

August 2010

Vol. 12, No. 8

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, September 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:**

WOW, what a weekend! I hope everyone had as much fun as I did at the party and the July meeting. We should plan to have Dr. Hoshizaki come back next year to continue our lessons. If you weren't able to make it to the meeting, you missed a real treat. She started the program with an explanation of the different parts of Platyceriums and the different geographical groupings. The second part of her program was "hands on". With microscopes set up for those without hand lenses and Monty operating his set up to project images onto the screen at the front of the room, Barbara showed us how to identify our Platyceriums using cross sections of the rachis, the rhizome scales, and the surface hairs. She finished up by teaching us how to use a key to identify our ferns. The handout she provided was very well done and if you weren't there to get one be sure to ask someone for a copy for your notebook.

Jessica has another fun meeting planned for August. If someone can tell me how to ripen our bananas we can make banana splits with the ice cream we make 😊. Hope to see you all there.

A special thanks from me to Cherie and Darla for all their help at the party!

Donna



**A Special Thank You**

A special thank you goes out to Jean and Ted Richardson for hosting Barbara and Takashi Hoshizaki during their stay here in Houston and for allowing us to invade their home for a beverage or two after the meeting on Sunday.

Also, a big thank you goes out to Donna and Monty McGraw for hosting the Saturday night reception and dinner at their home.

And of course, a huge thank you goes out to Darla Harris and Barbara Hoshizaki for making this great meeting happen.



**A message from our Vice President:**

Go Green, Go Scream

August 15<sup>th</sup> party

We have a theme this summer for our annual party and if you read this you will understand about the title. I promise not to make this long, so please read on.

Go Green: we are having our member plant exchange at the party! Bring healthy potted plants that will do you proud to say they are from you. You should give the plants at least 2 weeks in the pot before the party so they have a chance to recover from any transplant shock. How embarrassing to see a wilted plant from a plant person. You got the hint - now go pot up some plant to exchange. They do not have to be ferns. Oh, did I mention, there are a few other guidelines to the plant exchange?

And here they are:

- HEALTHY plants, not limited to ferns
- COMMON with BOTONICAL name on a stick, piece of paper or on the pot, IF at all possible
- YOUR NAME on the pot, plant, or stick
- POTTED, in the pot at least 2 weeks before party
- 10 plants max
- AND you can also bring any plant related book, item or objet d'art - 10 max. This could be very interesting.

And here's how the exchange works:

- When you arrive, you will put your plants or items on the exchange tables set up in the garage.
- When it is time to start the exchange, we will hand out a raffle ticket to each person participating in the exchange. A ticket will be drawn and the person with that ticket will have the first pick from the exchange tables.
- Whoever brought the plant or item picked, gets to pick next, and whoever brought the next plant or item they picked, gets to pick next, and so one until all the plants and items are gone.

Now, Go SCREAM !!!!! We will have an I SCREAM for Ice Cream bar. This will also be very interesting in the August heat, but hey, let's give it a try. If you have an ice cream maker, bring it with the necessary ingredients and we'll crank away. Mine is an electric one, so I'll just plug it in, electric makers are allowed. Darla and Joe are bringing their ice cream

maker, so that's two. Call or e-mail me if you have an ice cream maker to bring. Bring whatever "toppings" you can think of that you like and are willing to share.

I can't think of a better way to have a summer get together: plants and ice cream. See you there, or should I say, see you here!! More party information follows.....

**August Party:**

**Party Time:**

August 15, 2010 - that's the 3rd Sunday as usual  
4:00 pm until ???

**Place:**

Home of Jessica Sheldon, her sister Rhonda and Rhonda's husband, Jeff Sipek  
10 Southgate Dr,  
The Woodlands, Tx 77380  
Home phone: 281-298-4287  
Jessica's cell: 713-598-5836  
Email: [jscooking@aol.com](mailto:jscooking@aol.com)  
Map attached

**Food:**

Pot Luck - **DEADLINE FOR FOOD SIGN UP: SUNDAY AUGUST 8TH**  
Drinks  
Appetizers/ Snack food  
Salads: Fruit or Veggie  
Main entrée's  
Desserts – even though we are having an ice cream bar, there is always room for (more) desserts. READ "GO GREEN, GO SCREAM".  
Ice cream makers and ingredients

**Contact:**

Cecil Strange for which dish / drinks you will bring  
**PLEASE CONTACT CECIL BEFORE SUNDAY AUGUST 8<sup>th</sup>**  
Phone: 281-481-3884  
Email: [c2strange@comcast.net](mailto:c2strange@comcast.net)

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President

**Local Newspapers / Society Newsletters:**

Thank you all for bringing your local newspapers and various garden club newsletters. If you have not brought me yours, please bring them to the party in August.

