

March 2013

Vol. 15, No. 3

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, March 17, at 9:30 a. m. – Moody Gardens,
1 Hope Blvd, Galveston Island, TX 77554 – Phone: (800) 582-4673**

A message from our President:

Hi Everyone!

Spring is in the air. I love spring. It is my favorite time of the year, even if it only lasts about six days for us here in the Houston area. I consider the last half of winter part of our spring. Many of my plants and ferns have not gone down at all this winter since it has been pretty mild (so far, knock on wood). I'm starting to see the flush of new fronds on a lot of my ferns. Once you see those new fronds push up, that is a good time to take off any old or damaged fronds from last year. We have been getting good regular rain showers and that has really helped the landscape in conjunction with a mild winter. There's nothing like a good 'mother nature' rain to provide the needed nitrogen to really put the green in our plants. Even with my well water without all the additives that are in the city water, it does not compare to a good rain for making those plants happy.

I will not be sad to leave the garden center later this year. The parking has just gotten impossible. Jessica Sheldon arrived at the garden center at 12 noon thinking she would put out cones. That was a laugh. She would have had to be there at 9AM to find empty parking spaces to put the cones. Thankfully we do have our parking pass for parking over in the employee parking area. For those who do not have the 2013 pass, I will bring them to the field trip in March so you will have it for the April meeting. Remember when parking in the employee lot, they do not tolerate parking on any area that is not paved. Even if your tire is one inch into the grass/dirt, they will give you a ticket. I know we try to park snug so everyone can park and be able to leave when they are ready, but stay off the grass.... please.

In spite of our parking issues and pushing the start time to 2:30 PM so everyone could get parked and into the building, we had an informative and fun meeting from Larry Rucker. He started the meeting off with a cooking demonstration, how to make a 3-2-1 cake. That was one of the best ice breakers we have had. Then Larry shared with us some of his tips on growing ferns in higher light. Ferns have the reputation of needing to be under a tree to live in our hot humid climate, but depending on the watering schedule, your ferns may be able to take brighter light, possibly up to direct sunlight, than you might think. He showed two *Polypodium cobra* in about 10" pots. One had been grown in almost full sun (6-8hrs) and the other had received filtered sun all day. The fern grown in full sun was more compact, upright, fuller, and a darker green. The one grown in filtered sun was lanky and had to be supported to be upright.

Overall, it was just not as attractive to look at as the sun grown plant.

Keep in mind that the leaves themselves will tell you if they are a good candidate for sun. Normally the thicker the leaves and the darker in color the better they will take the sun. Test your plants slowly and see how they react. They need to be hardened off to the sun and make sure they have the proper amount of moisture to support the drying effects of the sun. Keep in mind that in nature, ferns normally grow in more open spots, by streams or by rivers or along the edges of roads and not as much in the middle of the dense forest.

We need a head count for the March field trip!!! Also, if you would like to carpool with someone, please let Jessica or me know. We have some members who would like to carpool but don't know where other members may live. Field trips are the best time to get to know our fellow members better and that is what makes our Society such a fun one. We like each other! If you're not going to make the field trip, please let me know. That way I know everyone has had the opportunity to commit one way or the other. We will be sending out one last email before the date so if you have not let us know by then, please respond to that email so we will not be standing in the parking lot wondering if you just got caught in traffic. 9:30 AM sharp in front of the Moody Gardens' Visitor Center, more info in Jessica's article.

A big 'Thank You' to all who brought plants to the Raffle in February. We had some of the rarest and hard to find ferns this past month thanks to the generosity of our members. This is what supports our society. The money spent on raffle tickets goes straight to our speaker/project funds. The membership dues only pay for the newsletter and membership book. Other than donations to the society, we have no other income. We have slowly gone down in funds since about 2009 so it might be time to think about having another sale at the Garden Expo. I know it is a lot of work, but every five years is not too bad. We are not broke, but we don't want to get there either, so we may need to think about it.

I'm looking forward to our day trip to Moody Gardens and visiting with you all. We are still thinking about having lunch together afterwards. Send me an email if you would like to join us for lunch.

Take care and happy gardening.

Darla



A message from our Vice President:

I'm in the Mood for.....

March 2013

An adventure! But where to go? A pyramid, in the dry heat of the desert? A rainforest, with the heat of steamy humidity? A greenhouse where there are plants growing which I can only dream of?

Well, I can almost conjure up all of the above without leaving Texas, as long as you don't mind trading the desert heat for a multilevel 10 story glass pyramid with rainforests of Africa, Asia, and The Americas.

