



Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

April 2006

Vol. 8, No. 04

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

REMEMBER!!! – No regular meeting on Sunday, April 16

Next Meeting: Saturday, April 8, 2006 at 10:00 a. m.:

Field Trip to “Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary” - See attachment for details.

A message from our President, Darla Harris:

Hi Everyone!

It's that time of the year, at least in my garden: spring is out in full force. All my hardy ferns are pushing up from their winter rest, ready for a new year. The Cinnamon fern with its tall fertile fronds was my first up, followed by the Lady fern and now the Royal fern is uncoiling their fronds. Even the ferns that stay up over winter like the Mother fern (January members' plant), Autumn fern, Japanese Holly, and the Blechnum Braziliance ferns are all putting off all their new growth.

This Saturday we're going on a field trip to the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. Walt Hesson will be our leader. Details and an overview of the trip are again attached to this *Newsletter*.

This time of year is what makes the field trip to the wide open spaces so special. The trip venue is just a little further north of most of us and makes the timing nearly perfect. It's always amazing to see the wonder of nature up close. For those that are not able to go on the field trips that require walking on rough terrain, we do have another one planned for the fall that all will be able to enjoy. We do need to know how many to plan go this Saturday, so please let Walt Hesson, Martha, or me know if you will be able to attend. Also if you have a cell number, please let us have that too so we can make sure everyone arrives at the same place.

We will not be having another regular meeting prior to our big plant show at the George R. Brown Convention Center. May 3 and 4 are our setup dates. This is going to be a **BIG** project and we will need a lot of help with both plants and muscle. What I need from each of you is a list of plants that you will have to display at the show. I also need the size and type of fern so we can get our floor plan done. We will be able to accommodate hanging baskets, plaques, and floor plants. Our space is 25 foot square so we will be able to show 100 to 200 types of ferns. If you have plant stands we can use that would be a lot of help. We want this to be **VERY** nice. All the Societies will be putting their best foot forward, and we want to show the public just what the fern world has to offer. We also need help May 5/6/7 for a membership drive and talking to people as they come through the show. We will not be selling plants, just talking up the Fern Society and ferns in general. Please phone me with questions and your list at 281-

733-5565. This should be lots of fun. I encourage all to participate. If you have a problem with transporting your ferns to and from the show, we are working that out as well, but we need to know now so we can make all the necessary arrangements.

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 want to thank everyone that brought in plants for the March Raffle; we had a very good participation at the meeting for this event And don't forget – if you bring in a plant for our raffle, or other purpose (such as thinning out your garden) please be prepared to give a brief explanation of it and its particular characteristics..

I especially want to thank Patrick Hudnall for his excellent presentation on growing ferns from spores and Donna McGraw for bringing in the spore from the Philippians.

This month, Jean Keiser has contributed a wonderful article regarding Maidenhair ferns. Thanks, Jean!

At our regular meeting in May, Walt Hesson will be our speaker. Walt will present a slide show from his travels around the U.S. and the native ferns he has seen.

The March memberstarter fern was a *Cyrtomium fortunei* (no common name) and is discussed later in this *Newsletter*.

I'm pleased to announce our newest member Mona D. Roy and welcome her into our Society.

Enjoy spring,

Darla



DUES REMINDER!

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!



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



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 Jean Keiser:

"Southern" Maidenhair Ferns

One of my favorite ferns is the Maidenhair. That is a broad statement since there are 200 species and an unknown number of cultivars of the Family Adiantum. Adiantum means "not wetted". Pliny the Elder said, 'in vain 'do you plunge the Adiantum into water, it always remains dry.'

The various species can grow up to 3 feet, but most are much smaller. To narrow the discussion, let's discuss the "Southern Maidenhair", Adiantum capillus-veneris. The habitat of this fern in the U.S. ranges from the Florida panhandle to Southern California, however, capillus-veneris can also be found in parts of the U.K.

- **Family:** Fern (Polypodiaceae)
- **Spores:** July - September
- **Field Marks:** Leaves that are much longer than wide distinguish this fern from the northern maiden-hair fern (*A. pedatum*). Both species have shiny, purple leaf stalks and reproductive structures protected by the recurved edge of the leaves
- **Habitat:** Stream banks, limestone ledges, around springs.
- **Habit:** Perennial fern with creeping rhizomes.
- **Stems:** All underground as creeping rhizomes.
- **Leaves:** Usually drooping, 2- to 3-pinnate, the leaf segments alternate, obovate, up to 1 1/4 inches long, thin, smooth, some of them round lobed and toothed, on a short stalk; main leaf stalks shiny, purple, up to 8 inches long.
- **Sori:** Borne under the recurved edges of the leaves.
- **Point of Interest:** a tea brewed from the leaves of capillus-veneris is supposed to have medicinal value.



Adiantum capillus-veneris



Darla's March Starter Fern of the Month

The March member plant was a *Cyrtomium fortunei*. This fern is in the same family as the Japanese Holy fern, the *Cyrtomium falcatum*. The *fortunei* does not have a common name so you need to just remember its botanical name.

Cyrtomium fortunei will not grow as large as its cousin, but is more cold-hardy. The leaves are a light grey-green and will not be glossy like the *falcatum*. This is an easy plant to grow and will be evergreen in our area even in one of our cold winters.

Plant this fern in bright partial sun, but with no west or afternoon sun. I have found that it does not like to be planted too deep, so be careful and do not mulch up the crown too high. Water requirements: it needs to be kept moist until it's established and then it just takes normal yard care.

We will not have an April plant because of the field trip, but we will have another new one in May. Come get yours!



Minutes of Meeting – March 19, 2006

A regular monthly meeting of the TEXAS GULF COAST FERN SOCIETY was held at 2:00 p.m., March 19, 2006 at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Dr., Houston, TX 77044. President Darla Harris presided.

Darla described the ferns available for the raffle and introduced the speaker, Patrick Hudnall. Patrick discussed various aspects of propagating ferns using spores. The discussion included cleaning, sterilization, viability, sowing, germination and other cultural requirements. A selection of plants and individual fronds with ripe spores were available for examination and a hands-on project was conducted for all members and guests. The workshop generally followed Sharon Banister's "Spore Soup" technique, enabling everyone to take with them an inoculated spore culture to grow at their homes.

Refreshments were provided by Mary McConnell, Larry Rucker, Jean Keiser and Emma Payne.

Attendance for the meeting was 22, made up of 20 members and 2 visitors.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm

A TGCFs Board meeting was held following the regular meeting. The main topics discussed were details of new web site, including domain name, and participation in the Orchid Society Expo in May. Darla Harris, Ted Richardson and Larry Rucker were selected as Expo committee members.

Submitted by: Patsy Geiger, Secretary