

February 2015

Vol. 17 No. 2

<http://www.tgcfernsoc.org>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, February 15, at 2:00 p. m. – Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004 - Phone: (713) 284-1994**

**A message from our President:**

**A Micro-World for Your Ferns**

Hi Everyone,

It was really great seeing everyone at the January meeting. I want to thank Larry Rucker for presenting an informative program and helping us make our platycerium hanging baskets. I am looking forward to watching mine grow and shoot out those pups. I also want to welcome our new members. I hope we will see you at all our future meetings.

To our current members, please remember to pay your dues before the end of March so your membership will remain active and you will be included in the directory.

Darla Harris has another fun and informative project for us this month. We will be building our own terrariums. Please see her article that follows with more information.

Well we are bracing for another cold night up here on the north side. Last night was exciting as we lost power right before the end of the Super Bowl. Luckily it was restored after three hours. Didn't help us see the end of the game but it did stop the temperatures in the greenhouses from dropping any further. Oh how I am looking forward to spring.

I hope to see you all at the meeting this month. Take care and stay warm.

*Cherie*



**Please Welcome Our New Members:**

*Nancy Biancardi*

*Raini & Bret Cunningham*

*Jean-Marie Jones*

*Emil Riedel*

*Patricia Ross*

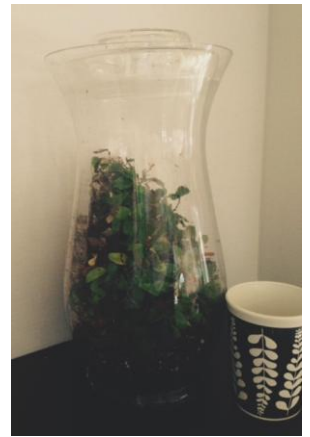
*Sally Tastinger*



Sometimes you just want to bring your plants indoors and enjoy them. The harsh reality is the home is really not very well suited for plants. In the summer months we suck all the moisture out of the air with our air conditioners and in winter we do the same with our heaters. The Houston area has very few days that we can just throw open the windows and let nature come inside.

What to do? Well back in the early 1800s, a man by the name of Dr. Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward discovered quite by accident that a sealed glass container would work as a microclimate and give the plant everything it needed for a number of years if set up with the correct balance of soil, nutrients, and water and placed in indirect sunlight. The condensation would build up on the glass and keep the moisture supply constant. We know that today as the **Wardian case**, the forerunner to the modern day terrarium.

What can we use to make a terrarium for our ferns? Well, glass is always nice, but you can also use clear plastic or anything that is clear and can be sealed. Choices can range from a large pickle jar to a bubble bowl depending on your plant and the space you have. You can put one plant in it and let it fill up the container as it grows or use something larger like an aquarium where you can put several plants in and landscape it with small rocks or figurines to make a full display. The important part is the seal. You can have a piece of glass cut to cover your opening or you can use plastic wrap. The plastic wrap will not keep the seal for years so you will need to replace it occasionally.





This is our project for this month, assembling a terrarium. **You will need a container for your new ferns, so please bring one with you.** We will have enough supplies for you to put together an 8" container including soil, charcoal, and two or three small ferns that will remain small and perfect for your new terrarium. These ferns are fairly rare and can be difficult to find outside of a Society. The project is \$10 for members and \$15

for non-members. If your container is larger, we will have some extra materials available for an additional cost.

Good places to purchase glassware for your terrarium are craft stores such as Hobby Lobby or Michael's but also stores such as Ross may have glassware that will work. Goodwill and Salvation Army often have inexpensive glassware that will work, too. Look in your pantry and see what you might have there like an old cookie canister. As long as it can be sealed, it can work.

Submitted by Darla Harris, Vice President



### Up and Coming Attractions:

- Feb 15: "Building Your Own Terrarium"  
presented by Cherie Lee & Darla Harris
- Mar 15: "Vegetative Reproduction of Ferns"  
presented by Darla Harris
- Apr 18/19: Sat "Field Trip"  
led by Carl Taylor, destination TBD  
Sun "Isoetes (Quillworts)"  
presented by Carl Taylor
- May 17: "Fern Fossils"  
presented by Diane Kerr Hudnall
- June 21: "Microscopic Study of Ferns"  
presented by Joan Hudson

