

**THE  
FERN SOCIETY**

**OF  
VICTORIA**

**Inc.**

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**NEWSLETTER**

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**PRESIDENTS REPORT.**

As we commence our bicentenary year we take up our new venue and it is my hope that 1988 will prove to be a significant period in the life of our Society.

All meetings for 1988 will be at the Welsh Presbyterian Church Hall, 320 Latrobe Street, Melbourne on the second Thursday of each month. (dates on back page)

Chris Goudey will be our first speaker in February and our March meeting will take the form of a fern study night.

Our 3rd edition of Society glasses are selling well so be sure you obtain yours at our next meeting.

We have two projects planned to promote our society during March, the first:-

"Gardening made easy"

Sunday March 20th Nunawading Horticultural Centre  
12.00 Noon - 4.00 p.m.

the second:- Royal Melbourne Show Grounds  
Thursday 24, Friday 25, Saturday 26th March.

Our role will be to mount a mixed information/display/demonstration/sales stand.

Displays will not be extensive and should take no more than one hour to assemble and disassemble. We will need members living in these areas to assist so please keep these dates free. Further details in March newsletter.

December meeting - Special Effort.

Door Prize 5 tier stand	-	Beth Ward
Christmas Cake	-	Barry White
Hampers	-	Albert Ward
		Gloria Tinkler
		Mavis Potter
		Keith Crellin
		Kevin Tinkler
Platyterium bifurcatum	-	June Pritchard

In closing I would like to thank Mary Frost and Dorothy Forte for their excellent presentation under difficult circumstances at our Christmas meeting also all the members who participated in making it a memorable finale to our year.

kindest Regards, Keith Hutchinson.

..Thursday February 11 ..

New Venue !!

Welsh Presbyterian

Church Hall

320 Latrobe st

Melbourne

SEE DIAGRAM - PAGE 11.

SPEAKER - CHRIS GOUDEY

SUBJECT - TREE FERNS

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Harold Olney, one of our foundation members and possibly the finest grower of Adiantums in Victoria has decided, due to indifferent health to sell some of his choicest ferns. Society members will be given preference and can contact Harold by phone on 870. 0513.

We remember Harold in the early years of our Society for his very informative talks which gave members an excellent grounding in fern culture. We wish Harold and his wife Rita all the best for our bicentenary year.

Keith Hutchinson.

SPEAKER REPORT - General Meeting, 10th December, 1987.

SPEAKERS: Mary Frost and Dorothy Forte

TITLE: Nephrolepis

1. The Potting Mixture.

Mary emphasised the need for a special potting mixture for the Nephrolepis genus. She said that the mixture should be light and open but heavily laced with cow manure. For best results the cow manure needs to be just dry enough to pass through a garden mulching machine. Cow manure older than that is useless.

In support of Mary's statement relating to cow manure, Chris Goudey reported that Orm Gould; a leading fern grower and fern Nurseryman of the 1970's, fed his ferns on liquid fertilizer made from fresh cow manure diluted with water. Orm Gould's ferns were always magnificent.

Mary's mixture is composed of leaf mould, tree fern fibre, pulverized cow manure and polystyrene beads. Mary explained that the polystyrene beads are used for drainage in preference to sand or gravel, simply because sand makes large baskets much too heavy to maintain.

2. Watering.

Special care should be taken with the watering of Nephrolepis. In winter they should be allowed to dry out and must on no account be foliage sprayed. Many of the fancy specimens will turn brown in colour and rot if heavy foliage is made wet.

Another point which Mary made on watering is to use the same potting mixture throughout the fernery. If this is done it is possible to do the watering with a more equitable distribution.

3. Aesthetics.

Mary said that most Nephrolepis are very accommodating, providing a touch of finesse to the overall beauty of the fern house scene; they hang beautifully but need space and a good circulation of air around them to keep them in top condition.

4. Specimen Fronds.

Mary and Dorothy brought fronds of Nephrolepis to the meeting and distributed these among Members. If these fronds were any indication then the plants from which they were taken must have been truly spectacular.

