



January 2006

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

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, January 15, 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 and "Happy New Year!"

We have many interesting and exciting things lined up for the Fern Society this year and I am really looking forward to it. I think everyone is going to have a great time. We have our show and sale coming up in May and Martha has already gotten some great speakers lined up. We will have some hands-on meetings and some new plants for everyone. We will be having a summer social and we need a volunteer home for it. Its fun to see what other members are growing and talking about the successes and failures. Some priceless information is always passed around at these gatherings.

I will have a sheet next to the sign in at the January meeting, so you can let me know what YOU would like to see and do. This is everyone's club and we want everyone to get the most out of their time, so please do some thinking and give us your thoughts.

For those who were unable to attend the Party at the Richardson's home in December, Wow! You missed a good one! The food was excellent; the weather was great and the fellowship wonderful. Ted and Jean have some great Platyceriums and have filled their entire yard with points of interest ferns as well as other plants. It was just wonderful.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting,  
Darla



**DUES ARE DUE**

If you haven't paid your dues for 2006 yet, this is a reminder – **please don't forget!**

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

Our Treasurer will be available to collect them at the next meeting or you may mail your payment to:

Cecil Strange, Jr.  
12002 Palmton  
Houston, TX 77034

Please make your checks payable to Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society or simply TGCFS.

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

**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



**January Refreshments:**

Refreshments for our next meeting will be furnished by Darla Harris and Patsy and Paul Geiger 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 – January 15:**

Our speaker for January 15<sup>th</sup> is Karen M. Breneman, Texas Master Gardener, author and lecturer who will talk about common garden insects:

**Karen M. Breneman** was born and raised in Idaho with an appreciation for gardening and wildlife. She was graduated by Idaho State University in 1966 with a BS Degree in Microbiology. She and her husband moved to Houston in 1978, bought their present home and very quickly learned that gardening in Houston was not like Idaho.

In 1988 she retired after working as a Medical Technologist in hospital laboratories for over 20 years and finally had time to pursue her interests in gardening and wildlife. In 1991 Karen joined the Master Gardeners and in 1995 wrote a book for them titled *Gardening the Upper Texas Gulf Coast: Answers to Your Most Frequently Asked*

*Questions and More.* The book was awarded first place for outstanding achievement in publications at the 1997 Texas State Master Gardener Association meeting.

In 1999 she helped form and has since participated in the Texas Master Naturalist Program, Gulf Coast Chapter, increasing her knowledge of nature and wildlife.

The Republic of Texas Press released her nonfiction book, *Gardening with Nature in Texas* in February 2002.

She continues to write, garden and learn about Texas.

**Title of talk:** *Common Garden Insects – Friend or Foe*

**Introduction:**

Thirty thousand different insect species have been identified in Texas. The good news is that 95% to 98% of these insects are beneficial or non-harmful species. The remaining less than 5% of all insects are designated as pests or possible pests. Insects are an essential part of life. Without the beneficial insects, man as a species could not survive. There would be no food, material for clothing or shelter. The world as we know it would not exist.

To combat the few pest species man has created over 35,000 different chemicals. Understanding the evolution of the chemical industry from the WWII to Rachel Carson is important to understand the proper use of pesticides. Integrated Pest Management (IPM), started for agriculture, can and should be adopted by the homeowner. This three step system is easy to understand and implement. Through the use of IPM, the amount of toxic runoff into the Gulf of Mexico which has been estimated per year to equal half the contamination of the Exxon Valdez in Alaska-the majority from urban areas-can be greatly reduced.

When in large numbers, pests can cause extensive crop damage, potentially resulting in devastation; therefore, it is essential to identify the pests and remove them before they cause extensive damage. The predator species of insects, birds, amphibians, soil organisms, and a few mammals all help to maintain balance. Diverse native plant species encourage “good guys” and help the overall health of the garden. Wise use of resources can reduce damage, yet maintain a healthy environment.

So, come to the meeting in January and learn about IPM and simple ways to identify beneficial insects and the few true pests.

