



**THE  
FERN SOCIETY**

**OF  
VICTORIA**

**Inc.**

REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST: PUBLICATION No. VBH3411

**NEWSLETTER**

Volume 11, Number 5, May 1989



# FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. Box 45,  
Heidelberg West, Victoria, Australia, 3081

## OFFICE BEARERS:

President:	Robert Lee	Ph.	-	836 1528
Immed. Past Pres.:	Keith Hutchinson		-	45 2997
Vice-Presidents:	John Oliver		-	879 1976
	Terry Turney		-	211 8169
Treasurer:	Albert Ward		-	459 4392
Secretary:	Bernadette Blackstock		-	391 5517
Spore Bank Manager:	Barry White		-	337 9793
Membership Secretary:	John Oliver		-	879 1976
Editor:	Terry Turney		-	211 8169

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Family - \$16.00 (Pensioners - \$11.00);  
Overseas - A\$25.00 (by Airmail).  
(Subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

A report on our 1989 Fern show has been deferred to next month's Newsletter. At this stage, I would just like to thank everyone who took part in the activities of the Show and especially my fellow members of the Show Committee for their efforts in organizing and running the event.

With our 10th Annual General Meeting due in just 3 months, it is appropriate that we begin to give thought now to filling the Committee and other positions that are essential to the proper functioning of our Society in its 11th year. We absolutely must have someone as Secretary to replace Bernadette Blackstock, who was good enough to agree to fill the position for this current year, even though she was extremely busy with other activities. Terry Turney, who fills dual roles as a Vice-President and as Newsletter Editor has had a large increase in his professional commitments, which limits his availability.

The Vice-President's position should be filled from within the Committee, thus giving at least one vacancy there when election time comes. To ensure continuity of publication of our Newsletter, it would be most desirable have someone function officially as Deputy Editor. With the plans Terry has with the Newsletter, this could be a very interesting position with, of course, great value to the Society. If anyone would like to consider the role, then please speak to Terry.

The Secretary will put a formal call for nominations in the Newsletter in due course. In the meantime please give some thought to you would be willing to contribute to the functioning of your Society.



Best regards,

Bob Lee



## NEXT MEETING

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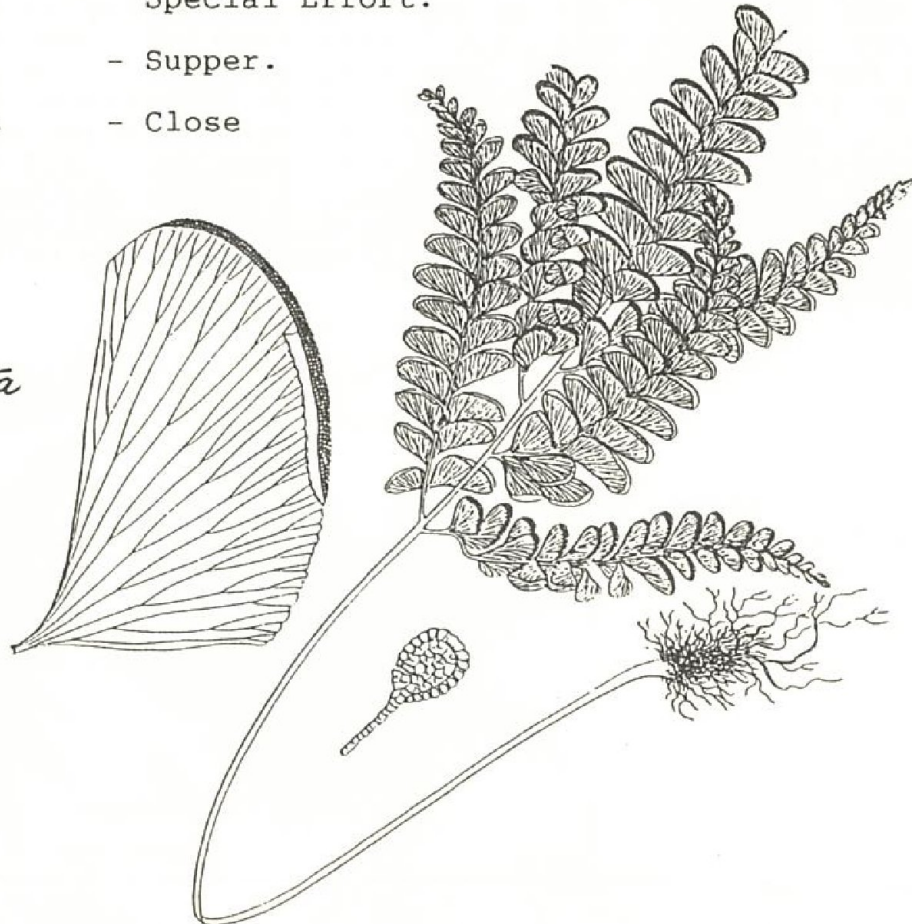
at 7.30 p.m.