Remember, our goals this year are advertising, increasing membership, and preparing for our upcoming Auction next Spring. I'm looking for any ideas that you have, or that you have seen, that work.

If you'd like to discuss your ideas or have any questions, please call me at 281-733-5564 or email me at [darla@fernplantation.com](mailto:darla@fernplantation.com).

Thank you in advance for all your help.

Submitted by: Darla Harris, Marketing Chair

**Up and Coming Attractions**

August 15	Summer Party and Plant Exchange
September 19	Ferns from A-Z by Darla Harris
October 17	Open
November 21	Open
December 19	Holiday Party

We have many other possibilities and speakers being pursued for our Society. As always, suggestions for programs are always welcome so please let me know if you have any, especially for the open dates.

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President

**Welcome New Members**

Troy and Pam Lewis  
Lucy Melara  
Betty Mooney  
Elizabeth Noelting  
Debra Norris

**Dues:**

If you haven't paid your dues for 2010, this is a reminder.

**TGCFS dues amounts:**

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:

Mary McConnell  
6218 Wister Lane  
Houston, TX 77008

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

**Refreshments:**

Refreshments for July were generously provided by:

Drinks:	Cecil Strange
Dips & Chips:	Martha Burg
Cheese & Crackers:	Cherie Lee
Chicken Salad:	Terri Dolney
Fruits:	Donna McGraw
Veggies:	Jessica Sheldon
Desserts:	Noreen Tolman, Jessica Sheldon, Larry Rucker, and Cherie Lee
Service ware:	Cherie Lee

Please let Cecil know if you can help with the refreshments for the September meeting: [c2strange@comcast.net](mailto:c2strange@comcast.net) or 281-481-3884. Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!

## Library



We encourage you to take advantage of 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.

Don't forget to visit our web site (see link in header, page 1) and click on **Library** to see the current list of books available. There you will see some pictures of the books we have and links to reviews at Amazon and elsewhere.



### August Book Review

By: Frank Lee

“Native Ferns, Moss & Grasses” by William Cullina

Native Ferns, Moss and Grasses contains a thorough discussion, with several maps, of what plant hardiness means in the light of global warming. Cullina stresses the importance of each native plant's genetic makeup as he guides readers to an understanding of hardiness factors from coast to coast. For each species, he gives the natural range, type of soil, and habitat in which the plant thrives. For the keen gardener or nursery professional, the book should prove an invaluable and authoritatively selective resource, with listings that provide common names, natural habitats, and cultural requirements as well as plant descriptions. In the back, he provides complete information on where to buy these plants and lists of the best species for various uses.



### 2010 Officers and Committees:

President:	Donna McGraw
Vice President:	Jessica Sheldon
Secretary:	Cherie Lee
Treasurer:	Terri Dolney
Board Members at Large:	Sharon Banister, Darla Harris, and Lulu Leonard
Membership Chair:	Mary McConnell
Ways and Means:	Ted Richardson
Special Projects:	Larry Rucker
Marketing:	Darla Harris
Web Master:	Malcolm McCorquodale
Newsletter:	Cherie Lee
Library:	Frank Lee
Raffles:	Patrick Hudnall
Hospitality:	Cecil Strange
Welcoming at Door:	Marcia Livingston



### No Watering Required for Two Weeks?

At the July meeting, there was some discussion about a product that can eliminate the need for watering for up to two weeks. Malcolm McCorquodale has provided the following information / websites in case you are interested in trying it out.

Drench Anti-Transpirant STASIS - On the retail side of their web site this is called “Vacation”. They claim “No water for up to two weeks”. [www.naturalindustries.com](http://www.naturalindustries.com).

