

April 2015

Vol. 17 No. 4

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, April 19, 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:

Hi Everyone,

Hope everyone is enjoying the spring weather. I am really glad not to have to close up and heat the greenhouses every night. I may be regretting this in another month or two when we start getting the summer heat but right now it is great

We had another interesting and fun meeting last month on vegetative propagation in ferns. Darla Harris gave a very informative presentation with many examples. We then got to plant some of these babies to take home and grow for ourselves. It's always fun when you get to bring a new fern home. Thanks Darla for a great program. I'm only sorry everyone couldn't be there to enjoy it.

I'd also like to thank everyone who brought refreshments. We've had some nice spreads so far this year thanks to everyone's generosity. Let's all participate and keep the trend going.

On March 20 & 21, Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Garden had their annual March Mart Plant Sale. I'd like to thank Midge Gorman, Darla Harris, Donna McGraw, and Frank Lee who joined me to volunteer to help sell ferns for Mercer in the rain. The ferns liked it but it was a little soggy for the rest of us. The crowds were light but we did our best to sell ferns, talk about our society, and of course do a little plant shopping on the side.

Darla has another great program for us this month including a field trip. I do hope you will be able to join us. It is always fun to get out and see how the ferns grow in the wild. Please see her articles that follow with more information.

I hope to see you all at the meeting this month and hopefully on the field trip. Take care.

Cherie

Two for One

***Isoëtes* (Quillwort) Presentation and a Field Trip to the Big Thicket**

First I want to talk about our Sunday meeting. We have the pleasure of having a program on *Isoëtes* being presented by the expert in this field, Dr. W. Carl Taylor. Dr. Taylor is a renowned botanist in the fern and *Isoëtes* world. He has numerous credits including publishing at least one paper a year for the past 30 plus years. He also wrote the "Arkansas Ferns and Fern Allies" in 1984. Dr. Taylor has helped other states as well in getting their fern list together. He is now retired, but still is associated with the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. in a limited capacity allowing him more time to travel and teach courses on ferns and *Isoëtes*. Dr. Taylor is an excellent speaker and teacher. I have had the opportunity to study with him on two different occasions. I know you will enjoy him as much as I have.

What are *Isoëtes*? What is a Quillwort? Good question!



Photo by Jeff Benca



They are mostly an aquatic or semi-aquatic plant that you can find in clear ponds and slow-moving streams. However, there are a few that will grow in wet ground that dries out in the summer. There are around 150 different species of quillwort and they date back to the Triassic era.

They have hollow, quill-like leaves, arising from a corm. They can look very similar so looking at their megaspores under the microscope is the best way of distinguishing them. The megaspores are a beautiful sight. The first time I saw them I was truly amazed. We will have a couple microscopes available at the meeting so you can see firsthand the beauty of nature.

Field Trip - Saturday April 18, 2015 The Big Thicket National Preserve

Why the Big Thicket for a field trip? This area is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world. Why? Millions of years ago the formations that make up East Texas were laid down under an ancient sea, swamp, or river and then buried under later formations. The rising Rocky Mountains tilted all the formations upward and as the Gulf receded and advanced, eons of rains and streams wore off the layers from the top down exposing the present surfaces. Because of this tilt, the farther north a wilderness is from the Gulf, the older the exposed formations. Across the Big Thicket, the age of the exposed formations span 30 million years thus resulting in substantial differences in the soils and subsequent plants.

This region makes up eight different kinds of plant communities boasting 85 tree species, 20 orchids, 4 carnivorous plants, 1000 flowering plants, and 26 ferns. This rich area is also home to 150 birds and another 200 that migrate throughout the year. Also, keep in mind there are 4 venomous snakes including the coral snake (remember "red on yellow - kills a fellow").

In 1974, the legislation was signed into law creating the Big Thicket National Preserve, the first national preserve in the National Park System. Why a preserve and not a National Forest or Park? It's because they allow hunting a few times of year and that is what makes it a preserve. The plants are protected so no collecting is allowed, but to enjoy the sheer beauty and make sure this is around for future generations we can live with that.

There are 12 different trails throughout this 6,000 sq mile preserve so bring your walking boots. Seriously, the trails are cut 6 foot wide and paved with gravel unless it is in the wet lands where there are boardwalks. So it is not a difficult hike. This is East Texas where the land is flat for the most part. Most of the sites have a picnic area, parking, and a bathroom.