Thursday, 11th May  
at the Welsh Presbyterian Church  
320 LaTrobe St., Melbourne.  
Talks by Bill Taylor  
and Barry White

#### • PROGRAMME:

- 7.30 p.m. - Fern and Book Sales,  
Spore Bank,  
Library Loans,  
Special Effort Ticket Sales
- 8.00 p.m. - May General Meeting
- 8.30 p.m. - Talks by Bill Taylor  
and Barry White
- 9.30 p.m. - Fern Pathology and Identification Table.  
Special Effort.
- 9.45 p.m. - Supper.
- 10.00 p.m. - Close

*Lindsaea*  
*caudata*



## MY INTEREST IN FERNS

by  
Ray Best

Possibly my first association with ferns came from my paternal grandfather Mr Fred Best of Flemington in New South Wales. He was a wonderful gardener (essential vegetables and fruit trees mainly), as well as an excellent builder. He was keen on co-opting his grandson in garden work, including mowing all his lawns with a hand mower. As a side line he had constructed a circular domed fern house that contained many specimens. However I must admit that I demonstrated no interest whatsoever in these at the time. My interest quickened during my Christmas Holidays from school; which were spent at my aunt's cottage at Lawson on the Blue Mountains of New South Wales. As was the general practice at the time (not possible now fortunately) our family removed many specimens from their natural habitat, to grow on at our home in Burwood New South Wales. We had just a small nursery, which I helped to maintain, but at the time my concern was just in their beauty; types meant nothing. Here it may be surprising that I still have growing in Kenthurst a few *Platycterium* species that were part of their original collection, much multiplied of course.

Another influence probably came from my Scouting experience; joining the First Burwood Cub Pack as a small lad, progressing to the Scouts then to Assistant Scoutmaster and finally to Rover Crew. This provided contacts with many fine people such as Mr Danvers-Power (university lecturer and Scoutmaster), John Theodore Chuncy-Richmond L.S., "T.C." to the boys and later "Skip" Richmond who put the out in Scouting, with his tremendous love of the outdoors. His strong character left an indelible impression on some of the finest boys (now men) that I have ever met. Men such as the now famous Len Beadell (Lennie to the boys) of Woomera Rocket Range etc., Dr John Burton of London University, Harold Maize (Rolly to the boys), later to become Chancellor of Sydney University, and the Reverend F.W. Best etc. All would agree to his influence on their lives. A common statement of his was:- "I say fellows, I would not do that if I were you!" He remains a constant reminder of the value of a balanced judgement.

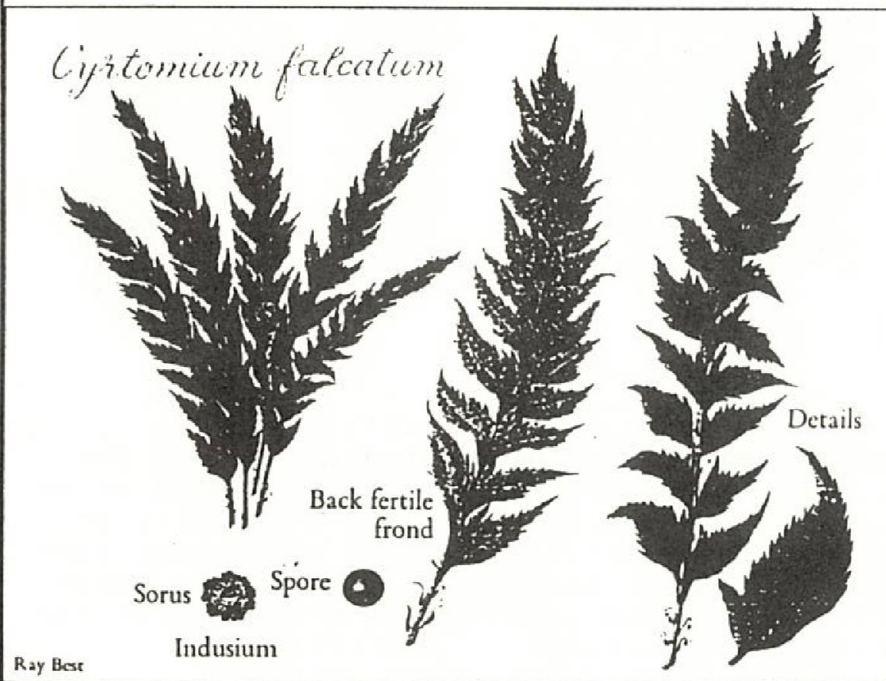
An illustration from Ray's book "Growing Ferns", showing his excellent watercolours.





