



# Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

February 2012

Vol. 14, No. 2

<http://www.tgcfernsoc.org>

**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!!!

Last month was one of the most interesting meetings we have had. First, Sharon Bannister gave a very nice presentation on how to put a terrarium together and did so under some very trying circumstances. We did this hands-on project on the front steps of the Garden Center with refreshments on the benches. Talking with the Garden Center after the meeting, I was reminded that last year our meeting also fell on Martin Luther King holiday weekend and we had complained about the lack of parking. Thus, this year they switched our date to the 4th weekend to avoid the conflict. They did not tell me they had switched our weekend but simply gave me the date, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Well back when all this was done, I didn't have a 2012 calendar with me. This date sounded like our normal time so it didn't raise any red flags. Because January 1st fell on Sunday, this was actually the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month. So all in all, it was my fault, and for that my apologies. I will pull the calendar out to confirm the 2013 dates are correct. Trust me I won't fall for that twice. I hope.....

I'm very sorry to be missing the meeting this month. I know it will have a wealth of information that I would have personally enjoyed. I do hope you will tell me all about it when I'm back in March.

I hope our warm winter continues and we have a beautiful and rainy spring, summer, and fall this year. We really could use this weather to continue as it has for the last few weeks.

Enjoy your new Osmunda, the European Royal fern, and in March, we will finish up with our last of this series and talk more about the Osmunda family at the meeting. Again, a 4" potted plant will be available for each member for \$2.00.

Take care and see you in March!!!

Darla



## A message from our Vice President:

Shine and Share the Love

February 2012

You will not have forgotten our member, Joan Hudson, for her rousing presentations on sex, always a big draw. She will be back this month with more sex, how fitting for this month of LOVE.

However, if you find yourself in the kitchen too long preparing that something special for that someone special, with pots, pans, spatulas, and spoons up to your elbows, look no further than to our featured fern.

This fern has an interesting history in its quest for respect and love. Huge at 20feet tall (who wouldn't "Love" to have that to boast about in your back yard), they left their mark on history as coal found from the Carboniferous period, 350 to 280 million years ago. Out on the "Westward Trail", they were with the generation of pioneers, helping out with little love or respect, but still there quietly, persistently, and watching as we populated this land, so did they.

To look at this fern you wouldn't think of it as an icon to "love", or even a fern to "love". But love we do. Easy to grow in sun and water, invasively sometimes, this fern has been tossed about from fern ally to its own classification as an honored fern.

Highly praised for its high silica content, this fern is still used today for the demanding and delicate polishing of specialized wood and metal products, delicate accents to flower arrangements, and increasingly popular in backyard ponds.

If you haven't guessed it yet it is the "Equisetum", horsetail and scouring ferns, and Joan will tell us all things about this time honored fern. She will bring fossils, cones, specimens, and of course talk about sex among the horsetails. Who would want to miss out on this!

PS: I'm not sure what "fern of the month" will be since horsetails are not the easiest plant to find for our purposes, but I do have a surprise group of ferns if I can't find the unusual horsetails.

PSS: I always mean to write this: If you have ANY fern relating to the presentation of the month, BRING it to the meeting. Like kindergarten show and tell!!!!

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



## Up and Coming Attractions:

February 19: "Equisetum" presented by Joan Hudson

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



### Refreshments

Refreshments for January were generously furnished by:

Drinks: Mary McConnell  
Savory: Jeanie Richardson  
Fruits: Cherie Lee  
Veggies: Jessica Sheldon  
Desserts: Beth Ayer & Marcia Livingston  
Service ware: Society/Jeanie Richardson

Refreshments for February will be generously furnished by:

Drinks: Ted Richardson  
Savory: Jessica Sheldon  
Fruits: Jeanie Richardson  
Veggies: Noreen Tolman & Ken Gardner  
Desserts: Larry Rucker  
Service ware: Society/Cherie Lee

Please let Jeanie Richardson know if you can help with the refreshments for future months. Email to: [tedandjean@aol.com](mailto:tedandjean@aol.com). Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!



### 2012 Dues:

2012 dues are now being accepted. Please complete the membership form and return it with your payment to our Treasurer Terri Dolney or our Membership Chair Noreen Tolman at our next meeting or mail it to:

Noreen Tolman  
15915 Pasadero  
Houston, TX 77083

#### TGCFS dues amounts:

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

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



## 2012 Officers and Committees:

President: Darla Harris  
Vice President: Jessica Sheldon  
Secretary: Cherie Lee  
Treasurer: Terri Dolney  
Board Members at Large: Marcia Livingston, Donna McGraw, and Lulu Leonard  
Membership Chair: Noreen Tolman  
Ways and Means: Ted Richardson  
Special Projects: Larry Rucker  
Web Master: Malcolm McCorquodale  
Newsletter: Cherie Lee  
Library: Frank Lee  
Raffles: Larry Rucker  
Spore Exchange: Patrick Hudnall  
Society Store: Larry Rucker  
Hospitality: Jeanie Richardson  
Welcoming at Door: Beth Ayer and Marcia Livingston



### Need Supplies?

Larry Rucker will be organizing a spring order of supplies through the Society Store so take an inventory, make your shopping (wish) list, and get with Larry at the next meeting.