We were able to handle fronds which were fine and dense, some tasselled and others fingered on the ends with a spread as large as a person's hand.

Mary provided names for dozens of the Nephrolepis displayed. Among these were: N. Mrs. N.P. Mills, Kimberley Queen, Cascades, Whiteii, Petticoats, Bisurrata Furcans, Cordifolia Formosa, Verona, Fluffy Ruffles, Mrs. Long and Magnifica.

5. Basketing a Nephrolepis.

Mary pointed out that because Nephrolepis grow into such huge plants, it is an advantage to have detachable holding wires on the baskets. When conventional wire holders are used it is often necessary to cut them in order to carry out routine maintenance.

Dorothy demonstrated the transfer of a Nephrolepis from pot to wire basket. For outside liner she used a liberal layer of bush moss. The bush moss was in a fresh state and looked nice and green when compacted into the contours of the basket. Inside the bush moss Dorothy fitted a piece of perforated black plastic upon which she spread a layer of potting mix. The plant was then inserted with it's root block undisturbed and the stolons twined around the root block. Dorothy emphasised that the stolons should not be cut off; they are the means by which new plants arise. Potting mix was then added and pressed firmly around the root block to complete the exercise.

6. The Exhibition of Members Ferns.

Members had responded beautifully to the President's call for a special display of Nephrolepis for the Christmas Meeting. Derek Griffiths had brought in and assembled an excellent steel frame on which Members ferns were hung and shown off to perfection. Mary discussed each plant in turn, providing names for some, cultural hints for others and even the historic backgrounds of a few.

7. The Colour Slides.

The presentation concluded with a screening of colour slides depicting some magnificent specimens of Nephrolepis. The photographs were taken inside Mary's fern house and highlighted the points made during the talk. It was noticed that the plants were not congested but were given good light and room to breathe. The fern baskets were hung on tautly strung barbed wire. Mary said that the barbed wire prevented the baskets from sliding. Mary concluded the slide presentation with a few photographs taken on the excursion to Tasmania earlier this year.

Vote of Thanks.

Bernadette Blastock ably moved a vote of thanks to Mary and Dorothy expressing appreciation of the practical and helpful nature of the presentation. The audience agreed wholeheartedly.

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NOTES FROM WESTLAND LABORATORIES ON NEPHROLEPIS.

<u>BOSTONIENSIS</u>	Old fashioned long boston fern. Most suited to hanging baskets.
<u>BOSTON COMPACTA</u>	Compact form of the above. Suited to pots or baskets.
<u>BOSTON COMPACTA IMPROVED</u>	An even tighter boston with short fronds. Suitable for advanced plants in pots.
<u>ROOSEVELTI</u>	Slightly frilly form of Boston compacta. Suited to pots or baskets.
<u>FLUFFY RUFFLES</u>	Extremely tight and frilly fern for pots or small baskets.
<u>VERONA</u>	The finest of the lace ferns, keep slightly dry and suited to pots or baskets.
<u>DALLAS QUEEN</u>	Continued over . . . . .

DALLAS QUEEN

is a compact hardy fern with dark green foliage - a true rising star from Texas - its original home.

'Dallas Queen' has a neat elegance which holds its feathery appearance under most conditions. The feathery cloak about her has a gentle appearance - and like most feathers are tough and protective. Her feathers hold tight to her for added elegance and charm.

A special feature of 'Dallas Queen' is the occasional rising of an indian feather, straight and broad rising from within. If the groomer feels that these feathers are out of place, simple removal will ensure her compact appearance. As new generations arrive, these incidents of indian feather will decrease.

'Dallas Queen' is reported to prefer a relatively high light to grow fully compacted, and if for some reason her light is restricted then 'Dallas Queen' will have longer feathers - but still retaining her uniqueness (approx. 30,000 - 50,000 lux per m<sup>2</sup>).

Dallas Queen is something new and unique.

Dallas Queen is another true queen from the royal House of Nephrolepis.

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THE FERN SOCIETY LIBRARY - LIST OF BOOKS.

The Fern Society Library is a service available to members. Books can be borrowed at monthly meetings. The loan period is one month and 20 cents per book is charged. Books cannot be borrowed by those members unable to attend meetings.

