.S.W.			
Part 1 Fern	by The Armadale University N.S.W.	\$1.75	please add \$1.00

Please note, Ferns for Modern Living is no longer available.

CHRIS GOUDEY
President

 NOT TO BE MISSED
 AT OUR APRIL MEETING, OUR GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE
 MR. PHILIP HICKS, OF THE GARDEN ADVISORY CENTRE.
 HE WILL BE SPEAKING ON "FERN PESTS" - AND IS SURE
 TO HAVE SOMETHING OF INTEREST TO ALL MEMBERS.
 COME ALONG, AND BRING A FRIEND.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS STOP PRESS ...
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As this Newsletter goes to print, reports are filtering through
 that the 2nd Annual Fern Show was an outstanding success - all
 the highlights will be included in next month's Newsletter.

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 STOP PRESS STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS STOP PRESS ...

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to extend a welcome to the following people who
 have become members of the Fern Society during the past few months.
 We hope that you find your membership rewarding, and enjoy the
 friendships you will most certainly make.

Mr. Brian Harrington, Mrs. Michael (Lalor & Thomastown Garden
 Club), Susan Howlett, Mr. & Mrs. David Coteril, Mr. I. Wood,
 K.W.B. Kelly, Sherylle Peacock, Mrs. Sue Evans, Milton Edwards,
 Graham Williams, Mrs. G. Stutchbury, Mr. F. A. Overall, Mr. Peter
 R. Duell, Mrs. V. G. Freeman, Mrs. Rosalie Williams, Mr. R. W. Barry,
 Mr. J. Canning, Mrs. Christine Elliot, Mrs. Lyn Church, Mr. E.
 Medforth, N. McCandish, Neville & Evelyn Blair.

Please note that all ferns sold at Fern Society meetings must be
 grown by members.

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE FERNS IN THE TROPICS

Part 1 of a talk given by Special Guest Speaker at the March meeting. Further extracts will be published over the coming issues of the Newsletter.

One of the largest audiences to attend the Fern Society's regular monthly meetings was on hand to hear noted authority on Ferns, David Jones, speak at the March Meeting. Two hundred and twenty members and guests attended.

David chose the topic to illustrate to the "southerners" the amazing variety and number of ferns growing in tropical areas, not necessarily in tropical rain forests. Until several years ago, he was a "native" of Victoria.

"One tends to think of the tropics as hot and wet with rain forest all over the place. I hope, by the time I have finished tonight, that I will have convinced you that it is the opposite -- it is hot and wet but the tropical rain forest is not everywhere", he said.

David did show us the extreme contrasts of the region through an extensive screening of slides. His pictures not only exhibited the species but highlighted the growing conditions of the ferns.

"In Australia we have about 118 genera and 420 species of ferns. That's not a very great population of ferns by standards such as countries of New Guinea", David said. But what he indicated was that 110 of the genera are found in the tropics and 370 species are also found there - 75% of Australia's ferns.

Some ferns found in the tropics like *Blechnum Nudum* extend all the way down the coast and then there are the others that are distinctly tropical.

There are three major tropical areas good for ferns, orchids and plants: North Eastern Queensland, Arnhem Land and the Kimberley Region of North West Australia. Most of these tropical areas are open forests and grasslands, not rain forests. In the open forests, where it is dry for a large part of the year, we don't find many ferns. There are huge swamps in these areas -- not common in the south -- and in these locations there is good development of ferns. "But the ferns really go mad in the rain forests", David said.

There are quite a few different sorts of rain forests in the tropics. David dealt with two -- those that are evergreen and retain their leaves all the year, keeping the forest floor dark -- and the deciduous or monsoonal forests, the ones that drop their leaves during the dry season. The latter forest not only creates mulch but also light on the forest floor. This is a very important factor in the north.

Shade in the tropics is a lot different to shade in other regions. David was not sure why this is so but felt that where there is shade in the temperate regions, plants still grow but the shade in the tropics -- a dense shade -- often nothing grows.

Rain forests in the tropics are not confined to the Northern Queensland area. There are extensive patches in the Northern Territory and in North West of Western Australia.

The other factor David impressed on us before showing us his slides was climatic conditions. In the tropics there is a distinct cycle -- the more tropical one goes, the more distinct it becomes. A wet season and a dry. The wet usually runs from December to April when 70-80% of the rain falls in those months. In those conditions the temperature and humidity are usually very high -- very oppressive. The dry season is dry -- no rain for six months.

"If you don't understand the climate, you don't understand the restrictions this puts on growth", David said. "This is a significant reason why many fern collectors in the south have many and repeated failures in trying to reproduce tropical ferns in temperate climates." For example, if you go to Cape York in the dry season, looking for spores, you are wasting your time. You get plants that die out completely in the dry.

