



Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

February 2010

Vol. 12, No. 2

<http://www.tgcfernsoc.org>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, February 21, 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:

Happy Valentine's Day to everyone. Monty says we have 6 more weeks of winter but I hope he's wrong. I'm so ready to start playing in the dirt.

The program this month should be very interesting. For those of you who don't know about herbarium specimens - they are preserved - usually dried - plants. Each one has leaves, stems, roots and flowers if possible for those plants that need flowers for reproduction. Having herbarium specimens helps with identification of new plants and serves as a record of where the plant was collected. The Smithsonian has a large collection of herbarium ferns as does UC Berkley and the New York Botanical Garden. It will be interesting to find out what A&M has.

If you haven't already, don't forget to sign up for the trip to Dallas.

We need to have a board meeting again this month to finish the items we didn't quite get finished last month, 12 o'clock again. As usual, anyone who'd like to sit in and see what's going on is welcome to join us.

I hope to see you all on the 21st.

Donna



February's Program:

Fellow Ferners:

Ah, February, the month of LOVE. As I look around my room, I recall the sacrifices, the dedication, and the determination I have made in the name of love. Oh you know what I'm talking about. Things you would never do if it weren't for that special feeling you get. However, let me warn you, to those who have not succumbed to love, just what I mean.

There was a feeling of anxious anticipation as I grasped the downspout and with eyes closed (as if that would make my crime less real), I pulled. The downspout came away from the gutter easier than I thought. A small thrill ran down my spine as the crime continued. Moving, with clumsy attempts, two garbage cans into just the right position on unruly rocks, took longer than I hoped. I quickly checked the door, and with no one suspecting my activity, I came back inside to resume my normal routine. Then I waited.

There was little suspicion until it rained. Instead of looking out the kitchen window to the view beyond, there was a veil of water spilling over the gutter and into my garbage cans. I was

exposed. The crime consummated. I had damaged property, hurt feelings, but worst of all, I had acted alone. Not willing to share my intentions of destruction. Yes, that is what I did in the name of LOVE.

Now as I haul up rain water, which I have warmed from the freezing outside temperatures, I recall other acts of love too numerous to mention but would be immediately obvious to anyone who saw my room. Victorious, I water my ferns. Love? Yes, because if it was not love, I would never put up with those little flying bugs! What are those bugs anyway?

Love does have a way of spurring us on to try new things. For instance, a, let's call it a scrapbook of your ferns. I know between the drought this summer and the freeze this winter, many of my favorite ferns have gone to fern heaven. I couldn't tell you their names to even mark their graves. For the plants that survived the drought, I'm waiting for spring to see if they have survived the winter. If only I had kept a sample, neatly pressed and labeled, information on where I planted it, how I didn't water it, or shade it, or all the other sins of the mother. The child is lost.

However, we are fortunate to have Monique Reed to help us with 'No Fern Left Unidentified'. Monique will take us through the steps of creating a herbarium (yes, I had to look that up) for our ferns. Oh, be assured, she is well qualified for this precious task. Monique is THE Herbarium Botanist for the Texas A&M University Biology Department Herbarium. Her love of plants not deterred by the fact that, while growing up in El Paso, where green was (and probably still is) a novelty, she wanted to grow up to be a tree. So to her disappointment, but to our good fortune, she grew up to be a botanist. She currently serves as Laboratory Coordinator for some of the undergraduate botany classes, which include morphology (sounds like a late night horror movie – got to find out more about that), classification, ecology, and uses of plants.

A 4" potted fern from Casa Flora and other supplies for our Fern Scrapbook, if Herbarium sounds too scary, will be provided for a small workshop fee. I am still looking for my recipe for preserving fern fronds with floor wax. If I do find it, I will have that set up to try. Monique and I are working out the details for the most productive, informative, and thrilling Herbarium workshop you have ever attended, if you've ever attended one before.

"Austral Gem" will be available to those of us who didn't get plants for our project last month. The rest of the plants will

be available by donation from our 'store' or included in the raffle.

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



Up and Coming Attractions

March: Field trip to Casa Flora and Dallas Arboretum if details can be arranged that quickly. We will have to keep in touch with our members before the March meeting so please contact Mary McConnell if your info needs updating.

April: David Mahler, an ecologist for Environmental Survey Consulting Company in Austin, will give a presentation on xeric ferns of Texas. I see the possibility of a mini garden with a xeric fern in our future.

We have many other possibilities and speakers being pursued for our Society. As always, suggestions for programs are always welcome.

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



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.



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
Newsletter:	Cherie Lee
Library:	Frank Lee
Raffles:	Patrick Hudnall
Hospitality:	Cecil Strange
Welcoming at Door:	Marcia Livingston



Board Meeting:

There will be a Boarding Meeting starting at 12 PM noon before our regular meeting on February 21 at the Houston Garden Center. Any interested member may attend.



New Members:

Please give a warm welcome to our new member Pat Foreman. Welcome.

Submitted by: Mary McConnell, Membership Chair



Minutes of General Meeting, January 17, 2010 Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

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

The meeting commenced at 2:10 PM with President, Donna McGraw calling the meeting to order.

General Meeting: Donna McGraw began the meeting by discussing the idea of having an auction to raise money for the society. Additional research on the idea will be done and it will be discussed further at future meetings.

There will be a Federation meeting on the 2nd Friday in March and TGCFS, along with several plant societies, will be supplying the refreshments for approximately 125 people. We could either bring the refreshments or donate funds. Jean Keiser motioned to donate \$50 toward the refreshments. Terri Dolney seconded the motion and it was approved by the members present.

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

Membership: Chair Mary McConnell reminded attendees to pay their dues if have not done so already.