After my marriage, the loss of both parents and war service in New Guinea with The 6th Aust. Army Topographical Survey Company, I continued to collect ferns with my wife's assistance. Many questions arose concerning nomenclature so I contacted all the Botanic Gardens in each of the States and New Zealand with a view to obtaining what literature was available. However, this proved a rather futile exercise as little or no material was at hand at this time. The first work obtained was a "Checklist of the Ferns of Queensland" by the "Queensland Naturalists Society, followed later by "The Lithograms of the Ferns of Queensland" by Frederick Manson Bailey", all published in the 19th Century. Later I wrote to Kew Botanical Gardens in England including copies of all my letters to our Botanical Gardens. Kew responded immediately and suggested that I should join "The British Pteridological Society" as they had access to world wide research. Thus it was that I contacted Mr James Dyce of B.P.S. then the Secretary (now President Emeritus); becoming a member of this excellent society has provided me with the many works both early and up to date that are now in my library.

Having produced many articles on ferns for the Glossy Magazines, I was invited to write the fern section of "The Encyclopaedia of Australian Gardening". Upon its completion a request came from the publishers for a special work on ferns which I completed under the title "Growing Ferns".



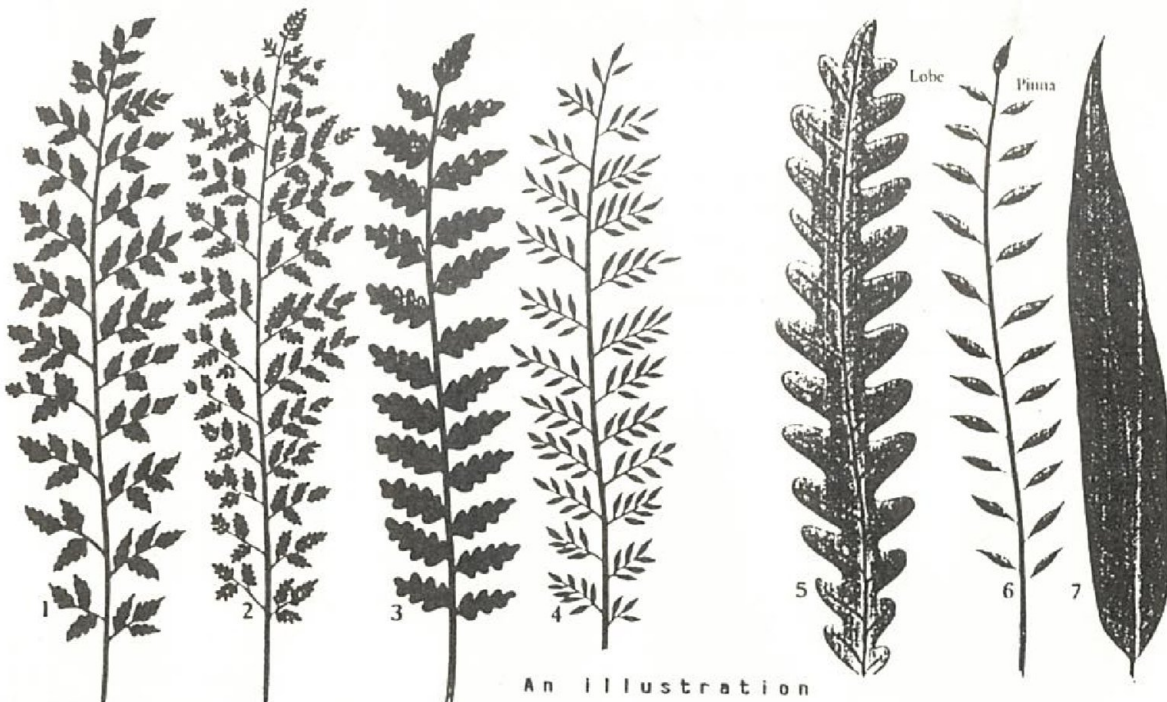
An illustration from Ray's book "Growing Ferns".

A membership of the Society for Growing Australian Plants; followed by the formation of a fern group, created the opportunity to provide many colour slide lectures for the branches. Here my wife assisted as my driver on many evenings culminating in a lecture on ferns at Sydney University and finally Burnley Horticultural College at Melbourne.



Another event was an unexpected visit from Mr Geoff Newling, a school headmaster from Glenbrook on the Blue Mountains of New South Wales. Having a keen interest in Australian fern types himself, he presented me with all the early fern works of Frederick Manson Bailey; some six volumes of "The Queensland Flora". Such a generous gift conveys the co-operation that exists amongst fern growers world wide, again greatly stimulating my activities.