As we are walking and seeing all the wonderful things nature is providing us, we can let our minds wander back in time when this was home to the mastodons, elephants, the American horse, camels, tapirs, and giant sloths and even saber-toothed tigers and the dire wolf. Yes, they have been gone from here for thousands of years, but so many things have survived and thrived in this magical place in the Pineywoods.

Details for the Field Trip:

Due to the location and the wide area of town our members live in, I think we should meet in Kountze on highway 287 at the Subway sandwich shop on the right hand side of the road at 10 AM.

The members who are going to head out highway 59 will meet in Kingwood as a group and either car pool from there or caravan north to Cleveland then take 105 east to Kountze.

The members starting on the South side of town might take highway 90 north to highway 146 and then east on 105 to Kountze.

We need to know who plans on going. We need to set up a meeting place for those on the south side of town. Once we know who is going we will send out an email or phone everyone to make sure everyone knows where we are headed. My cell number is 281-733-5564 (Darla) we don't want anyone lost so please let us have your cell number too.

We will be visiting the Turkey Creek Trail and the Pitcher Plant Trail. We will have with us Dr. Carl Taylor and he will be helping to point out all the lovely ferns and other plants. I think a picnic lunch would work out well for everyone. Once we know who is going we can decide on food and refreshments.

Just as a reminder, the field trip is a voluntary part of the Fern Society. Please keep in mind your own health conditions as to your level of participation. This is a Preserve so there are things to be careful for such as snakes, mosquitoes, possibly a fallen tree to step over, etc. This trip is at your own risk and the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society cannot be held responsible for an accident. If you decide to participate on this field trip you are agreeing to these terms.

Please email Cherie at cherie.d.lee@sbcglobal.net to confirm you're going with us.

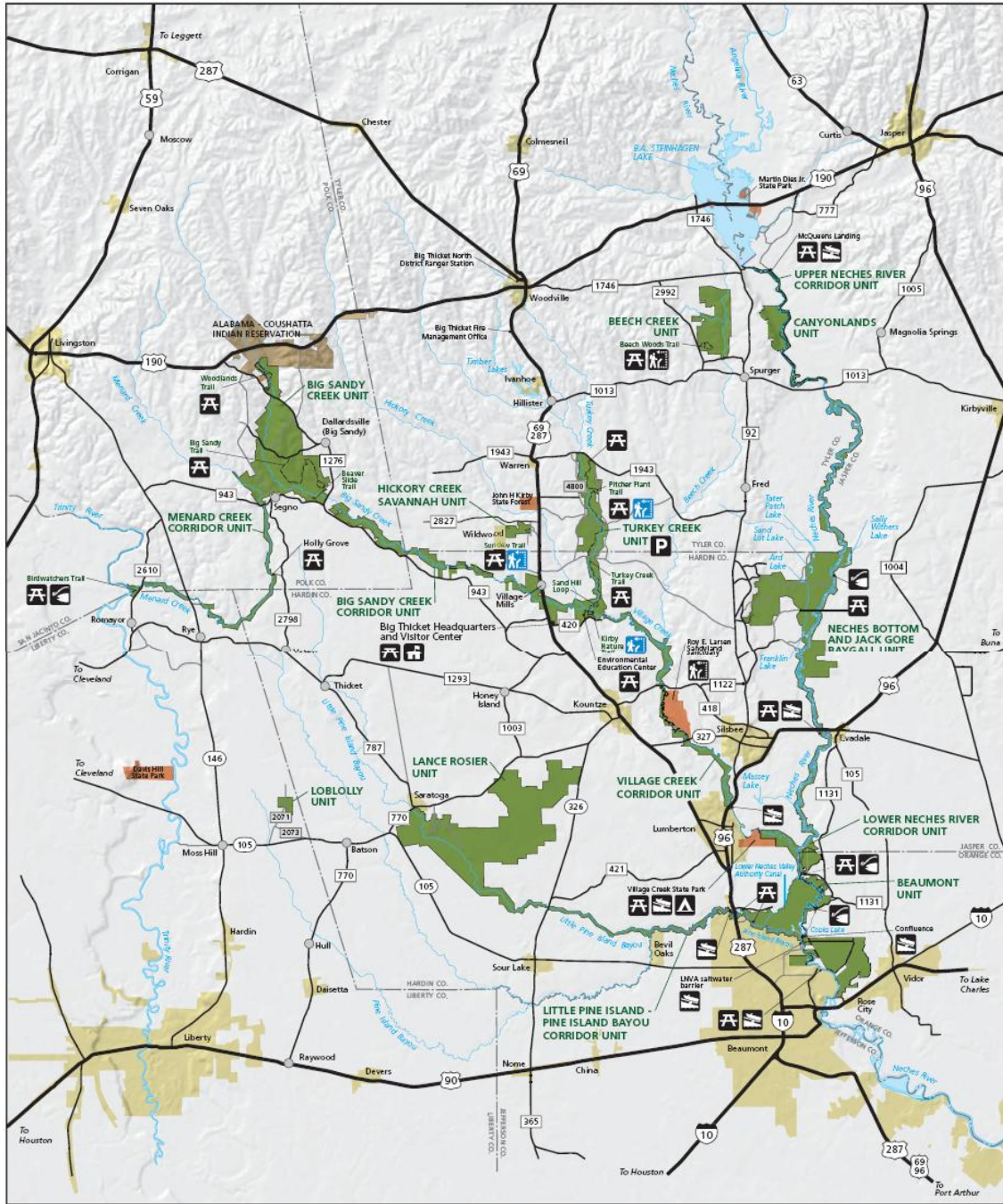
Things you might want to bring:

