



February 2006

Vol. 8, No. 02

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

Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, February 19, 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!

To freeze or not to freeze, that is the question. Just when I thought it might be safe to uncover some of my plants, we may not be out of winter yet. Only time will tell.

We have a great meeting planned for February. For anyone that has not been able to attend a fern plant show, you are in for some real eye openers. This will be a prelude to our May show and sale. Donna McGraw will be our speaker this month and will be giving some ideas on set up, plants, displays, and judged plants. For illustration, she will present a Microsoft® PowerPoint® slideshow with pictures of a plant show and sale held in Miami, Fla. We hope to have a large participation. This will help put our Society on the map so to speak.

Brian White with the Orchid Society will be attending our meeting Sunday to answer any of our questions.

This should be a year for learning, we have a program for growing ferns from spore for March and we hope to have a field trip in April.

We still need a volunteer for the summer and fall socials. It is always fun to see what someone else is growing. Please feel free to bring ideas to any one of our board members.

I am trying to place emphasis on fern education this year. I encourage each member that brings in a plant for our raffle, or other purpose (such as thinning out your garden) to give a brief explanation of it and its particular characteristics. I am thrilled at the response to my request for members to write an article for the *Newsletter* that tells of his or her experience with a particular fern or ferns. This month, Malcolm McCorquodale has contributed such an article. Thanks, Malcolm!

We will be having another “starter fern of the month” for members – remember: one per household. By year’s end we will have introduced at least 10 new ferns to take home and grow. I will not be announcing the name of the fern ahead of the meeting and I’ll write about it in the following month’s *Newsletter*. My hope is that everyone will wonder what the next fern will be and come out and get one. Remember: you must be present to receive one. The January starter fern is a *Woodwardia orientalis* and is discussed later in this *Newsletter*.

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 Palmtown

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!

Board members: Don’t forget! We will have a BOD meeting at 12:30 pm this Sunday.

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



Please note this correction to the January 2006 Newsletter: The delicious refreshments were provided by Lulu Leonard, Helen Spiers and Martha Burg and not as previously announced. Thanks, ladies!

February Refreshments:

Refreshments for our next meeting will be furnished by Jessica Sheldon, Larry Rucker and Darla Harris. 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 and videos available for immediate checkout.



Members Talk about Ferns!!

This month's fern of the month article is contributed by Malcolm McCorquodale:

I have been a member of the TGCFS for a couple of years. At my first meeting, I was given a small plastic container that contained what looked like green moss. It turns out that these were baby staghorn ferns or gametophytes. So, this month's Fern of the Month is about the Staghorn Fern and my experience with it.

When I got the baby ferns home, I placed them on my plant stand under dual florescent lights. In a few weeks, I saw some green fern leaves starting to stick up. When some of them got almost an inch tall, I transplanted them into Dixie cups and put them in a mini-greenhouse made out of two clear plastic half-sheet cake containers, one on top of the other. A few weeks later, I transplanted several more. At this writing, some of them have fronds several inches long. Unfortunately, some of them have died, either they dried up, or got a fungus, or scale. Some are doing ok, but have stayed kind of small.

The Staghorn Fern is also known as an Elkhorn Fern and gets its name from the way its leaves look. They kind of look like the horns on a stag. The botanical name for the Staghorn fern is *Platycerium*, from "platy-" which means broad or flat, and "cera" meaning horn. There are two types of fronds, the green ones look like the stag's horns, but the base is surrounded by smaller brown leaves. The spores are formed on the tip of the green leaves.

There are about 18 species of ferns, one comes from South America, but the rest come from the warmer tropical parts of the Old World.

Most Staghorns are mounted on a wood board with some sphagnum moss. Mounting these ferns is a popular club activity.



Staghorn Fern (*Platycerium*)



Darla's January Starter Fern of the Month

The starter plant that was given out at the January meeting was a *Woodwardia orientalis*, or Mother fern, as it is commonly named. This fern is cold/heat hardy for our area, staying evergreen all times of the year. The conditions preferred by the *orientalis* are bright filtered shade, well-watered, but not soggy; it likes to dry out between waterings. This fern will reach about 3 foot high and wide so it needs a lot of room. In about two years the plant will be mature enough to put off bullets (buds) from around the edges of the leaves. These can be taken off and sowed onto damp sphagnum moss, in a clear sealable container. They will grow into new plants. If conditions are right in the garden you may get new plants under the Mother fern. This is one of the most under utilized ferns in our area. At the February meeting we will have another starter fern for members to take home and grow.

Come see what I'll have for you this month!



Minutes of Meeting - January 15, 2006

A regular monthly meeting of the TEXAS GULF COAST FERN SOCIETY was held at 2:00 p.m., January 15, 2006 at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Dr., Houston, TX 77044. President Darla Harris presided.

Darla announced her program for the year will emphasize fern education and encouraged everyone to contribute in any way they can.

More details about the May fern show and sale will be provided at the February meeting, primarily by Donna McGraw, chairperson for the event.

Darla also announced a meeting of the Board of Directors will be held prior to the February 2006 meeting, about 12:30 pm.

Martha Burg introduced our guest speaker, Karen M. Breneman, Texas Master Gardener, author and lecturer who gave a talk about common garden insects both friends and foes:

Refreshments were provided by Lulu Leonard, Helen Spiers and Martha Burg.

The meeting was attended by 19 people.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm

Submitted by: Patsy Geiger, Secretary



TGCFS Finances

The financial statement of income and expenses for 2005 is attached to this *Newsletter*.