### February Book Review

"A Natural History of Ferns" by Robbin C. Moran

From the curator of ferns at the New York Botanical Garden, this book is a meticulously researched, soundly organized, and entertainingly written treatise on the biology of ferns. For all their cool beauty and exotic allure, ferns are anomalies of the plant world because of their distinctive form of reproduction, by spore rather than seed. Moran examines this and other essential processes in a scholarly manual that sets forth in a single volume the wealth of material usually accessible only through intricate research. As opposed to field guides focusing primarily on identification, this history explains the unique life cycle and explores the evolutionary adaptations that have occurred throughout the species' 340-million-year history. Exhibiting a storyteller's flair, Moran opens each chapter with an engaging vignette or anecdote to instantly engage the reader, thus elevating what could be a pedantic discourse into an enjoyable discussion. This book is especially applicable to our presentation this month with a section on Fern Fossils containing a chapter devoted to Horsetail Ferns.

Submitted by: Frank Lee



### *Osmunda regalis European*

Family: Osmundaceae  
Genus: *Osmunda* (os-MUN-duh)  
Species: *regalis* (re-GAY-liss)

The *Osmunda regalis* European is best known to us as the Royal fern. It is an Old World fern that has also been called the 'Flowering Fern'. And coming with Old World ferns are folklores and this fern is no exception with its fair share.

The first folklore starts with the name itself, *Osmunda*. It is derived from the Saxons *Os* meaning House and *Munda* meaning Peace, so House of Peace.

Others think the name was based on the fairy maid 'At Loch Tyne'. Back in the time the Danes were invading and raising havoc throughout the land, there was a man named Osmund with a wife and a daughter who was said to be the fairest of maidens. On one such raid by the Danes, Osmund heard of their coming and fearing for his wife and daughter, he rowed them to an island that was covered with the Great Royal ferns. The ferns reached the heights of 10 feet tall and he had his wife and daughter lay down under these great ferns and hide. Later when it was safe he returned and retrieved his wife and daughter who were safely waiting for him. Later when his daughter grew into a woman, she referred to these tall ferns as the *Osmond* after her father.

*Regalis* is a Latin word that means Royal or Kingly, this has to be for the majestic appearance of the fern.

Another folklore surrounding this fern is that if you eat the very first crosier as it comes up in the spring, you will be tooth ache free for the full year. Don't you know that the fern must have almost become extinct from the local dentists trying to save their businesses? Ah, lucky for us that it was pre-dentist.

The 'Flowering Fern' - we know from our studies of ferns that they do not flower. So where did this nickname come from? In the spring, the new fronds push up and as they uncurl and put on their leaves, the top half of the frond is so completely covered in sori that it appears to be a bloom. It will first look green as this is another green spore fern, but then as it ages it turns a rusty to brown color. This explains the confusion of long ago.

The folklore on the height of the fern was not lore, but true. They can grow up to 10 feet tall, but normally they will be in the 3-4 foot range. The taller ferns are on very old growth that has been established for years and the trunks have grown to be a foot to two feet tall. Not to say in a few years some of us might have one to really show off. This is a clumping fern and only puts off a few rare offshoots. It does not grow as wide as it does tall, only a couple feet wide.

The *Osmunda* fibrous trunk is used for mounting Orchids on as it is a very tough and durable substance. It takes a saw to cut through the trunk. So dividing these is no simple task. You're going to need a really sharp shovel once they get grown.

The Royal fern is considered a bog fern, liking very moist to wet soil. The soil should be high acid so plenty of peat or pine needles to give them the nourishment they require. High light will work for this fern as well. The European Old World *Regalis* has a much thicker sturdier stem than the New World counterpart we have here in the States. When fall comes so does the fall colors as it turns yellow to brown and we know that next year we will experience the rebirth all over again.

We will have one 4" plant per member available for \$2.00 if you would like one for yourself.



Submitted by: Darla Harris



### 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, there 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. If there is a particular book you would like to check out at the meeting, please contact Frank Lee at [f.a.lee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:f.a.lee@sbcglobal.net) or 281-999-8368 prior to the meeting to make sure it will be available.



### 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 March Newsletter is March 1, 2012.**

Cherie Lee, Editor, *TGCFs Newsletter*



**Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society  
Board of Directors Meeting  
January 15, 2012**

Meeting held at the Houston Garden Center, Houston, Texas with President Darla Harris presiding and calling the meeting to order at 12:54 PM.

**Board Members Present:**

Darla Harris – President  
Jessica Sheldon-Vice President  
Cherie Lee – Secretary  
Terri Dolney – Treasurer  
Marcia Livingston  
Donna McGraw

**Committee Chairs Present:**

Beth Ayer  
Larry Rucker

**Budget:** Darla Harris led a discussion on the budget for 2011. Terri Dolney reviewed the Income and Expenditures for 2011, \$534.76 net profit due to no out-of-town speaker costs. The Board agreed to keep budget for 2012 the same as 2011 with 3-5 projects and no plan for plant sale in 2012.