He also saw this product advertised in Greenhouse Product News ([www.gpnmag.com](http://www.gpnmag.com))

## Using Catnip to Repel Mosquitoes and Insects

At the July meeting, Donna McGraw mentioned a natural mosquito repellent she had heard about using catnip. The following is some information she provided from a couple of sources on making your own bug spray.

Research by Iowa State University and the US Forest Service announced that nepetalactone, the essential oil in catnip, can be used as a very effective mosquito repellent. The authors stated that nepetalactone is about 10 times more effective than DEET. The researchers believe that catnip repels mosquitoes by an irritant reaction.

How to make: in a hand-held spray bottle, mix 1/4-1/2 tsp. (1.25 - 2.5 ml.) of essential oil of catnip (*Nepeta cataria*), 1 cup of isopropyl alcohol, and 1 cup of water.

How to use: Shake well and then spray lightly on clothing, arms, and legs, being careful to avoid eyes or open cuts. Do not use on the skin of small children. Some persons may be sensitive to catnip oil. Keep the contents of the spray away from children and pets, and be careful around cats! :-)

Recently, catnip has been shown to work as an effective repellent of bugs and insects, including mosquitoes. Though much research concludes that it is as effective as commercial products, other studies conclude quite the opposite. Either way, many people are still using catnip as an insect repellent. Here are a couple of ways that you can use it and try its effectiveness for yourself:

### What You Need

- Catnip
- Water
- Spray bottle
- Pot
- Stove
- Food processor
- Strainer
- Catnip Oil
- Isopropyl alcohol
- Vinegar
- Rosemary
- Glycerin
- Mason jar

### Step 1 – Grow Catnip

Begin by sowing some seeds in your garden according to the instructions listed on the seed package. Water regularly and wait until you have several leafy stalks on the plant. Once you do, remove a few large stalks.

### Step 2 – Prepare Catnip Steeped Bug Spray

Take the stalks inside and strip the leaves off of them. Place the leaves in a food processor and place the pulp in a pot. Heat 2 cups of water to the boiling point and pour it over the catnip. Steep the catnip in the water for about 10 minutes and proceed to strain the leaves out. Pour this mixture into a spray bottle and refrigerate. Spray onto your clothing as you would any other bug spray.

### Step 3 - Making Catnip Oil Spray

To create a spray using a catnip oil, add 1 cup isopropyl alcohol and 1 cup water to a half teaspoon of the catnip essential oil. Pour into a spray bottle and use on clothing as a repellent. Though this recipe is the most effective, it is not suitable for children and pets.

### Step 4 – Making Vinegar and Catnip Spray

Another effective repellent includes vinegar and catnip. Crush the leaves of 2 cups of catnip and combine with 3 cups of rice vinegar or white vinegar into a quart Mason jar. Close the jar with a lid and store in a dark cabinet for two weeks. Shake the mixture every day. At the end of 2 weeks, strain the spray into a squirt bottle and refrigerate. Use on clothing and skin to keep the bugs away.

### Step 5 – Making Catnip/Rosemary Bug spray

Crush 2 cups of catnip and 1 cup of rosemary leaves using your hands or a rolling pin. Place the mixture in a clean quart Mason jar and cover completely with 2 cups of glycerin or other body oil. Leave the jar in a dark cupboard for 2 weeks, shaking daily. Strain the pulp out after 2 weeks and place the oil into a new jar. Refrigerate and use the oil as needed when working outdoors.

If you prefer, add a small amount of citronella or lemon balm to your mixture to both enhance the scent and help in repelling mosquitoes. Catnip only is effective on certain kinds of mosquitoes, so you may want to test a small batch of any of these recipes to see if they work on the mosquitoes in your area before preparing a larger quantity. If you find that they are effective, steep a large batch of repellent and store in the refrigerator all summer long and enjoy a great natural remedy for your bug problem.