1. Australian Ferns and Fern Allies by D.L. Jones & S.C. Clemesha
2. Exotic Ferns in Australia by D.L. Jones and C.J. Goudey
3. Ferns and Fern Allies of New Zealand by E. Heath and R. J. Chinnock.
4. Fern Growers Manual by B. J. Hoshizaki.
5. Ferns for Modern Living by E. Davenport.
6. Growing Ferns by Ray Best.
7. Ferns of Victoria and Tasmania by N. A. Wakefield.
8. The Fern Dictionary by W. W. Olson.
9. Platycerium Fern Facts by W. Franks.
10. Ferns and Clubmosses by S. Rooke and T. Y. Stead.
11. Students Flora of N.S.W. - Pteridiophytes by N.C.W. Beadle
12. Welsh Ferns by H. A. Hyde
13. Irish Ferns by D. Synnott

14. Home Gardener's Book of Ferns by J. Mickel
15. Ferns for the Home and Garden by G. Dunk
16. Platycerium Hobbists Handbook by R. Vail.
17. Ferns from Mother Nature
18. Fern Collector's Guide
19. Observers Book of Ferns.
20. Heineman Guide to Common Epiphytic Ferns of Malaysia and Singapore by A. Piggot.
21. Ferns by Roger Grounds
22. Plants and Landscape in Westland National Park by P. Wardle
23. Beginner's Guide to Fern Study.
24. Flora of Malaya Vol II - Ferns by Holttum
25. Collins Guide to the Ferns Mosses and Lichens of Britain and Northern Ireland and Central Europe by H. M. Johns
26. Ferns - Time Life Book of Gardening
27. Ferns for the Garden and Greenhouse by P. Swindells
28. Feasting on Fiddleheads - American Fern Society
29. Ferns, Fern Allies and Conifers of Australia by H.T. Clifford
30. Ferns, A Handbook - Brooklyn Botanical Gardens
31. Ferns in Australia by D. L. Jones & C. J. Goudey
32. Common Ferns and Fern Allies (NZ) by R.J. Chinnock
33. Gardening with N. Z. Ferns by M. E. Fisher
34. Ferns of Jamaica by Proctor
35. A Guide to Hardy Ferns by R. Rush
37. N.Z. Ferns in your Garden by Fisher and Ward.
38. Ferns for Ferneries by R. W. Martin
39. Ferns and Allied Plants of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia by B. Duncan and G. Isaac
40. Ideas from Private Gardens by McMaster and Edmanson
41. Encyclopedia of Ferns by D. L. Jones.

The books numbered 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 29, 31, 36, 39, and 41 in the above list were published in Australia and deal with either Australian growing conditions or ferns.

The books numbered 2, 4, 5, 6, 15, 31 and 41 would be suitable books for beginners.

David Radford.  
Librarian.

As I believe the Nephrolepis species have been rather neglected recently, to further our knowledge of this fern I am adding the speaker report of the W.A. Fern Society to our newsletter. With thanks to the W.A. Fern Society and Mr. Bill Poole.

Acting Editor Keith Hutchinson

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FERN OF THE MONTH SPEAKER    MR BILL POOLE

After the hussle and bussle of the annual general meeting it was refreshing to get back to doing what we do best and thats growing ferns. Bill Poole in his usual relaxed manner, Started by saying that the NEPHROLEPIS variety are old as the world itself explaining that ferns and in particular nephrolepis are the worlds first known growth and are the basis of the worlds coal deposits of today. More than 400 varieties of nephrolepis are known, with the best known the boston fern, this is often refered to as the beginners fern, because it is easy to grow and to propagate and is a stolon grower and will reproduce its self many times in this manner. Bill had on show a very large boston in a 125mm pot, it was well and truly pot bound, and he showed us how the stolons grew from the rizome, Another plant he brought in was a neglected, as well as a pot bound lacy nephrolepis, with this pot Bill was able to demonstrate repotting procedures, and from this demonstration small pots were donated as raffle prizes.