Hand lens / loupe, sunscreen, water bottle, hat, mosquito spray, camera, change of shoes, note pad, your book on the Texas Ferns and Lycophytes of Texas.

Submitted by Darla Harris, Vice President

Big Thicket National Preserve Texas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



- Camping
- Public boat launch
- River access (no boat launching)
- Ranger station
- Picnic area and parking
- Self-guiding trail
- Wheelchair-accessible self-guiding trail
- State road
- Farm-market road
- County road
- Unpaved road
- Parking
- Trail
- Big Thicket National Preserve
- Other conservation areas (non NPS)



North

0 5 Kilometers
0 5 Miles

175 / 100,089



Up and Coming Attractions:

- Apr 18/19: Sat "Field Trip to the Big Thicket"
led by Dr. W. Carl Taylor
Sun "Isoetes (Quillworts)"
presented by Dr. W. Carl Taylor
- May 17: "Fern Fossils"
presented by Diane Hudnall
- June 21: "Microscopic Study of Ferns"
presented by Joan Hudson
- July 19: "Pellaea atropurpurea
- Potting Up & Hardening Off"
- Aug 16: Summer Party
at Biruta Claunch's home
- Sept 20: Annual Plant Exchange

Submitted by: Darla Harris, Vice President



Refreshments:

Refreshments for March were generously furnished by:

- Drinks: Raini Cunningham, Rodolfo Reyes,
Jacqueline Smith
- Savory: Biruta Claunch, Darla Harris, Cherie Lee
- Desserts: Beth Ayer, Darla Harris, Cherie Lee
- Service ware: Cherie Lee

Refreshments for April will be generously furnished by:

- Drinks: Beth Ayer, Jacqueline Smith
- Savory: Bret Cunningham, Terri Dolney
- Veggies: Cherie Lee
- Desserts: Hannah Martin, Patricia Ross,
Larry Rucker
- 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 or call 713-734-0170 or email to 102666@email.hal-pc.org or call 713-592-9029. Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!



2015 Officers and Committees:

- President: Cherie Lee
- Vice President: Darla Harris
- Secretary: Diane Hudnall
- Treasurer: Mary McConnell
- Board Members-at-Large: Patrick Hudnall
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



Statement of Income & Expenses January 1, 2015 to March 31, 2015

<u>INCOME</u>	
Membership dues	\$ 320.00
Raffle Income	171.00
Bank Interest	0.63
Programs	<u>485.00</u>
Total:	\$ 976.63

<u>EXPENSES</u>	
Federation Dues	\$ 30.00
Program Expenses	<u>696.20</u>
Total:	\$ 726.20

Balance 12-31-2014: \$8,002.84

Balance 3-31-2015: \$8,253.27

Net Gain Loss for 1st Qtr: \$ 250.43

Net Gain Loss for 2015: \$ 250.43

Submitted by: Mary McConnell, Treasurer



Bolbitis heteroclita

This is one of the ferns we used as an example of vegetative reproduction in our project last month. We took the plantlets off the end of the mother plant and planted them in their own container to grow into new adult ferns.