With that much of a hint, yes, we'll travel to Moody Gardens and the Rainforest Pyramid for our March meeting. Not only will we see the Rainforest Pyramid, but we are the beneficiaries of a private tour of the growing greenhouses by curator Donnese Brandon, coming in on her day off to do this for us.

There has been a 25 million dollar (that's a lot of \$\$\$\$\$) enhancement of the Rainforest Pyramid, so unless you have been there since Hurricane Ike, this will be a new adventure. After the private tour of the dreamy plants in the greenhouses, we will ride a train over to the Pyramid.

We will enter the Pyramid on a 'canopy' walkway overlooking the Amazon Rainforest with the exotic plants and animals and then walk into the Butterfly Exhibit. Next, we will venture through the Cloud Forest with nature's water towers and make our way down to the nocturnal exhibit on the rainforest floor, where creatures of the night live.

On the rainforest floor, we travel through Asia, Central and South America, and Africa with all thewell if I tell you it wouldn't be an adventure would it?

Save your air miles, a mere \$15 (cash or check payable to TGCFs) gets you to plant paradise. Drive, carpool, or hitch a ride (with a friend of course) down to Galveston. Be at the Visitors Center by 9:30 AM sharp, the tour begins at 10:00 AM sharp. Did I say Sharp? Adventures wait for no one, but without anyone there would be no adventure. How fun!!!

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



Refreshments

Refreshments for February were generously furnished by:

Drinks:	Darla Harris & Betty Mooney
Savory:	Cherie Lee
Veggies:	Mary McConnell
Fruits:	Darla Harris
Desserts:	Jessica Sheldon & Marcia Livingston
Service ware:	Betty Mooney

Please let Betty Mooney know if you can help with the refreshments for future months. Email to: jcmbzm@att.net or call 713-468-3834. Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!



Up and Coming Attractions:

Mar 17: Field Trip – Moody Gardens
 Apr 21: "Platyceriums"
 presented by Ryan Paddock
 May 19: TBD
 June 16: TBD
 July 21: TBD
 Aug 18: Summer Party
 location to be announced later
 Sept 16: "Annual Plant Exchange"
 Oct 20: "Spores"
 presented by Ann Herrington
 Nov 17: TBD
 Dec 15: "Holiday Party"
 location to be announced later

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



Please Welcome Our New Member

Diane Montagna



2013 Officers and Committees:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	Jessica Sheldon
Secretary:	Frank Lee
Treasurer:	Mary McConnell
Board Members-at-Large:	Malcolm McCorquodale Donna McGraw Larry Rucker
Membership Chair:	Beth Ayer and Marcia Livingston
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:	Betty Mooney
Welcoming at Door:	Beth Ayer and Marcia Livingston



Nephrolepis falcata

Macho Fern

Family: [Polypodiaceae](#)

Genus: [Nephrolepis](#) (nef-roh-LEP-iss)

Species: [falcata](#) (fal-KAY-tuh)

Macho Macho "Fern" can you hear the music? This fern is breathtaking when put in a container that will support its six foot long fronds. On the mature fronds, the black stipe (stem) is very stout making this fern a great choice for hanging high in a tree even where it will get a good wind or putting it in a tall pot to allow for the long fronds to hang rather than just lay on the ground.

The Macho fern can be grown in almost full sun, however, the color will not be as dark a green as it would if given very bright but not direct full sun. The more sun, the more it needs regular watering, however, it will take drying out without shedding its pinnule (leaves). Older or damaged fronds will shed their pinnule leaving the long black stipe for a long time before it falls off. I cut them off if it is in a walkway so you don't get poked, keep in mind they are a tall plant and can be at eye level.

Like other Nephrolepis, the best known being the Boston Fern, the plant spreads by rhizomes and stolens. The stolens are the long string like streamers or scaly runners that form at the base of the plant and head down in search for soil to attach to in an effort to make a new plant.

Mature plants will also put off spore. The name Nephrolepis comes from the spore, nephros means kidney and lepis means scale referring to the kidney-bean shaped indusia.

This is considered a tropical epiphyte and is one of about 30 different nephrolepis in the world. So it would be classified as tender and needs protection from a freeze. I find it will return after a mild winter for me in zones 8b to 9a, but it really sets the fern back with a slow recovery. I try to protect it to insure a pretty plant.

Biggest killer of the Macho fern is over watering! It is an epiphyte and we have learned that they require a lot less water. They grow in trees in nature in a rain forest setting. So we want to try to match their natural requirements. If you tend to water a lot and often, be sure to plant your fern in a well drained soil mix or even uncut moss. If you never water, plant it in a mix that will keep it moist/dry so it won't dry out completely between watering. Keep in mind if you hang it in the wind in a wire/moss basket, it will dry out faster. Plastic baskets will retain the moisture better. So choose according to your watering habits.