Some of the more lacy types of fern are often refered to as crazy ferns because they will mutata many times. Most Nephrolepis are best grown under 75% to 80% shadecloth.

Mr RAY AITKEN the founder of the W.A Wildflower nursery discovered a uniquely Western Australian fern and named it Nephrolepis Obliterata Kimberley King, and Kimberley queen which was named the house plant of the year in 1982, these are a hardy fern from the North West of our state, unlike the Randolphii which is very temperamental and the simple act of cutting off a frond may kill the plant. A very attractive fern is the fan dancer with its 1m long fronds which are lighter i colour than the average Nephrolepis, this fern is prone to attack from meally bug, and growers should watch for them, Bill then discussed two king ferns and their weeping habits, All Nephrolepis prefer an acid soil within the range of 5.5% to 6% consisting of german peat, pine needles, and a course material like sand to provide a well drained soil, you can include charcoal and even some slow release fertiliser like Osocote.

when feeding your Nephrolepis, you can use old cow manure (used like weak tea) or a commercai product like Zest or Phostrogen both of which are high in Nitrogen.

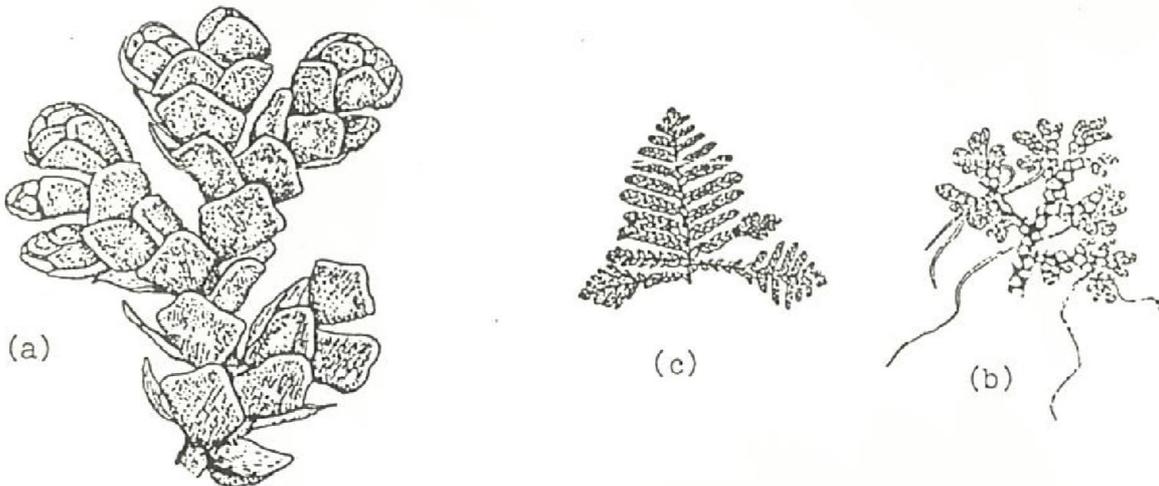
Of the few aquatic or semi-aquatic ferns to be found in Tasmania, Azolla is probably the most abundant. A. filiculoides is a small free-floating fern found on relatively still fresh waters such as lagoons, swamps, dams and backwaters of creeks and small rivers. Examples in Tasmania include Copper Creek in the north west, the Melaleuca swamps behind Bakers Beach (central north) and numerous dams and watercourses in the Upper Derwent and Huon Valleys.

Each individual plant of A. filiculoides is roughly 1 to 2cm square. It is much branched with many small close-set overlapping leaves which mostly conceal the stems. As mentioned earlier, the plants are free-floating (i.e. not rooted in soil), with the roots hanging freely to a depth of up to 5cm from the underside of the plant. Apart from the overall shape of the fern, the presence or absence of numerous fine lateral rootlets off the main roots distinguishes A. filiculoides from the other Australian species - A. pinnata. The roots of A. pinnata do possess these fine side roots, but so far as known, does not occur in Tasmania.