Joining "The Los Angeles International Fern Society (L.A.I.F.S.) provided additional material on a world wide basis. Now growing most of my ferns from spores, using the spore banks from both L.A.I.F.S. and B.P.S. certainly expanded my collection. Writing articles for local societies and overseas bodies brought much correspondence and co-operation which further augmented my library.



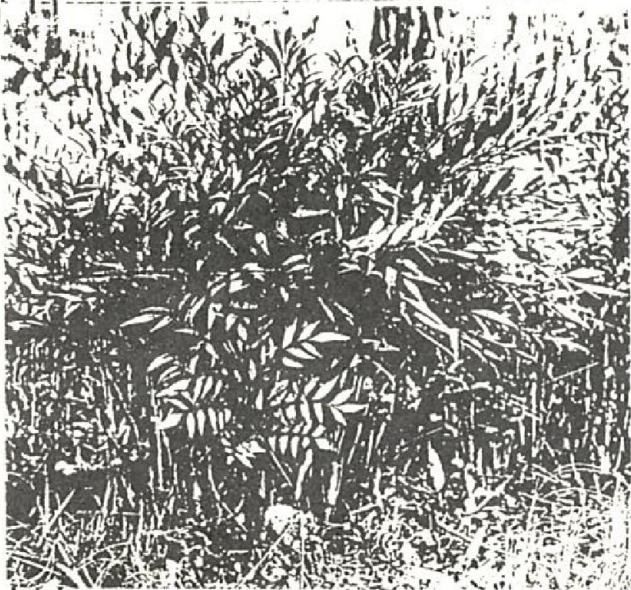
An illustration from Ray's book "Growing Ferns".

An early association with Chris Goudey long before the foundation of "The Fern Society of Victoria" also added to my collection and interest. Including a request from Chris to submit a design for a Logo; which I completed and is now used on the letterheads of all their stationery. In latter years I have continued my research and painting as a hobby that has proved very satisfying. Any attempt to appreciate and understand nature can become an everlasting interest. I think Louis Bromfield summed this up in his work "From My Experience" when he stated:- "Every good farmer practices, even through he may not fully understand clearly the principle of "Reverence for Life" and in this he is amongst the most fortunate of men, for he lives close enough to life, to hear the very pulsations of the heart; which are concealed from those whose lives are concentrated upon the unbalanced shabbiness of the complete material".



## BYFIELD "FERNS"

Although Byfield Ferns resemble true ferns in leaf shape, their life cycle and structure of these plants are quite different from pteridophytes and places them in the Order, Cycadacea. There are only two species in the *Bowenia* Genus; *Bowenia serrulata* is limited to moist eucalyptus forest north of Yeppoon and *B. spectabilis* is restricted to wet tropical lowlands, north of Innisfail. The generic name commemorates Sir George Bowen, the first Governor of Queensland, appointed in 1859.



*B. serrulata* is an evergreen shrub growing to a height of 1.5 metres and to a spread of 1.5 m. Its stem is short and mainly underground. The 0.5 m fronds are a dark glossy green, with the sharp serrations on the leaflets giving the species name. *B. spectabilis* is different in having smooth glossy green leaves, growing to a length of 1 m. Both species prefer light, acid soils in shady, protected positions, often close to water. Like other members of the cycad Family, they grow extremely slowly, at a rate of only 1-2 m each century.

Male and female flowers are born separately on each plant and are referred to as cones rather than flowers. Fruits ripen in September hidden at the base of the fronds by leaf litter. Not all plants flower each year. The fruiting cones (strobilus) is globular, 6 - 10 cm in diameter containing up to 12 large spherical seeds with a purple fleshy coat when ripe

All parts of the plant are poisonous, although the roots were baked and eaten by Aborigines. Many cycads are known to cause "Ricketts" disease in cattle, the chief symptom of which is paralysis in the hind-quarters. Pharmaceutical properties of the plant are as yet little known.

Plants can be grown from seed which is pre-germinated under a wet bag and then sown, half buried, in a layer of mulch over sandy soil, kept moist and at least half shaded. No attempt should be made to transplant anything but the smallest seedlings as damage to the tuberous roots is usually fatal. The plant is adapted to sub-tropical conditions but will produce new fronds after fire or frost. Seeds are available through the Qld. Department of Forestry.

FronDS may be cut without damage to the plant and will look fresh for several weeks. At one time, Railway Refreshment rooms in Queensland, were widely decorated with vases of the glossy, long lived leaves of *B. spectabilis*. They once found commercial usage as decoration with fresh meat displays in Butcher's windows, and are said to be repellent to house flies. Now, however, plastic ferns have been found to be even more durable than *Bowenia*, and the real thing is now mainly used in floral displays, bouquets and wreaths.