"These are some of the things you have to consider when you get strange behaviour of plants in glasshouses. One of the ones that comes to mind is the Johnson River which is not an easy fern to maintain in cultivation. In nature, Johnson River Maidenhair grows on rocks and trees and on the bases of other epiphytes such as birdsnest ferns. I have seen Johnson River Maidenhair ferns actually shrivel until you can crush the leaves into a powder. At the onset of the rain, the leaves reactivate and there is a massive growth. The whole year's fronds are actually produced in two to three months. The plant doesn't grow for the rest of the year. I am convinced that people who keep Johnson River Maidenhair in glasshouses in warm and humid and wet conditions all the year round in glasshouses find that they never thrive," he said.

Some of the North Queensland areas do get rain in the winter -- the highland areas in parts receive 200 inches of rain. Other parts of the Cape York Peninsula might receive 20 - 30 points of rain from a coastal shower. He has seen areas which have been quite dry and arid of a morning, a shower overnight will reveal ferns on rocks which were not noticed before.

Fire is another climatic condition which affects fern growth in the tropics. Fires do not do much damage but they do modify the environment and push the rain forests back.

Next Month:

We continue David Jones' talk and deal specifically with types of ferns which grow in the various types of climatic conditions. And we will give you some of his reasons why they will not grow in the southern regions or things that people do wrong in trying to cultivate these ferns "down south".

NOTICE TO MEMBERS:

This space is available for you.

Any articles, cartoons, jokes, comments
(complimentary or otherwise) will be
most welcome.

Don't forget - this is YOUR newsletter!

QUESTION: Who was the gentleman who, in the excitement
of the Fern Show, managed to leave his car keys
in the door of his car?

(Don't worry, we won't tell a soul!)

CYRTOMIUM FALCATUM

by CHRIS GOUDEY

The Genus Cyrtomium consists of approximately 20 species which range from Japan to South Africa, Arizona to Venezuela.

Quite a number of species are in cultivation the most common of which is C. falcatum and its cultivars. Commonly known as the Japanese Holly Fern, this fern is native to the warmer regions such as China, Japan, South Africa, The Sandwich Islands and Madagascar. It has also escaped from cultivation and has naturalised in Florida U.S.A. and on coastal cliffs in central New South Wales. This fern is simply pinnate, the pinnal closely resemble the leaves of Holly which accounts for the common name.

The fronds of this fern can grow up to 90 cm with dark green glossy leaves, the sori are scattered in the back of the leaves.

C. falcatum is a hardy fern for growing in a fernery or garden situation; it seems to prefer being planted in a well drained slightly alkaline medium.

It is an easy quick growing fern to raise from spore in a cool situation away from the direct rays of the sun.

The cultivars 'Rochfordianum' and 'Butterfieldii' are commonly cultivated as well as a crested form known as a 'Mayl'.

LITERATURE CITED

Ferns of Florida	Lakela & Long 1976
Australian Ferns & Fern Allies	Jones & Clemesta 1976
Exotic Ferns in Australia	Jones & Goudey 1981
Ferns to Know & Grow	R.G. Foster 1976
Hardy Ferns	Reginald Kaye 1968
Handbook to the Ferns of British India	R.H. Beddume 1976
Ferns	Philip Perl 1979

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CYRTOMIUM
FALCATUM

by BARRY STAGOLL

"A TRIP TO THE INNERSANCTUM"

On Sunday, 21st March, even though it was quite hot, a very large number of Fern Society members was in attendance at the paradise of glass houses and magnificent fernery, owned by our President and his wife.

Over 100 members were given a guided tour and were able to see the magnificent collection of all types of ferns from around the world, too numerous to name.

When you arrive at Chris and Lorraine's property, you see a very large structure set well back and you wonder what the devil it is. But when you open the sliding door and step inside from the arid plains of Lara, the transformation is unbelievable, as Chris and Lorraine have created another world inside. The atmosphere is perfectly created for ferns.

The large variety of ferns is set out all around a circular pathway, with the smaller varieties in front and large tree ferns behind. To me one of the most important things, all ferns were named and place of origin marked.

Thanks must go to Kath and Jean for their organising of afternoon tea. And thanks are also due to all members who bought a plate and made quite a banquet of it and a great success.

So, many thanks to Chris and Lorraine from all the members, for allowing us the opportunity to inspect their pride and joy.

BILL TAYLOR

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A VERY USEFUL FERN

QUESTION: What fern has a 200 page book devoted to its growth and uses?

ANSWER: Azolla (believe it or not)

The book is "Azolla a Green Manure. Use and Management in Crop Production."

The Azolla is a small aquatic fern represented in Australia by two species - Azolla faliculoides and Azolla pinnata. It is an attractive pond plant but can overgrow. The excess Azolla may be a good fertiliser for your garden.

