

FERN STUDY GROUP - SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

NEWSLETTER NO. 7.

MARCH, 1979.

Leader: Mrs. Gerry Parker,  
7 Blackbutts Road,  
French's Forest.  
N.S.W. 2086.

Hon. Treasurer:  
Mrs. Fay Low,  
151 Raglan Street,  
MOSMAN. N.S.W. 2088.

You will notice that we have a change of leader for our Group - this is mainly for convenience as our group is run by a committee based in Sydney. Steve will still be writing for our newsletter and giving us assistance.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: The time has now come to call in subscriptions. Will all members who have not paid within the last six months please send \$1 to our Treasurer (address above). If subs are not paid we will assume that you no longer wish to remain a member of the group, though we would appreciate a note to this effect.

MEMBERSHIP: A suggestion of dual membership has been suggested for all study group members -

- (a) Passive members - who receive newsletters only
- (b) Active members - who are prepared to grow, record and report to the leader. This group will have access to the spore bank.

Would all members please indicate in which group they wish to participate.

SPORE BANK: Pressure of work makes it necessary for Ray Best to give up keeping the spore bank. Please accept my grateful thanks on behalf of all members Ray for the work you have put into the Spore Bank in the past.

It will now be run by Molly Murray and Gwen Hardwick and all requests to be addressed to Mrs. M. Murray, 25 Nowill Street, RYDLEMERE, N.S.W. 2116. Please send a stamped addressed envelope and limit your request to no more than six ferns at one time. If the bank is to succeed we will need members to send in spores. We are particularly interested in getting spores from more unusual ferns. Queensland members - can you collect for us?

COLLECTING SPORES: (Further to query - When are spores ripe?)

Most spores are located in clusters on the back of mature fronds. They can be from one-sixteenth to an eighth of an inch wide and may be round, oblong or linear. Occasionally sporangia are scattered over the entire undersurface of the frond or born on modified portions of the leaf. Some ferns produce spores all year while others are seasonal. Check first with a 10x lens to make sure that the spores are ripe. When the sporangia (spore cases) begin to ripen most will turn from green to light brown, and then to a medium or dark shiny brown (in some, mature sporangia are yellow or orange - even green). Dull, frayed-looking sporangia have already shed their spores. Pick the fronds just as most of the sporangia are turning light to medium brown. If indusia (the covering over the sporangia) are present they will be intact, will look firm, and will usually - depending on the species - be light brown, gold or nearly black. Green indusia indicate the spores are not ripe. Shed or shrivelled indusia indicate ~~that the sporangia may have shed their spores.~~ Plump sporangia without a cracked wall still have their spores, whereas frayed ones or ones with cracks or slits have shed their spores. Collecting spores on a cool dull day reduces loss of spores or contamination.

Please see also last Newsletter (No. 6) for reprint of Ray Best's information on collecting spores.

Now how about it members - have a go at it anyway!... and send them in to the ~~xxxx~~ Spore Bank.

If we are to function successfully as a Study Group we are going to need more feed back from members. I would like to hear from you now what native ferns you are growing and under what conditions - can you list the ferns you have please?

EXOTIC FERNS WHICH HAVE BECOME NATURALISED IN AUSTRALIA  
- by Steve Clemesha

A number of ferns native to overseas countries have become naturalized in Australia. Some have spread to areas remote from civilization and are easily mistaken for native species. In addition to this some native species have become established in areas outside their natural habitats.

PITYROGRAMMA CHRYSOPHYLLA (L) Link - The Gold Dust Fern is a plant which grows in tufts and it has the general habit of a Polystichum. The new uncoiling fronds and the backs of the new fronds are covered in fine waxy powder. These are sometimes mistaken for the spores which are brown. It is a native to South America and is now widespread in Queensland. A number of years ago it was reported from the Gibraltar Range. It is now common in a number of areas of the North Coast and grows in at least four locations in the Coffs Harbour district. Favourite habitats are on road banks and in full sun and often in fairly dry positions. It is plentiful in the Lismore - Ballina area and seems very much at home on the red soil road banks in the area. Its clumps have a characteristic appearance and I know of locations where plants can be seen easily while driving along the Pacific Highway. Two of these locations are near Ballina and the third is near Tweed Heads.

PITYROGRAMMA CALOMELANOS (L) Link - Also is a South American native and it is a weed in many tropical countries. It is very similar to P. chrysophylla but where that species has gold powder this one has silver. It also is very hardy and grows in full sun in open positions. Though well established in North Queensland it does not appear to have established itself in the south.

SELAGINELLA KREUSSIANA (KUNZE) A.Br. - Creeping Club Moss is commonly cultivated in shady positions in gardens and fern houses. Some people regard it as a nuisance. It is a native of Africa and has become established in some cool moist areas of Victoria. I also have seen it in Sydney but possibly from plants that were dumped there.

SALVINIA AURICULATA Aublet - This is a free floating aquatic and is regarded as a threat to tropical water ways, as is the water hyacinth. It spreads rapidly in warm climates and has been recorded from Queensland and Northern New South Wales (widespread) and Western Australia where it is reported to have been eradicated. Often it is cultivated in goldfish ponds. It is a native of Central and South America and it should not be cultivated in tropical and subtropical climates because of the danger of it spreading.

BLECHNUM OCCIDENTALE L - From South America is reported to have become naturalised on the banks of the Daintree River in North Queensland. It is very similar in appearance B. vulcanicum from Tasmania and New Zealand and it has been mistaken for this species.

NATIVE SPECIES:

PTERIS VITTATA L - is widespread through tropical and temperate areas of Asia but in Australia it is comparatively rare and seems to prefer limestone areas and rocky gorges. It has become naturalized in sandstone walls and crevices of a Sydney suburb - Castlecrag. It also appeared on disturbed ground near Coffs Harbour, N.S.W.