Newsletter: Editor Cherie Lee reminded members that the Newsletter is posted on the TGCFS website for viewing and /or printing. Please let her know if you are willing to accept an email notification that the Newsletter has been posted and forgo receiving the mailed Newsletter to help save money.

Hospitality: Chair Cecil Strange reminded everyone to please sign up to bring refreshments at upcoming meetings.

Plant Sales: The Mercer Arboretum's March Mart will be held March 26 & 27. Members of Mercer Arboretum can shop on Thursday, March 25.

Upcoming Programs: Vice-President Jessica Sheldon discussed the programs for upcoming meetings. These included herbarium / preserving ferns in February, trip to Casa Flora in Dallas in March, Xerophytic Ferns in April, and more exciting programs to come.

Each member was given a binder to hold the data sheets they will be receiving on the plants that are available at the meetings as well as any other useful information.

Plant Propagation: If anyone has ferns that they would like to share and would like help dividing them, they should contact Jessica Sheldon about hosting a propagation party at their home or having interested members meet at the Garden Center before the regular meeting to divide the ferns. Members attending are expected to provide their own pots, potting soil, etc.

Program: Donna McGraw discussed growing ferns indoors. Ferns with thicker fronds are recommended and best if temperatures are 65-68 degrees with humidity of around 60%.

Jessica Sheldon demonstrated the planters that would be used in the hands on workshop. Each member participating received three Austral Gem ferns (cross between *Asplenium dimorphum* and *Asplenium difforme*) to plant in their planter. A plant data sheet was provided with additional information for their notebooks.

Plant Raffle: Frank Lee ran the plant raffle.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Submitted by: Cherie Lee, Secretary



Minutes of Board Meeting, January 17, 2010
Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

Meeting held at the Houston Garden Center, Houston, Texas with President Donna McGraw presiding and calling the meeting to order at 12:25 PM.

Members Present: Donna McGraw – President
Jessica Sheldon-Vice President
Cherie Lee – Secretary
Terri Dolney – Treasurer
Darla Harris
Lulu Leonard

Members Absent: Sharon Banister

Guests: Larry Rucker
Mary McConnell
Ted Richardson

Discussion was held on ways to increase membership. Ideas included:

- Posting flyers at nurseries, especially for special meetings (Mary McConnell to investigate)
- Letter to Federation
- Ads in local papers
- Examiner – publishes local papers for many areas (Ted Richardson will check into this)
- Chronicle (Mary McConnell will ask Brenda about it)
- Craig's list
- Begonia Society Newsletter
- Buchanan's Newsletter (Jessica Sheldon to check into)

Discussion was held on the best method for implementing the Propagation Group. The Board decided to recommend to the membership that any member could host a propagation party at their home or at the Garden Center prior to a regular meeting. Interested members could then sign up to attend.

Purchasing items for the store was discussed and Ted Richardson said he would look into tax exemption certificates.

Upcoming programs were discussed including Monique Reed in February, Casa Flora field trip in March, and David Mahler in April. Other potential programs included: Little Thicket field trip, Rainforest in Arkansas, Ferns A-Z by Darla Harris, Bayou Bend Park tour, Water Ferns by Frank Lee, Duane Peterson on Maidenhair Ferns, Barbara Joe (Darla Harris), Robbin (Donna McGraw), plant exchange in fall, Mike Lowry from Another Place in Time (Jessica Sheldon).

Terri Dolney reviewed the funding status. Discussion was held around options for generating income. Ted Richardson reminded Board that only two plant sales/auctions were allowed per year. Board discussed possibility of holding an auction this summer, could request plant donations from members, nurseries, other plant societies, etc. Ted Richardson will find out if a permit is required to hold an auction. He will also develop a list of other plant auctions/sales already scheduled and check when the Garden Center is available.

Terri Dolney will work to update the TGCFS bylaws to include the changes required by the government and those approved by the membership over the past several years.

Cherie Lee requested permission to purchase \$44 worth of stamps for mailing the Newsletter-granted by the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Submitted by: Cherie Lee, Secretary



Refreshments:

Refreshments for January were generously provided by:

Drinks: Terri Dolney
Snacks: Darla Harris
Fruits/Veggies: Malcolm McCorquodale
Desserts: Larry Rucker
Service ware: Cecil Strange

Refreshments for February will generously be furnished by:

Drinks: Cecil Strange
Chips & Dips: Mary McConnell
Cheese & Meats: Lulu Leonard
Desserts/Fruit: Cherie & Frank Lee
Service ware: Cecil Strange

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.



February Book Review

By: Frank Lee

“Indoor Ferns” by Boy Altman

This book explains in great detail the correct treatment for ferns: light, water, temperature, fertilizer, repotting – all aspects of caring for the plants are discussed in simple language, and with no complicated scientific terminology. In addition, each variety (about ninety of them are available) is discussed separately in summary form. It tells you how to keep tropical and sub-tropical ferns growing in peak condition and is lavishly illustrated with over 150 color photographs.

This book is intended for every fern lover and there will no longer be any excuse for letting an indoor fern die after only a few months. Every room in the house can be home to some of the many splendid varieties of ferns.



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. **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, or let me know at the January meeting. If I don't hear from you, you will continue to receive the Newsletter as usual. Thanks.

Deadline for the March Newsletter is March 6, 2010.

Cherie Lee, Editor, *TGCFS Newsletter*



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.

Bromeliad Society/Houston Inc.

www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org

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

Next regular meetings are February 16 and March 16, 2010

The Houston Orchid Society, Inc.

www.houstonorchidsociety.org

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

Next regular meeting is March 4, 2010



January 17, 2010 General Meeting



Jessica Sheldon discussing the planters for the workshop.



Success!