Dividing a macho fern is best done in the spring for cooler areas but for our zone 9 weather, any time will work. Little else is required of these beautiful big plants, but to enjoy.

Submitted by: Darla Harris



2013 Dues:

2013 dues are now being accepted. If you have not done so already, please complete the membership form included with your Newsletter or with your email Newsletter notice and return it with your payment to our Treasurer Mary McConnell or our Membership Chair Beth Ayer at our next meeting or mail it to:

Beth Ayer
5815 Portal Drive
Houston, TX 77096

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.



Need Supplies?

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



**Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society
General Meeting
February 17, 2013**

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

General: Darla discussed the latest information available on the status of the Houston Garden Center. Current indications are that meetings post July 2013 will be held at either the Hermann Park Golf Club or the Judson Robinson Community Center on Hermann Drive. Additional information will be provided as plans are finalized.

TGCFS T shirts are available for \$10 each. See Darla if you are interested.

Hospitality: Please contact Chair Betty Mooney if you can sign up for April or May refreshments.

Future Programs: VP Jessica Sheldon reminded everyone that the March meeting will be a field trip to Moody Gardens in Galveston. It will be on March 17th, our regular third Sunday of the month, but at 9:30 AM sharp at the Visitors Center. It will cost \$15 per person. Please bring either cash or a check made out to TGCFS. Please sign up at the meeting or let Darla know via phone or email by Monday March 11 so she will be able to account for everyone.

For our April meeting, Ryan Paddock will be speaking on Platyceriums and will be bringing plants to sell so bring your wallets.

Program: The program began with Chef Larry Rucker demonstrating the baking of a 3-2-1 Cake. Recipe follows.

3-2-1 Cake (Single serving cake)

1 angel cake mix and 1 regular cake mix (any flavor)

Combine cake mixes together and keep in sealed container.

In a small microwavable bowl or cup (at least one cup size), mix **3** tbs of combined cake mix and **2** tbs water. Microwave on high for **1** minute. Let cool slightly and dump out. You now have your personal cake. If you'd like to share, the recipe can be doubled (of course use a larger bowl or cup for baking).

Fern Grower Larry Rucker next presented a very interesting discussion on growing ferns in brighter light showing examples of the same ferns grown in bright light and in shade to demonstrate the difference in appearance. He also discussed his potting mix and watering.

Darla Harris next presented a very informative discussion and demonstration on moving up our spores from the agar to soil. She discussed preparing the soil, demonstrated moving the ferns from the agar to the soil, watering and covering the ferns.

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

Attendance: 14 Members and 1 guest/new member
Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Submitted by: Frank Lee, Secretary



March Book Review

“Fern Finder”

by Anne C. Hallowell and Barbara G. Hallowell

This book is a pocket guide to identifying native ferns that grow in the U.S. Midwest and Northeast, and eastern Canada. The "Fern Finder" leads the user step-by-step through a series of choices to the species being identified. It is heavily illustrated with line drawings and is perhaps the most popular nontechnical guide to fern identification ever published in this country. Check it out.

Submitted by: Frank Lee



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 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, 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 April Newsletter is April 4, 2013.

Cherie Lee, Editor, *TGCFS Newsletter*



Upcoming Events in the Houston Area:

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

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 meeting is March 19, 2013

Spring Sale - April 13, 2013

9 AM - 3 PM

Gethsemane First United Methodist Church
6856 Bellaire Blvd., Houston 77074
(east of the SW Freeway)

Show and Sale - April 26-28, 2013

Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens
22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Humble 77338

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 April 4, 2013.



Orchids on the Bayou
The Houston Orchid Society
2013 Show and Sale
April 20 - 21
Saturday 9AM - 5PM
Sunday 9AM - 4PM
Houston Museum of Natural Science, Main Lobby
5555 Hermann Park Drive
Houston, Texas 77030
Details at:
www.HoustonOrchidSociety.org



HOUSTON SATELLITE BRANCH
OF THE
AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