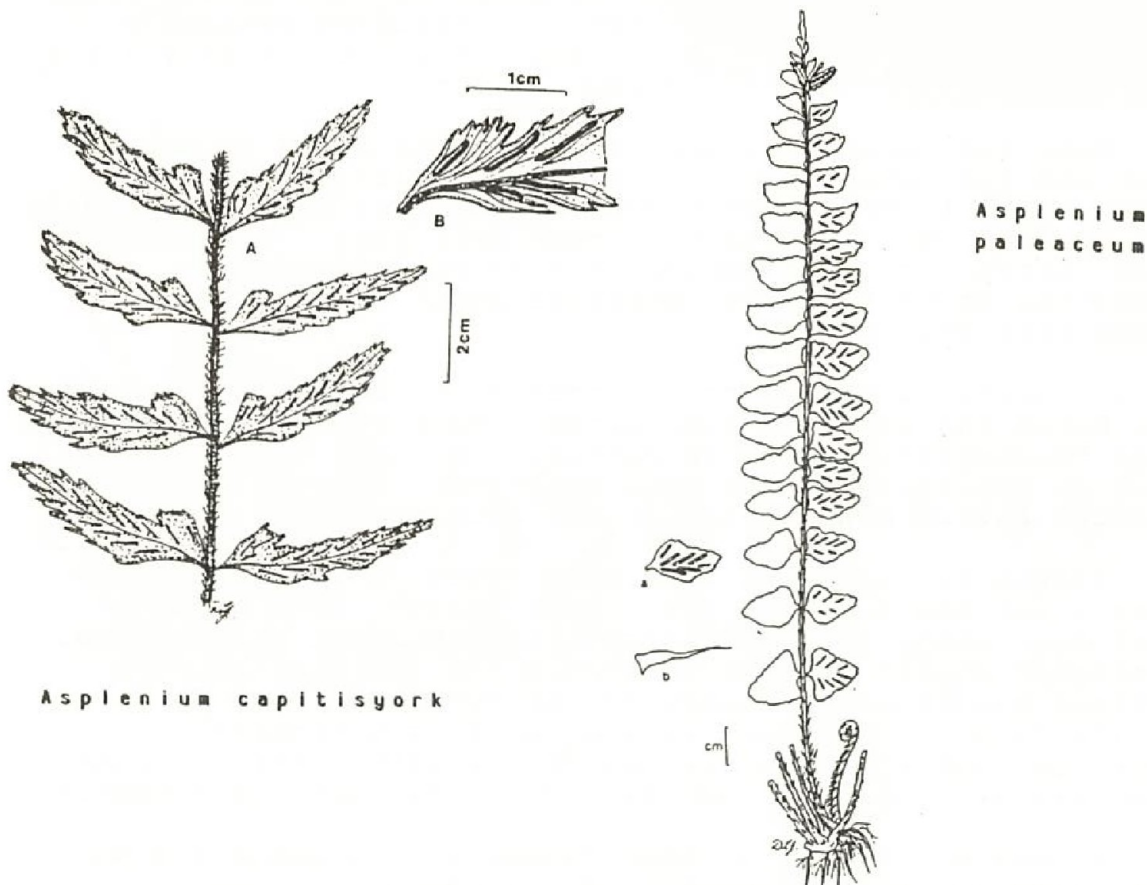
## NEW FERN SPECIES FROM AUSTRALIA - Part 1

As a result of numerous collecting trips, into relatively inaccessible parts of Northern Australia, there have been a number of recent reports in the botanical literature of previously undescribed fern species. Many of these species were collected by David Jones, now at the National Botanic Gardens, in Canberra. The next few issues of the Newsletter will outline of these recent finds.

### *Asplenium capitisyork* (D. Jones):

This species is a medium sized fern, usually found growing in clumps. Its dark green, arching fronds are tufted and grow to 60 cm long. It is superficially similar to *Asplenium paleaceum*, but can be immediately distinguished by the much longer stipes, the longer narrower pinnae, which are thinner textured, smoother and the margins more deeply lobed. Like *A. paleaceum*, this fern spreads by means of bulbils which appear near the tip of the fronds.

The plant is found in rainforest in Cape York Peninsular, growing on boulders in humid gullies and ephemeral stream beds. Being locally common in areas covered by existing National Parks, its future survival seems assured.



Thanks are extended to David Jones for permission to reproduce details from his publication in *Austrobaileya*, 2(5), 469-480 (1988).



## SOCIETY NEWS:

### \* New Members:

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members to the Society:

Steven and Vicki Luttrell,	Tasmania
Linda Haddon,	E. Bentleigh
Jenni Bryant,	Eden Park
K. Nosseck,	Boronia

### \* Excursion:

The excursion to Cumberland Falls, originally planned for this June, has been postponed to the warmer months. In its place, Chris Goudey has kindly agreed to have a Fern Society excursion out to his nursery at Lara. More details will be provided in next month's Newsletter.