Submitted by: Darla Harris, Vice President



### 2015 Officers and Committees:

- |                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| President:              | Cherie Lee                       |
| Vice President:         | Darla Harris                     |
| Secretary:              | Diane Kerr Hudnall               |
| Treasurer:              | Mary McConnell                   |
| Board Members-at-Large: | Patrick Hudnall<br>Larry Rucker  |
| Education Chair:        | Darla Harris                     |
| Hospitality Chair:      | Terri Dolney and Faye Stansberry |
| Library:                | Frank Lee                        |
| Membership Co-chairs:   | Beth Ayer and Marcia Livingston  |
| Newsletter:             | Cherie Lee                       |
| Spore Exchange:         | Patrick Hudnall                  |
| Ways and Means:         | Larry Rucker                     |
| - Raffle, Store, etc.   |                                  |
| Web Master:             | Malcolm McCorquodale             |
| Welcoming at Door:      | Beth Ayer and Marcia Livingston  |





## Refreshments

Refreshments for January were generously furnished by:

Drinks: Beth Ayer, Cherie Lee  
Savory: Mary McConnell, Donna McGraw,  
Cherie Lee, Larry Rucker  
Desserts: Diane Hudnall, Marcia Livingston, Karen Pol,  
Malcolm McCorquodale, Cecil Strange  
Service ware: Cherie Lee

Refreshments for February will be generously furnished by:

Drinks: Donna McGraw  
Savory: Mary McConnell, Larry Rucker  
Fruit: Terri Dolney  
Veggies: Diane Hudnall  
Desserts: Anna Belle Hicks, Cecil Strange  
Service ware: Cherie Lee

Please let Faye Stansberry or Terri Dolney know if you can help with the refreshments for any months in 2015. Email to [stansberry.faye@yahoo.com](mailto:stansberry.faye@yahoo.com) or call 713-734-0170 or email to [102666@email.hal-pc.org](mailto:102666@email.hal-pc.org) or call 713-592-9029. Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!



## T-Shirts

Darla Harris will be placing an order for our fern society T-shirts at the end of the month. If you are interested in purchasing one, please let her know at this month's meeting or email her at [darla@fernplantation.com](mailto:darla@fernplantation.com).



## 2015 Dues

2015 dues are now being accepted. Please complete the membership form and return it with your payment to our Membership Co-chairs Beth Ayer and Marcia Livingston 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.



## Board Meeting

There will be a Board Meeting at 3:30 PM after the regular membership meeting on February 15, 2015 at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center at 2020 Hermann Drive. Board members and all interested members are welcome to attend.



## Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society General Meeting – January 18, 2015

The regular monthly meeting was held at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, Houston, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm by President Cherie Lee. Cherie announced the new board members and asked each board member when announced to raise their hand. Cherie then welcomed all of the visitors and new members and asked each visitor to introduce themselves.

Marsha Livingston collected the 2015 dues during the meeting. There were 24 people at the meeting, 6 visitors and 5 new members. Frank Lee introduced the visitors and new members to the library and talked about where the library was, how to check out books and that the books in most cases should be checked back in the next month so other members can take advantage of the collection. Faye Stansberry thanked all who brought refreshments and told everyone where to sign up to bring refreshments for subsequent meetings.

Cherie announced the next board meeting to be held after the February general meeting. She then announced that the next month's project is a terrarium. To participate in this project you should bring your own terrarium container, whatever size and shape you like. Plants will be provided along with all of the other items needed to complete the project. Cherie suggested finding a container with a lid or using clear wrap, she also suggested the opening be large enough to easily place the plants into the container.

Larry Rucker introduced our project for the month which was potting a *Platyterium* in a hanging basket. He also discussed the plants natural habitat and showed different ways the plant can be grown and displayed.

Larry also announced that the city council will vote this coming Wednesday on whether or not the city should allow the "Houston Botanic Garden Inc." to proceed with plans to raise money to convert the land from the abandoned Glenbrook Valley Golf course into a botanical garden. For many years there have been efforts to establish a botanical garden in the Houston area with no success. This golf course is located where the Sims bayou crosses I-45. If this land allocation is approved the group trying to establish the botanical garden would have to raise \$5 million the first year and raise \$20 million before breaking ground. (City council approved plans. editor)

Larry Rucker ran the plant raffle which brought in \$51.

Submitted by: Diane J. Hudnall, secretary



## **Tectaria zeylanica syn. Quercifilix zeylanica**

### **Oak Leaf Fern**

**Family:** Dryopteridaceae

**Genus:** Tectaria tek-TAIR-ee-a

**Species:** zeylanica zey-LAN-ee-kuh

This is an uncommon Old World fern which has a relatively small distribution range in nature being found only in Sri Lanka, India, southern China, Vietnam, and Taiwan.

Growing only to 3" to 6" and requiring zone 10 climate with lots of humidity makes this little fern a perfect terrarium plant. Having a short creeping rhizomes that will spread within the terrarium making it a nice full plant getting about 10" wide. The fertile fronds are dimorphic with spore shoots high above the sterile leaves. The fertile leaves have sporangia that are acrostichoid in arrangement and lack an indusium. Acrostichoid means the sporangia are spread throughout the surface not arranged in a lines or dots. The sterile leaves resemble an oak leaf and that is how it got its common name.