Azolla very rarely produces spore, its usual means of propagation being dispersal of the branch ends (which all continue growing and branching) as the base of the plant decays with age. By this means Azolla literally carpets large areas of the water surface. This carpet is a light green colour in shady areas or takes on a distinctive purplish-red colouration in full sun. This latter colour is a dead give away if ever you're driving through open farm land with stock dams and water courses. In periods of heavy rain the majority of the plants may get washed away by flooding, but enough stays behind to rejuvenate the population. Azolla is non-wettable and will immediately return to the surface if dunked.

A. filiculoides also occurs in most mainland states, as well as NZ, Nth. and Sth. America, and is naturalized in Europe. A. pinnata is predominately a fern of warmer climates.

As a matter of interest, there is a free floating liverwort (Ricciocarpus natans) that is quite often found growing with Azolla.



(a) A. filiculoides (x8)

(b) A. filiculoides (x1)

(c) A. pinnata (x1)

Reference and drawings taken from 'Aquatic Plants Of Australia' by Helen I. Aston.

By courtesy of the Tasmanian Fern Society.

ASPLENIUM BARTLETTIROD PATRISON

This is a new *Asplenium* which I found near Monto, in the Burnett area, Q'ld.

The fern bears some resemblance to *Asplenium Polyodon*. However *Bartletti* has coarser textured fronds with lobed pinnae and is a lithophyte. Fronds are to 65 cms, with some having a single bulbil near the apex.

Spore will be made available to the trade as soon as possible.





# Maxicrop

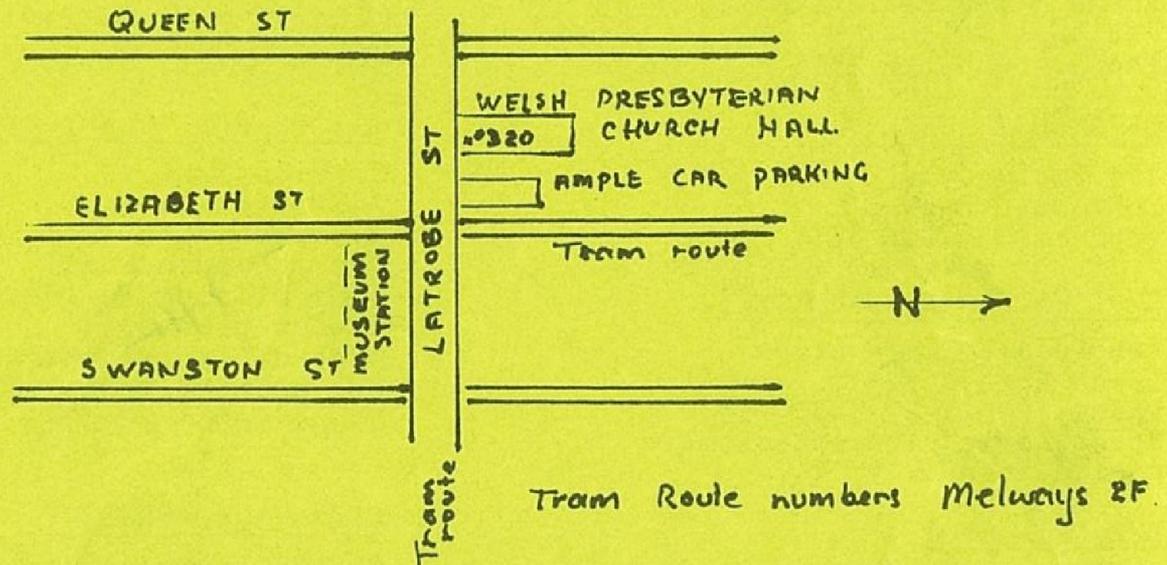
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#### QUEENSLAND.

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D I A R Y   D A T E S .

VENUE - WELSH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL -320 LATROBE ST. MELBOURNE

February	11	August	11
March	10	September	8
April	14	October	13
May	12	November	10
June	9	December	8
July	14		

NOTE: In the event of a power strike on the evening of any meeting, we regret that the meeting must be cancelled.

BUYERS' GUIDE TO FERN NURSERIES.

VICTORIA.

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VICTORIA.

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