### \* Additions to the Library:

The following new arrivals to the library are now available for monthly loan at each meeting:

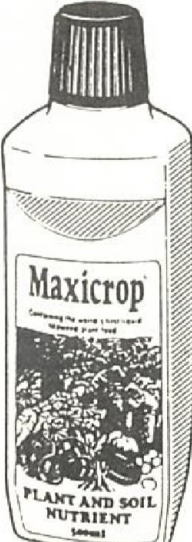
- \* Fern Society of Sth Aust. Newsletter, No.96, Mar. 1989.
- \* Western Australian Fern Society Newsletter, Mar. 1989.
- \* S.G.A.P. Fern Study Group Newsletter, No.44, Mar. 1989.
- \* LAIFS Fern Journal 16, Feb. 1989.

### \* From the April Meeting:

Highlights of the ferns offered for sale at the April meeting were specimens of the Crepe ferns, *Leptopteris superba* and *L. hymenophylloides*. Other species included *Arachnoides simplicior*, *Asplenium gemmiferum*, *A. terrestre*, *Blechnum filiforme*, *B. pattersonii*, *B. spicant* var '*cristatum*', *Davallia pyxidata*, *Dicksonia herbertii*, *D. squarrosa*, *Dryopteris labordei*, *Notholaena sinuata*, *Osmunda regalis* var '*cristata*', *Polypodium formosanum*, *Polystichum polyphlebarum*, *Pteris argyraea*.

### \* Special Effort Winners:

Norma Hodges  
Mary Frost  
Dave White  
Rod McConchie  
Heather McCororey  
Beverley Peterson  
Keith Hutchinson  
Moira Gasgard  
Fran Harrison



# Maxicrop

"Goodness from the sea"

- \* Contains over 60 elements and minerals
- \* Safe and easy to use.
- \* Made from fresh growing seaweed.
- \* Ideally suited for ferns
- \* Maxicrop is available from nurseries and other places where garden products are sold.

## Maxicrop

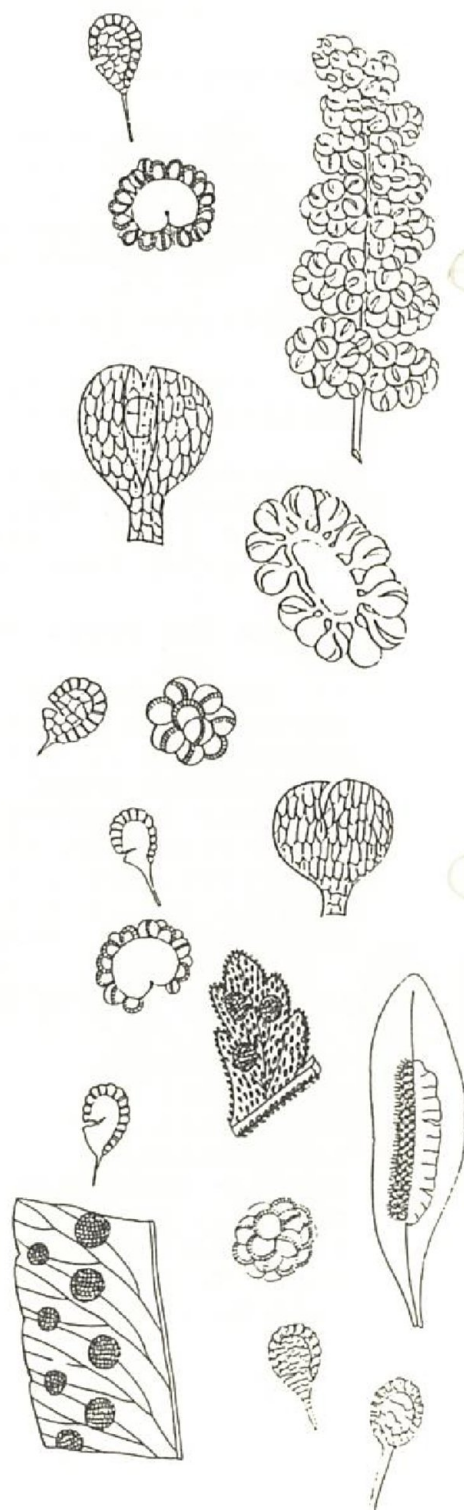
4/375 Bayswater Rd., Bayswater. Vic. 3153.  
P.O. BOX 302, Bayswater, Vic. 3153. Tel. Melb. (03) 720 2200



## SPORE BANK

Ordering: The following spore is free to those who donate spore. Otherwise, members - 20 cents each, non-members - 50 cents. Available at meetings or by mail from Barry White, 24 Ruby Street, West Essendon, Victoria, 3040 (Ph: 337 9793). Please add \$1.00 for p. & p. Ther is no charge for overseas members, but to cover postage 2 International reply Cupons would be appreciated.