This book tells us that Azolla is used in China and Vietnam as a green manure in rice cultivation. The Azolla contains a blue green algae that lives symbiotically with the fern, fixing atmosphere nitrogen. Chinese rice farmers have exploited this nitrogen fixation potential for centuries.

The authors of the book are Thomas Lumpkin and Donald Plucknett of the University of Hawaii. The former has acted as an FAO specialist in Azolla production and has travelled in several Asian countries teaching Azolla management.

The contents of the book include history, botany distribution and physiology of Azolla, and its nursery culture, field cultivation, management in specific crops, pests, diseases, fish food and future potential.

Obviously Encyclopaedia Brittanica editors will need to revise their comment on ferns ie. "As a class of plants, ferns are not of much use to man".

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Sydney, NSW 2000. Phone: (02) 235 8100.



SPECIES IN SHORT SUPPLY - APRIL:

If ordering species from the following list, please include a supplementary list in case supplies run out. All species on the march list should be still available.

Spore samples may be purchased at monthly meetings, or by sending a list of your requirements with 20 cents for each species, plus 40 cents for packaging and postage, to Mr. R. Hill, 41 Kareela Road, Frankston, 3199.

Payment for orders may be made by postage stamp (24 cent stamps preferred where possible) or by cheque (payable to "Fern Society of Victoria").

NOTE: Instructions on propagation from spore are also still available for an extra 5 cents.

- ACROSTICHUM AUREUM(8-79)
 ADIANTUM PHILIPPENSE(12-81)
 RADIANTUM 'FRAGRANTISSIMUM'(8-80)
 RADIANTUM 'TRIUMPH'(8-80)
 TENERUM 'VICTORIAE'(12-81)
 SP.(PUBESCENS?)(6-80)
 ANEMIA OREGANA(11-80)
 ASPLENIUM TRICHOMANES(6-80)
 ATHYRIUM NIPONICUM(9-80)
 BLECHNUM VULCANICUM(3-80)
 * BOLBITIS QUOYANA(10-80)
 CAMPYLONEURON PHYLLITIDIS(5-80)
 CHEILANTHES CALIFORNICA(6-80)
 CIBOTIUM CUMINGII(10-80)
 'PESALE(5-80)
 CONIOGRAMME FRAXINEA(7-81)
 CYATHEA DECURRENS(3-81)
 WOOLLSIANA(8-79)
 * DAVALLIA PYXIDATA(1-82)
 DICKSONIA LANATA(?)
 SP.(OLD)(5-80)
 DOODIA CAUDATA(4-80)
 DORYOPTERIS PEDATA(11-80)
 DRYOPTERIS AUSTRIACA(?)
 ERYTHROSORA(?)
 GOLDIANA(?)
 SPARSA(7-81)
 SPINULOSA(?)
 SP.(DREADES?)(6-80)
 GLEICHENIA MICROPHYLLA(10-80)
 HYPOLEPIS AUSTRALIS(1-81)
 LASTREOPSIS TINARODENSIS(1-80)
 LINDSAEA LINEARIS(1-82)
 MICROSORIUM DIVERSIFOLIUM(2-80)
 PARKSII('82)
 NEPHROLEPIS BISERRATA(12-77)
 HIRSUTULA(4-80)
 OPHIOGLOSSUM LUSITANICUM CORIACEUM(12-81)
 OSMUNDA REGALIS(CONTORTED)(12-79)
 POLYSTICHUM ACROSTICHOIDES(?)
 ANDERSONII(?)
 SCOPULINUM('78)
 PTERIS CRETICA(1-82)
 SELLIGUEA FEEI(?)
 LIMA(?)
 SPHAEROSTEPHANOS LASTREOIDES(?)
 STICHERUS LOBATUS(2-80)
 SYNGRAMMA ALISMIFOLIA(12-80)
 TECTARIA MUELLERI(7-80) *
 THELYPTERIS LAXA(8-77)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some members keep a club so strong,
While others join just to belong.
Some dig right in, some serve with pride,
Some go along just for the ride.
Some volunteer to do their share, while
Some lie back and just don't care.
Some do their best, some help, some make,
Some do nothing, only take.
Some greet new members with a smile,
And make their coming so worthwhile.
While some go on their merry way, with
Never a greeting or kind word to say.
Some help the club to grow and grow,
When asked to help, they don't say 'no'.
Some drag, some pull, some don't, some do -
CONSIDER WHICH OF THOSE IS YOU.

Could your business benefit
from an advertisement placed
in the Fern Society Newsletter?

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Half page	\$17.50
Quarter page	\$10.00
Eighth of page	\$ 5.00

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an advertisement, just give
the Editor a call - he'll be
happy to help you.



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY	DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
APRIL	FERN PESTS by Philip Hicks, Garden Advisory Centre
MAY 13TH	FERNS OF THE OTWAYS by Trevor Prescott, Botanist
JUNE 11TH	THE FAMILY POLYPODIUM by Chris Goudey

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