Read more: <http://www.doityourself.com/stry/using-catnip-to-repel-mosquitoes-and-insects#ixzz0u6I7qjyM>



#### Editor's Comments:

As most of you are aware, the Newsletter is posted on the TGCFs website at the same time as it is mailed out to the members. In an effort to save money on mailings, it has been suggested that email notification be sent that the Newsletter has been posted on the website instead of mailing the Newsletter. Members can then visit the website to view the Newsletter and print it for themselves if they wish. **If you have not done so already, please let me know if you are willing to accept the email notification and forgo the mailed Newsletter.** You can contact me by calling 281-999-8368, emailing [cherie.d.lee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cherie.d.lee@sbcglobal.net), or let me know at the next meeting. If I don't hear from you, you will continue to receive the Newsletter as usual. Thanks.

**Deadline for the September Newsletter is September 3, 2010.**

Cherie Lee, Editor, *TGCFs Newsletter*



## Minutes of General Meeting, July 18, 2010 Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

A regular monthly meeting was held at the Houston Garden Center, Houston, Texas.

The meeting commenced at 2:00 PM with President, Donna McGraw calling the meeting to order.

**General Meeting:** Donna McGraw opened the floor for Committee Chair reports.

**Upcoming Programs:** Vice-President Jessica Sheldon discussed the August Summer Party that will be at Jessica's home on our normal meeting day but at 4 PM. It will be a pot luck dinner party with our traditional plant exchange.

**Library:** Chair Frank Lee reminded all that the Library was open for checking out books and to please return books at the next meeting.

**Newsletter:** Editor Cherie Lee reminded members that the deadline for the August Newsletter is July 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Reception and Dinner for Barbara Joe Hoshizaki:** Thank you from all to Donna and Monty for hosting the reception and dinner at their home on Saturday evening for our guest speaker. It was a very enjoyable occasion.

**Program:** Barbara Joe Hoshizaki presented a wonderful program on Platycerium Identification. It included a lecture on the various parts of the Platycerium and the various species followed by a "hands on" demonstration using our hand lens and microscopes to distinguish between the various species.

Platycerium veitchii 'Lemoinei' were available for purchase at cost and Ted Richardson prepared a plant data sheet for members to add to their notebooks.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Submitted by: Cherie Lee, Secretary



#### Upcoming Events – Other Societies in Houston Area:

If you have the time and would like to expand your horticultural activities, take note of the following announcements by the Houston Bromeliad and Orchid Societies.

#### The Houston Orchid Society, Inc.

[www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org)

Regular meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 PM at: The Houston Garden Center.

Next regular meetings are August 5, 2010 and September 2, 2010.

#### Bromeliad Society/Houston Inc.

[www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](http://www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org)

Regular meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM at: The Houston Garden Center.

