



October 2005

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<http://www.rwsarchitects.com/fern.htm>

Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, October 16, at 2:00 p. m. – Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77044 – Phone: (713) 529-3960

A message from our President:

Hi, everyone:

It's that time of the year again. Paul Geiger has agreed to chair our Nominating Committee to elect or reelect officers for the upcoming year. As you know, we will need to elect two additional people to complete the nominating committee. This will be done at the October meeting so be thinking about the two members you would like to vote onto the committee. This is a one month committee, and the results will be voted on at the November meeting. If you are interested in filling a current position, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Board Member at Large (2 positions) please remember to let one of the committee members know.

We are hoping to get to go on a field trip with Robbin Moran on Saturday, October 15, the day before our regular meeting on Sunday. Walt Hesson has been working very hard on this but Rita has made it a real challenge. The top-pick places were damaged by the storm. Walt has a lot of contacts though, and will be letting us know where we should best go. It would be a shame for anyone to miss the opportunity of going on an outing foray with such a distinguished person as Robbin Moran.

Although the exact place, time of day and meeting point is to be determined, we desperately need a head count of those who feel they would like to go. Please contact me at 281-733-5564 to let us know if you are planning on going. Otherwise, we will see you at the Sunday meeting. For more information on the field trip see Walt Hesson's announcement further in this *Newsletter*.

We will have a few copies of Robbins book and he will be signing them for us. If you have your book already, remember to bring it with you.

We will also have a short Board meeting after the regular meeting.

See you at the meeting,

Darla



Members: - Spread the word – encourage someone you know to visit us - we always have room for more!

Membership dues:

Individual:	\$10.00
Family:	\$15.00
Student:	\$5.00



Officers and Committees:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	Martha Burg
Secretary:	Patsy Geiger
Treasurer:	Al and Susan Peacock
Board Members at Large:	Ted Richardson, Cecil Strange, Jr. and Larry Rucker
Membership Chair:	Cecil Strange, Jr.
Newsletter:	Paul Geiger
Library:	Patrick Hudnall
Raffles:	Jean Keiser
Hospitality:	Lulu Mae Leonard
Welcoming at Door:	Emma Lee Payne



Minutes of Meeting - September 18, 2005

A regular monthly meeting of the TEXAS GULF COAST FERN SOCIETY was held at 2:00 p.m., September 18, 2005 at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Dr., Houston, TX 77044. President Darla Harris presided.

Darla announced we are invited to operate a kiosk at *The Garden Club of Houston. Bulb and Plant Sale*. October 6, 7 & 8, 2005 at Westminster United Methodist Church, 5801 San Felipe. Volunteer kiosk "workers" were requested. Darla also announced a field trip led by Robbin Moran and Walt Hesson is planned for Saturday, October 15, with details to follow.

Martha Burg introduced our guest speaker, Linda B. Gay, Director of Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens. Her topic was "Interesting Companion Plants to Ferns."

Refreshments were provided by Sara Chumley.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm, followed by a meeting of the TGCFS BOD. The following was discussed and agreed:

Robbin Moran would be invited to bring 5 of his latest book to the meeting with sale guaranteed by the TGCFS. Also, a special addition of the Newsletter would be sent out early to request names of persons intending to attend the field trip.

Submitted by: Patsy Geiger, Secretary



October Refreshments:

Refreshments for our next meeting will be furnished by Ted and Jean Richardson. Come out and enjoy some really good and delicious food!



Library

Don't forget the great resource of information available in our library. At each meeting there are take-home sheets that contain a brief review of available books. Also at each meeting is a wide variety of books available for immediate checkout.



Our Next Meeting – October 18:

As announced in earlier *Newsletter* editions, our speaker for October 16th is **Robbin Moran**, Curator of Ferns at the New York Botanical Garden:



Dr. Robbin Moran is Curator of Ferns at The New York Botanical Garden. He has published four books and over 70 papers on ferns. He served as the main writer, editor, and organizer for the fern volume of *Flora Mesoamericana*, which is the largest fern flora ever written. He is co-author of the *Ferns and Allied Plants of New England* and the *Fern Grower's Manual*. He recently published (October 2004) a new book with Timber Press, *A Natural History of Ferns*. Robbin has taught fern courses in Costa Rica, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, and traveled widely in Latin America, Thailand, and Taiwan. During summers, he co-teaches *Tropical Plant Systematics*, a six-week long course in Costa Rica sponsored by the Organization for Tropical Studies. He also serves as an Associate Editor for *Brittonia* and the *American Fern Journal*, and is a card-carrying member of the New York Mineralogical Club.

Title of talk: *Helpful and Harmful Ferns*

SUMMARY: Ferns are used by people in a variety of ways. Azolla, the mosquito fern, is the world's most important fern economically because it is used as a fertilizer in the rice paddies of southern China and Vietnam. Several ferns are eaten in the fiddlehead stage, while the young leaf is

unfurling. Ostrich fern fiddleheads are popularly eaten in the eastern North America and are the largest export crop of New Brunswick, Canada. Ferns are also used in construction, such as tree fern trunks in the tropics, and for making baskets, as is done with the rachises of *Lygodium*, a climbing fern. In Vanuatu, tree fern trunks are carved into stylized figures and used in grade ceremonies marking a person's advance in society. But not all interactions of ferns and people are positive. Bracken is the "Lucretia Borgia" of the fern world because it contains many toxins poisonous not only to people, but also to livestock and insects, causing death in diabolical ways. Eating bracken fiddleheads is associated with a high incidence of stomach cancer. *Salvinia molesta*, a floating fern, is one of the world's worst aquatic weeds. The four-leaf clover fern (*Marsilea*), or "nardoo" as it is called in Australia, is responsible for the deaths of Australia's most famous explorers.



Walt Hesson Announcement of the October 15 Field Trip:

A field trip to E. Texas is tentatively planned for Saturday, October 15, 2005.

Dr. Robbin Moran will be joining us and has indicated that he would like to find gametophytes of *Lycopodiella*. (Note that this genus, in the *Lycopodiaceae* family, has been elevated to genus status in recent literature.) The gametophytes of this genus grow above ground rather than subterranean as found in many other genera in this family.

In this genus, *Lycopodiella*, we have three species, *appressa*, *alopecuroides* and *prostrata* that have been found in E. Texas. These plants are commonly found in bogs or baygalls and it is possible that we may find hybrids.

Thelypteris dentata, relatively rare in Texas, has been found in the general area. On the return trip we would likely stop in one or two locations to see other typical E. Texas pteridophytes.

It will be a long day to remote locations with no drinking water, food or bathrooms. Footing will be rough and likely wet in some locations. Wear hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes and bring rubber boots if you have them. Bring drinking water and a brown bag lunch. Long trousers and insect repellent may be desirable. **No Collecting Allowed!!**

This should be a fun and educational experience. A future announcement will be made as plans and logistics develop.



Looking ahead to November 20

Our speaker for November is Dr. Larry Brown, well known local plant taxonomist and Houston Community College instructor. He will discuss the importance and use of herbariums in the study of ferns.

He will be bringing some specimens from the herbarium that he will display and discuss.



Ferns and Going Beyond Ferns

For anyone that missed it, here is a link to a web page recommended by Barbra Joe Hoshizaki:

http://www.cnps.org/publications/fremontia/Fremontia_Vol32-No2.pdf.

It is a wonderful mixture of technical articles and stories of human interest. You'll enjoy it!