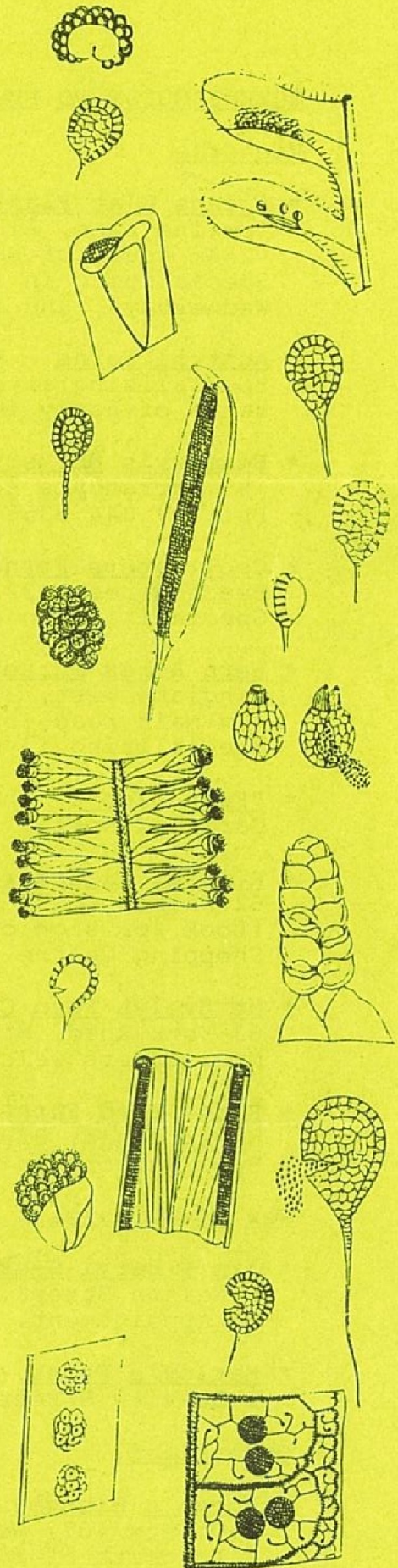
ADIANTUM lady supreme	3/89
ADIANTUM raddianum cv.pacottii	3/89
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Crested majus'	3/87
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Gracillimum'	3/87
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Grandiceps'	3/87
ADIANTUM raddianum 'Grossum'	3/87
ADIANTUM raddianum cv. elegans	2/89
ADIANTUM raddianum gracillimum	2/89
ANEMIA mexicana	3/89
ANEMIA phyllitidis	3/89
ARACHNIODES foliosa	10/88
ASPENIUM adiantum-nigrum	6/86
ASPENIUM australasicum	8/86
ASPENIUM bulbiferum (native)	1/87
ASPENIUM sp. (nidus? - W. Irian)	/87
ASPENIUM trichomanes	1/86
ASPENIUM trichomanes 'incisum'	6/86
ATHYRIUM elegans	3/89
ATHYRIUM filix-femina 'cristata'	/86
BELVISIA mucronata	3/86
BELVISIA platyrynches	6/87
BLECHNUM brazieliense cv.cristata	2/89
BLECHNUM capense	10/88
BLECHNUM discolor	2/89
BLECHNUM fluviatile	3/89
BLECHNUM gibbum	2/89
BLECHNUM giganteum	3/86
BLECHNUM minus	3/86
BLECHNUM punctulatum	5/88
CHEILANTHES multifida	2/89
CHRISTELLA guenziana	10/88
CIBOTIUM schiedei	11/86
CULCITA dubia	4/86
CYATHEA australis	4/88
CYATHEA brownii	2/86
CYATHEA cooperi	2/89
CYATHEA cooperi (black scales)	2/86
CYATHEA cooperi (glaucous)	/86
CYATHEA dealbata	6/88
CYATHEA medullaris	3/87
CYATHEA sp. (New Guinea)	2/86
CYATHEA vieillardii(New Caledonia)	4/88
CYRTOMIUM falcatum	3/87
CYRTOMIUM falcatum x caryotideum	/86
CYSTOPTERIS dickieana	7/86
DICKSONIA antarctica	2/89