Next regular meeting is August 17, 2010



Reception and Dinner at the McGraw's



**Meeting Preparations**



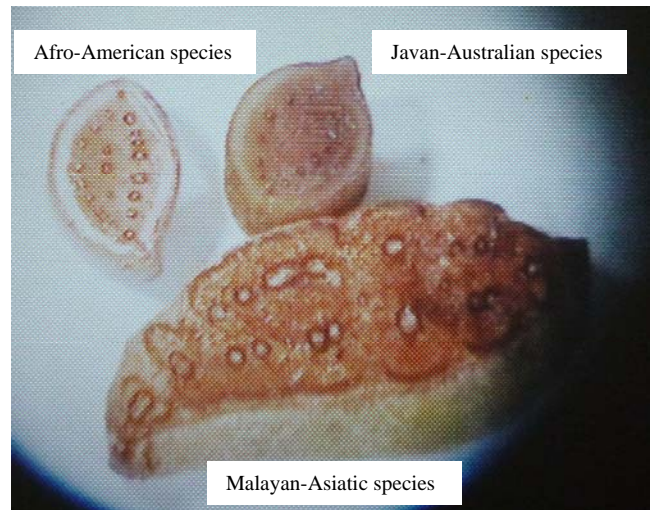
**It worked!**



**'Platycerium Identification' presented by Barbara Joe Hoshizaki**

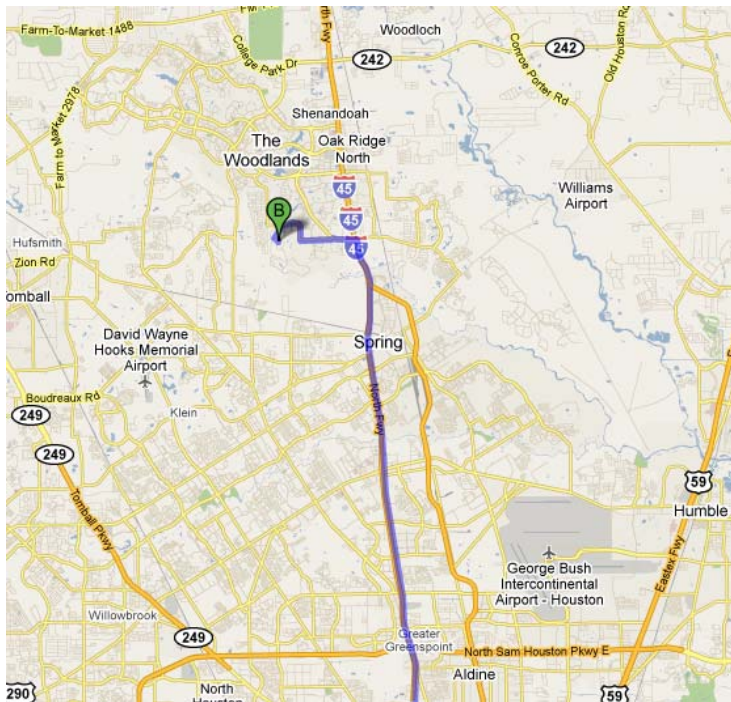


**Barbara Hoshizaki**

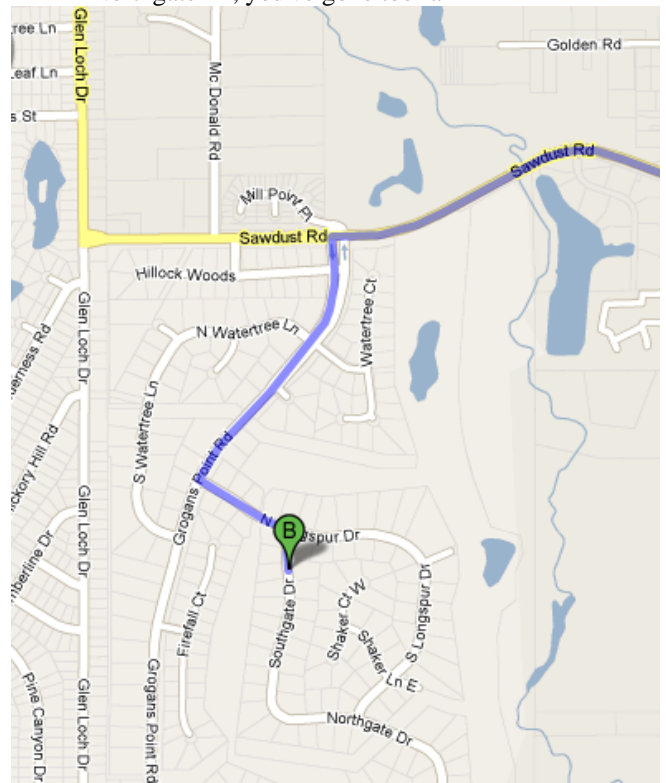


**Stipe Cross-sections**

**August Party and Plant Exchange – August 15<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM**  
**Jessica Sheldon’s Home**  
**10 Southgate Dr., The Woodlands, Texas 77380**  
**Home phone: 281-298-4287**  
**Jessica’s cell: 713-598-5836**



6. Turn right onto Southgate Dr 0.1 miles
7. Arrive at 10 Southgate Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77380  
The last intersection is N. Longspur Dr. If you reach Northgate Dr, you've gone too far



1. At exit 73, take ramp right for I-45 toward Sawdust Rd / Rayford Rd 0.7 miles
2. Turn left onto Rayford Rd / Sawdust Rd 0.8 miles
3. Turn left to stay on Sawdust Rd 2.2 miles  
CHEVRON on the corner
4. Bear left onto Grogans Point Rd 0.5 miles
5. Turn left onto N Longspur Dr 0.2 miles