PTERIS TREMULA R.Br. Is a native of all Australian States except Western Australia. It also occurs in Central Australia, New Zealand, Norfolk Island and Fiji. It is a very weedy species and comes up readily in gardens and at the base of moist walls. It is a common colonizing plant in some harbourside and bayside suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. Individual plants are fast growing and are sometimes mistaken for young tree ferns. They are short lived and persist only for a few years. The spores are very easily raised and it is a common "Ring in".

CYATHEA COOPERI (Hook. ex F. Muell.) Domin - A number of tree fern species are colonizers being among the first plants to come up in disturbed areas in suitable habitats. Cyathea australis and Cyathea leichhardtiana come up along disused roads in rain forest in the Coffs Harbour area. C. robertsiana does a similar thing in north Queensland. Around Sydney in the hilly sandstone suburbs Cyathea cooperi commonly appears along gutters, in disturbed bushland near houses and on moist brick walls. It is rare in undisturbed bushland of the area. A colony has also become established along creek banks in the Bedforddale area of Western Australia. It, originally, was reported as Cyathea australis.

SYDNEY REGION MEMBERS:

Next Meeting: At Geoff Edward's Nursery - "Glen Haven", 67 Glen Haven Road (cnr.Holland Road) Glen Haven...  
April 22nd - 2 p.m. (Directions: Travel to Round Corner, turn left and proceed along Old Northern Road, turn right at Glenhaven Road (if you pass Nock & Kirby's Nursery, you have gone too far).

At this meeting we will discuss the genus ASPLENIUM. Would you please bring any specimens, particularly unusual ones, of this genus you may have.

GLOUCESTER TRIP: This was a week-end trip - particularly successful - due in large part to the efforts of Vern Rowney in organizing permission from local farmers to visit their properties. At our last meeting it was decided that, to show our appreciation, we would make a presentation of a book each to Vern Rowney and Herb Rudkin from members who took part in that excursion. The cost was \$1.30 per person on that trip, payable to me. I have since received thank you notes from them both and an offer from Herb for our members to visit his property again any time they wish. I noted the following ferns in this area - would you please let me know if you saw any others:

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Adiantum aethiopicum    | Blechnum cartilagineum |
| " hispidulum            | Dictymia brownii       |
| " formosum              | Lastriopsis ? munita   |
| Arthropteris tenella    | " marginans            |
| Asplenium attenuatum    | Pteris umbrosa         |
| " (nidus) australasicum | Platyserium superbum   |
| " falcatum              | Pyrossia confluens     |
|                         | " rupestris            |

Our last excursion to the Royal National Park and Otford was also very rewarding.

INTERSTATE MEMBERS: Is there anything you would like particularly published in the newsletter? Please let me know.

FERN GROUP IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA - Mrs. G.I. (Rhonda) White of 6 Cooloon Court, Queens Park North, W.A. 6107, has started a fern group in W.A. Already it has over 30 members. Rhonda is a keen letter writer and has a large fern collection herself. She is interested in writing to eastern state members, exchanging plants by post, etc. We look forward to hearing of her results in cultivating native ferns in W.A. Eastern State members may not be aware that Western Australia has very few native ferns so their cultivation could be quite a challenge.

BOB COVENY: Who has been so helpful to our group is having rather a grim time in hospital - going on for ten weeks now - with bowel and bladder problems. All our members wish you well Bob and we hope you will soon be well and joining us again in our excursions. (He's at North Shore Hospital for members who might be interested in sending him a card or message)

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ADDITIONS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST - MARCH, 1979.

N.S.W.

Mrs. W.M. Muntz, 3 Ayres Road, ST. IVES. 2075.  
Mrs. J. Piper, 9 Terranora Road, BANORA POINT. 2413.  
Mrs. J. Beaumont, 66 Wrights Road, DRUMMOYNE. 2047.  
Mrs. D. Magnusson, 8 Kiwong St., Yowie BAY. 2228.  
Mr. N. May, 88 New North Rocks Road, NORTH ROCKS. 2151.  
Mr. J. Schotte, 39 Fisher Road, MARAYLYA. 2765.  
Mr. & Mrs. S. Jack, 16 Railway Parade, WARRIMOO. 2775.  
Mr. P. Frybort, 13 Carranya Road, LANE COVE. 2066.  
Mr. & Mrs. C. Cash, Nambucca Valley Palm Nursery, NAMBUCCA HEADS. 2448.

NORTHERN TERRITORY:

Mrs. H.C. Cuff, P.O. Box 1271, Katherine. 5780.

VICTORIA:

Delete: Mrs. H. Hassett, 20 Elm Grove, Parkdale, 3149.  
Add: Mr. & Mrs. J.M. Muir, 78 Railway Avenue, Garfield. 3814.  
Miss S. Ashton, 28 Polaris Drive, East Doncaster. 3109.

ADDITIONAL N.S.W.:

Mrs. P. Brown, 254 Edgar Street, CONDELL PARK. 2250.  
Mr. J.J. Wenke, 113 Commercial Street, WALLA WALLA. 2659.  
Mr. A. Sharp, 20 Kirby Street, RYDALMERE. 2116.  
Mrs. B. Walker, 169 Dartford Road, NORMANHURST. 2120.  
D. Cliffe & D. Perryman, 13 Meringo Street, NARROMINE. 2821.  
Mrs. Joan Doney, 64 Cary Street, Wyoming. 2251.

Change of Address:

Mr. G.T. Edwards - delete North Turrumurra address - replace with 67 Glenhaven Road, Glenhaven. 2154.

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May I welcome all new members to our Group and hope that you will find much enjoyment and interest in study and exchange of information offered by this group.

Gerry Parker.