# SPORE BANK

DICKSONIA fibrosa	3/86
DICKSONIA herbertii	3/89
DICKSONIA lanata	/86
DIPLAZIUM australe	3/87
DOODIA maxima	2/89
DORYOPTERIS pedata	2/87
DRYANARIA rigidula	4/86
DRYOPTERIS affinis 'polydactyla'	/87
DRYOPTERIS carthusiana (crested)	3/86
DRYOPTERIS dilatata 'lepidota'	2/87
DRYOPTERIS filix-mas 'cristata'	3/86
DRYOPTERIS filix-mas 'grandiceps'	3/86
DRYOPTERIS inequalis	4/87
DRYOPTERIS sp. "Korean Crown Fern"	3/89
HYPOLEPIS rugosula	3/87
LASTREOPSIS acuminata	6/88
LASTREOPSIS calantha	3/86
LASTREOPSIS smithiana	2/89
LUNATHYRIUM japonicum	4/87
MICROLEPIA speluncae	3/86
MICROLEPIA strigosa	2/87
MICROSORIUM scandens	2/89
ONOCLEA sensibilis	6/86
PAESIA scaberula	7/86
PELLAEA rotundifolia	2/87
PELLAEA viridis	/86
PHYLLITIS scolopendrium (small)	/87
PITYROGRAMMA chrysophylla	3/86
PLATYCERIUM sp. (Timor)	/87
PLATYCERIUM bifurcatum	3/87
PLATYCERIUM hillii	4/86
PLATYCERIUM superbum	2/89
POLYPODIUM vulgare	4/86
POLYSTICHUM andersonii	2/89
POLYSTICHUM echinatum	2/87
POLYSTICHUM formosum	3/87
POLYSTICHUM munitum	4/88
POLYSTICHUM retro-paleaceum	3/86
POLYSTICHUM setiferum	
'plumosum cristata'	2/89
PTERIS lincata	2/89
PTERIS biaurita	3/86
PTERIS cretica 'parkerii'	3/87
PTERIS hendersonii	2/89
PTERIS quadaurita cv. argyraea	3/89
PTERIS semipinnata	2/89
PTERIS tremula	3/89
PTERIS tricolor	3/87
PTERIS vittata	3/87
PTERIS wallichiana	2/88
RUMOHRRA adiantiformis (S.Africa)	3/88
SADLERIA pallida	3/89
STICHERUS tener	2/89
THELYPTERIS patens var. lepida	2/89
WOODWARDIA fimbriata	/86





BUYERS' GUIDE TO FERN NURSERIES:

Victoria

- \* Allans Flat Plant Farm - Retail.  
Tomkins Lane, Allans Flat, 3691, Ph:(060) 27 1375.  
(25Km south of Wodonga on the Yackandandah Road)  
Specializing in ferns and indoor plants. Open daily, except  
Wednesdays, and all public holidays.
- \* Austral Ferns - Wholesale Propagators. Ph:(052) 82 3084.  
Specializing in supplying retail nurseries with a wide  
range of hardy ferns - no tubes.
- \* Beasley's Nursery - Retail.  
195 Warrandyte Road, Doncaster East, 3109.  
Ph:(03) 844 3355.
- \* Cool Waters Fern Nursery - Wholesale Fern Propagators.  
Beech Forest, 3237, Ph:(052) 37 3283.  
Specializing in cool climate native ferns.
- \* Fern Acres Nursery - Retail.  
Kinglake West, 3757, Ph:(057) 86 5481.  
(On main road, opposite Kinglake West Primary School).  
Specializing in stags, elks and birdsnest ferns.
- \* "Fern Glen" - Wholesale and Retail. Visitors welcome.  
Garfield North, 3814, Ph:(056) 29 2375.
- \* R. & M. Fletcher's Fern Nursery - Retail.  
62 Walker Road, Seville, 3139, Ph:(059) 64 4680.  
(Look for sign on Warburton Highway, 300m east of Seville  
Shopping Centre. Closed Tues. except on public holidays).
- \* Mt Evelyn Fern Centre - Retail.  
63 York Road, Mt. Evelyn, 3796, Ph:(03) 736 1729.  
Mail orders welcome.
- \* Ridge Road Fernery - Wholesale and Retail.  
Weeaprounah, 3237, Ph:(052) 35 9383.  
Specializing in Otway native ferns.

New South Wales.

- \* Jim & Beryl Geekie Fern Nursery - Retail.  
6 Nelson Street, Thornleigh, 2120, Ph:(02) 484 2684.  
By appointment.
- \* Marley's Ferns - Retail.  
5 Seaview Street, Mt. Kuring-gai, 2080, Ph:(02) 457 9168.

Queensland.

- \* Moran's Highway Nursery - Wholesale and Retail.  
P.O. Box 467, Woombye, 4559, Ph:(071) 42 1613.  
(1Km north of Big Pineapple. Turn right into Kell Road).