**Store:** Board proposed that the Society order supplies for members a couple of times a year through the store. Larry Rucker as Store manager will organize the purchase. Put notice in Newsletter for members to submit their list of supplies they would like ordered this spring.

**Membership:** Discussion was held concerning the name tags. Suggestion was made that the Society members be responsible for bringing their own name tags to the meetings. The Board decided to try this and discussed options for incentives to bring name tags. Membership Chair will be requested to look into cost of procuring permanent plastic name tags.

**Membership Directory:** Jessica Sheldon suggested providing members with a bound copy of the directory including photographs of the members. Larry Rucker agreed this would be useful. Darla Harris said we would discuss this possibility further.

**Newsletter:** Discussed concern that members are not reading the Newsletter. Consider including a puzzle or something else to encourage folks to read it. The Board discussed the cost of printing and mailing paper newsletters once free printing is no longer available (could be as early as mid-year 2012). Currently approximately 15 newsletters are mailed each month at an estimated cost of \$5 each (\$60 per year per address) including printing costs. Some options discussed included finding another source of free or cheaper printing (member with own business, buying printer), printing newsletters in black & white, or printing only one page front and back with the essential information only.

**Library:** Discussed option of storing library books at the Garden Center like several other Societies. Board will request Library Chair look into option. In the meantime, Board agreed that the number of books being brought to the meetings would be reduced to the 3-4 major reference books, the book highlighted in the newsletter, and any other books requested by members in advance.

**Meetings:** Jessica Sheldon suggested using monthly meeting to go to Arbor Gate or Mercer to talk about favorite ferns, etc. to promote the Society. Terri Dolney mentioned that there is a person who is proposing a Botanical Garden in Houston and wants to come and talk to all the plant societies. She will provide his information to Jessica.

Meeting adjourned at 1:40 PM.

Submitted by: Cherie Lee, Secretary



**Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society  
General Meeting – January 15, 2012**

A regular monthly meeting was held in the courtyard in front of the Houston Garden Center, Houston, Texas. The meeting commenced at 2:30 PM with President, Darla Harris calling the meeting to order.

**Membership:** Darla Harris informed the membership that a new process for handling name tags was going to be tried in 2012. Members would now be given their name tag to keep and bring to the meetings. An incentive to remember to bring your name tag is being considered so don't forget. Also, if you haven't renewed your 2012 membership, please see Noreen Tolman.

**Newsletter:** Treasurer Terri Dolney requested that all receipts be given to her by the November meeting.

**Library:** Chair Frank Lee reminded all that the Library was open for checking out books and to please return books at the next meeting. Also, if there is a specific book you are interested in checking out, please let him know prior to the meeting so he can make sure to bring the book. Check the website for a listing of books. Not all library books are brought to every meeting.

**Store:** Darla informed members that Larry Rucker would be organizing a spring order of supplies through the Society's Store so put your shopping list together and get with Larry at the next meeting

**Hospitality:** Chair Jeanie Richardson reminded everyone to please sign up to bring refreshments for upcoming months. Darla thanked Jeanie for all her efforts and a great job organizing the refreshments and parties and informed the membership that it was time for someone else to take over this responsibility. A volunteer is needed by the March meeting so please consider taking on this task.

**Program:** Sharon Bannister presented a very informative program on "Terrariums", construction and maintenance. Kits were then available including several small plants for a make-one-yourself project in your own container. Congratulations to Sharon for an impressive job improvising on the steps of the Garden Center.

**Plant Raffle:** Larry Rucker ran the plant raffle with many plants finding new homes.

**Attendance:** 21 Members  
0 Guests

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Submitted by: Cherie Lee, Secretary



**Mercer March Mart Volunteers Needed!! March 23 and 24**

This is a wonderful opportunity for members of our society to help spread the word about ferns. I was a volunteer last year and while by no means an expert on ferns, I was quite surprised at what knowledge I have assimilated over the years as a society member, and with abundant enthusiasm for ferns, was actually invited back to March Mart as a volunteer. I am looking forward to it.

Don't feel that exuberance is the only means to be helpful, there are LOTS of warm bodies needed to help in lots of capacities:

- Labeling, pricing, watering plants
- Unload plant deliveries
- Café help, food prep, serve and cashier
- Check out cashiers
- Cottage hospitality for volunteers
- Gate monitors
- Help people locate plant groups
- Sell plant guides
- Help load plants into vehicles

The list goes on and on. I will have copies of the volunteer form for you to fill out and give back to me at the meeting. I will see to it that your volunteer sheet gets to the right person. How easy is that!!!!

Or if you prefer to go on-line and fill out the volunteer form, go to:

<http://www.hcp4.net/mercermarchmart/index.htm>

I know we all have precious little time to get through the day, let alone something extra to think about, but if you want to

experience something akin to an "adventure" without leaving the country, think of this as one of those "Helping the Planet" vacations, or at least "Helping out with something I would never usually think of doing" on the "Bucket list" of good things to do.

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon



**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](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 February 21, 2012.

**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 meeting is March 1, 2012.

**"Terrariums"  
presented by Sharon Bannister**



**"On the steps"**



**Sharon Bannister**