This is one of the ferns we expect to have for your terrariums. It grows well under medium light in a moist potting mix. In nature, this is a terrestrial fern. When your fern grows large enough to have extra plants, you might want to pot a couple up in 3" containers and harden them off to grow outside the terrarium. We should have enough humidity here in the Houston area for them to grow well but, they would need to be brought in for winter.



Submitted by Darla Harris





outdoors south

# Resilient Resurrection Fern

This amazing plant cheats death by only pretending to die. Enduring deluge and drought, it speaks eloquently of life's determination.

Some people love to water the garden. As Lee May, former garden columnist for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, once wrote, "Watering is great therapy. There's something simple, direct, and ancient about standing there on the end of a hosepipe."

Me, I hate to water. There's something dull, mind-numbing, and stultifying about standing minute after valuable minute at the end of a stupid hose. Life, not to mention the downing of a good beer, is just too short—which is why I hold resurrection fern in such high regard.

Native to the South, the fascinating resurrection fern (*Polypodium polypodioides*) is an epiphyte—what's commonly known as an air plant. It attaches itself to a host, then obtains nutrients and water from the air and rain, as well as from the surface of the host. You'll often see a cluster of it perched on a main limb of a big tree such as a live oak, but it sometimes makes homes on large rocks beneath the forest canopy.

Like all ferns, this one reproduces not by seed, but by spores, which are carried by scalelike clusters called sori on the bottoms of the fronds.

After dropping onto a host or being swept there by wind and rain, they ger-

minate. A creeping, rootlike rhizome quickly secures the young fern in place. Eventually, it becomes a billowing nest of leathery, evergreen fronds, each 2 to 12 inches long.

Now, with a name like resurrection fern, you likely figure dying and rebirth come into play. Well, almost.

Resurrection fern has an extraordinary talent that allows it to survive long periods of drought. Its fronds curl and shrivel and turn yellowish-brown. All metabolic activity nearly ceases. The plant looks dead, and it stays looking dead for as long as the clouds withhold moisture. But as soon as they release their elixir of life, resurrection fern springs back, its fronds becoming plump and green.

If it acts this way on Earth, might it also act this way in space? High school students in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, wanted to know. So in August 1997, the space shuttle *Discovery* lifted into orbit an experiment module designed by the students containing a dormant resurrection fern. When provided with light, water, and carbon dioxide from a crushed Alka-Seltzer tablet, the space-bound fern woke from its sleep. Zero gravity was zero problem.

What can we learn from all this? Well, if you're a space shuttle pilot who likes houseplants but sometimes forgets to water them, consider taking a resurrection fern on your next mission.

For the rest of us, though, there's a deeper lesson. It's about the utter resiliency of living things. Challenge life, deny it water, terrorize it with chemicals, trample it underfoot—it makes no difference—life will find a way. And this is good—because it's 95 degrees outside in the yard, and I'm not going to water after all.

STEVE BENDER

ILLUSTRATION: RAY E. WATKINS, JR.



Although there are several types of resurrection ferns, the one shown here is the most common in the South. In the Southeast, it favors the large limbs of live oaks, but it also grows on rocks.



## Library

### February Book Review

#### “Gardening with Nature in Texas” by Karen M. Breneman

This book provides the basic principles to garden successfully, provide habitat for wildlife, reduce pollution of air and water, and improve quality of life. You will learn about native plants and their importance to conservation of natural resources and wildlife, working with nature to reduce watering requirements and pesticide usage while maintaining a landscape, gardening in the shade, alternatives to turf grass, producing healthy vegetables, and creating a water feature and surrounding habitat to promote wildlife. Following the suggestions outlined in this book will not only promote colorful flowers and healthy plants, but also reward the gardener with beautiful butterflies, hummingbirds, and other desirable wildlife.

Submitted by: Frank Lee



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 832-566-5788 prior to the meeting to make sure it will be available.



### Editor's Comments:

**Deadline for the March Newsletter is February 27, 2015.  
Thanks.**

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.

#### **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 First Christian Church,  
1601 Sunset Blvd., Houston, TX 77005

Next regular meetings are February 5, 2015  
and March 5, 2015

#### **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  
West Gray Multi-Service Center,  
1475 W. Gray St., Houston, TX 77019

Next regular meeting is February 17, 2015



**“Making Platycerium Balls”  
by Larry Rucker**



**Instructor Larry**

**Lovely exhibits**