There are several cultivars of *B. heteroclita*, all originating in Asia and Malaysia. They can range in size from real tiny ones like the one you are growing (see pictures) to a larger broad frond version. All of the cultivars make great terrarium plants. So once yours gets larger, you can add it to the terrarium you made at our February meeting or to a new one if your terrarium is already getting full because this little one will multiply.

These ferns like medium light and moist to moist wet soil. They are also often grown immersed in water in an aquarium so you can experiment with your plants once they are grown. These are easy plants to grow and you should have great success with them.



12" diameter bowl



Submitted by: Darla Harris



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.



April Book Review

“The Ferns and Lycopytes of Texas” by George M Diggs, Jr. and Barney L. Lipscomb

This book includes a general discussion of the structure and reproduction of ferns, the growing conditions including adaptations to dryness and other special conditions, and their locations in Texas. It also includes a complete description of each of the 127 ferns in Texas including location and photographs / illustrations of fronds and sori pattern. This book is very information and useful for ferning in Texas.

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 a wide variety of books 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 832-566-5788 prior to the meeting to make sure it will be available.



Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society General Meeting – March 15, 2015

The regular monthly meeting was held at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, Houston, Texas. President Cherie Lee called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

General: Members were reminded about paying dues. Thanks were expressed to members who furnished refreshments. Cherie discussed our participation in the Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Garden plant sale March 21-22. There is a sign-up sheet for those planning to help. A list of the ferns that will be on sale is available.

VP Darla Harris gave us a rundown on future programs. On April 18th we will have our annual field trip which will be to the Big Thicket area led by Carl Taylor. Details of the trip such as meeting place, car pooling, etc. will be in the April Newsletter. A sign-up sheet was available. Dr. Taylor will also present a program on “Isoëtes” on Sunday, April 19th. In May, Diane Hudnall will present a program on “Fern Fossils”. Our Summer Party is August 16th and Biruta Claunch volunteered to be our host. Programs through our Plant Exchange in September are planned. Details of our Plant Exchange were given and at a later date the numbers of plants members can bring for exchange will be determined. As of now, we do not have a host for our Holiday Party in December.

Program: Darla Harris presented “Vegetative Reproduction of Ferns” which included an opportunity for members to plant tiny pups and grow them to maturity. Darla discussed the vegetative process and its advantage over spores in enabling ferns to grow and mature more quickly. She had a number of ferns with pups on their leaves for members to view. Containers, soil mixture, and pups were available to all members wishing to participate. It was a fun project planting these tiny pups and hopefully, with good care we have ferns to add to our collections.

Plant Raffle: The Raffle Table was filled with interesting plants and \$46 was collected. Larry Rucker encouraged members to start growing plants for the table.

Attendance: 15 members were present.

Submitted by: Anna Belle Hicks
for Diane Hudnall, Secretary



Editor's Comments:

**Deadline for the May Newsletter is April 30, 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

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 April 2, 2015
and May 7, 2015

Bromeliad Society/Houston Inc.

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 April 21, 2015

The HOUSTON ORCHID SOCIETY presents



ORCHIDS: NATURE'S MASTERPIECE

2015 Spring Show & Sale, April 11-12, 2015

Museum of Natural Science, Main Lobby
5555 Herman Park Drive
Houston, TX 77030

For info visit <http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org/show>



Bromeliad Spring Sale

**Saturday
April 11, 9am-3pm**

**West Gray
Multi-Service Center
1475 W. Gray St.**

Bromeliad Society / Houston Inc.

Plant Sale April 25th – Jimbo’s Nursery

15019 8th Street, Santa Fe, TX 77517

Jimmy and Joanne Woolsey will be hosting a plant sale at their nursery on April 25th. There will be a variety of plants available including bromeliads, cacti, succulents, ferns, etc. Come check it out.

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



“Vegetative Reproduction of Ferns”

by Darla Harris



Instructor Darla