CALLING ALL GARDENERS TO THE

2013 PLANT & GARAGE SALE

SATURDAY MARCH 23rd
9AM-4PM

&

SUNDAY MARCH 24th
9AM-3PM

CLEAR LAKE PARK (RECREATION BLDG)
5001 NASA PARK WAY SEABROOK TX 77586

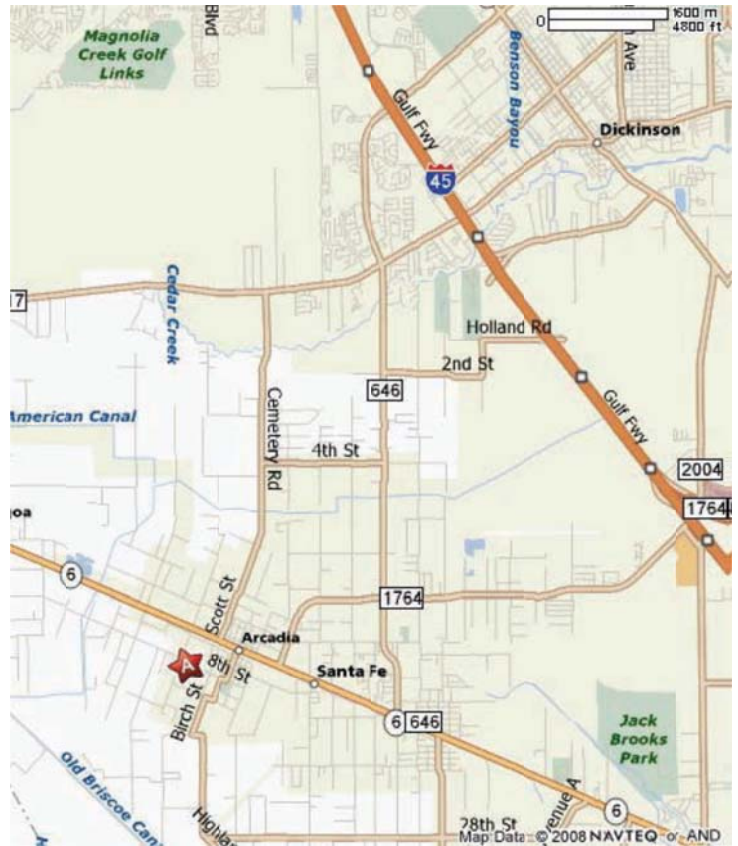


CHAPTER MEETINGS 10AM.
4th TUESDAY EACH MONTH
NEW COMERS & PUBLIC WELCOME
HOUSTONSATELLITEBRANCH_ABS@YAHOO.COM
FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK
TWEET US ON TWITTER
PIN US ON PINTEREST

Jimbo's Nursery to Host Sale

Jimmy and Joanne Woolsey will once again host a plant sale at their nursery on March 16th. In addition to the Bromeliad Society of Houston, members of other societies including the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society, the Plumeria Society and the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society will also be participating.

Sale starts at 9 a.m. and ends around 3 or 4 p.m.



“Making a 3-2-1 Cake” presented by Chef Larry Rucker



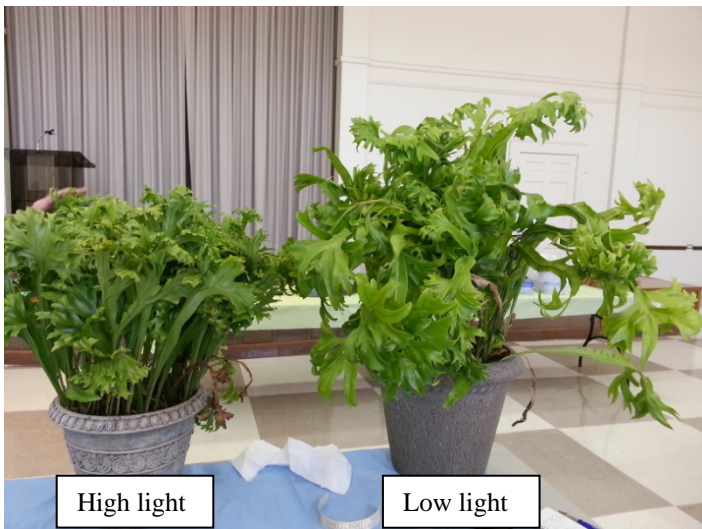


Cooling slightly



Sharing

**“Growing Ferns in Higher Light”
presented by Larry Rucker**



High light

Low light

**“Potting Up Spores, the Next Stage”
presented by Darla Harris**



Darla with her babies grown from spores



Moody Gardens
1 Hope Blvd, Galveston Island, TX 77554
Phone (800) 582-4673



Moody Gardens Map

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|--------------|
|  | Restrooms |  | Dining |
|  | First Aid |  | Gift Shop |
|  | ATM |  | Ticket Booth |



Map Artwork By C&Ggraph, Inc. © 1999 - 2014

 Visitors Center