



February 2016

Vol. 18 No. 2

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, February 21, 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:

It was great seeing so many at the meeting in January. There were some faces we have not seen in awhile, welcome back. I want to thank everyone who arrived early and helped with the setup. The center sets out tables and the stack of chairs, but the members have to move the tables and set up the chairs for the meeting. We have table cloths to put down on the food and raffle tables and on the rest of the tables when we have a project. It really helps when we have more hands and gives everyone a little free time to talk before the meeting.

Larry did his normal expert presentation on how to plaque a fern. The *Aglaomorpha coronans* is such a nice fern and can really take a wide range of conditions. It will take a little over watering and a little drying out. The tough fronds can handle a wind storm and usually not get damaged. Shade to very bright light are acceptable but no direct full west sun. It can take a light freeze for a short time if protected from frost however it is not considered a hardy fern and should be protected.

So far the weather for most of our members has been very mild this year. Let's hope we have the same through February and early March so our gardens will remain mostly intact. That would be a nice change if it happens. We need to be working on our beds getting them ready for a new growing season. Put down your fresh mulch and be ready to start adding some new ferns to your landscape.

I would like to thank Faye Stansberry for her role as chairperson for Hospitality. She has done this for three years and it has really been great for the Society. Now it is time to give her a break. So I would like to ask for a volunteer or two to take this over for this year. The job includes making sure we have folks signed up to bring refreshments, reminders are sent out prior to the meeting, and helping to set up and clean up at the

meeting. Everyone has been really good about bringing refreshments each month even if they have not signed up for something. This really helps since sometimes things come up and those who did sign up can't make the meeting with their item. I also want to thank Terri Dolney who has been working with Faye these past few months, but she will not be able to chair this committee at this time. So if you are willing to help out, please give me a call, email me, or let me know at the next meeting. Our group will be very appreciative.

We have had a switch on this month's meeting. The spore presentation will be moved to March and instead, Linda Gay will be presenting "Easy to Grow Ferns". Thank you, Linda for stepping up on short notice. See the meeting article for more information on the talk and on Linda herself. We will be in the back room this time.

Let's keep our Raffle table full. The revenue helps to pay the difference on the cost of our projects. Thank you for bringing your plants and plant related items. Ferns are great but if you have something else, that will work too. And for those of you who always buy a ticket (or more), thank you for your support. It's always fun to take a new plant home.

See you soon,

Darla



Board Meeting

There will be a Board Meeting at after the regular membership meeting on February 21, 2016 at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center at 2020 Hermann Drive. Board members and all interested members are welcome to attend.



**“Easy to Grow Ferns”
Presented by Linda Gay**

Most of us know of Linda Gay from her days as Director/Manager/Horticulturist at Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens where she gave the Fern Society guided tours of the Prehistoric fern garden. She has spoken to our group on several occasions and is a member of our Society.

Linda received her Associates Degree in Horticulture from the Trident Technical College. She has written books on plants and gardens as well as collaborated on other garden books. She is an accomplished horticulturist, garden designer, consultant, and lecturer on a wide array of topics including ferns.

She is currently working with the McGovern Centennial Gardens helping teach others how to best take care of our new wonderful garden. This includes teaching and instructing volunteers on plant care and pruning practices as well as working to improve mineral substrate soils using organic practices and methods.

Linda has a wealth of knowledge and will be sharing some of her fern tips with us in a PowerPoint presentation. We will be in the projector room this month so please plan on joining us and learning even more about gardening in Houston.

Submitted by: Darla Harris



2016 Dues

2016 dues are now being accepted. Please review the 2015 directory for any updates to your information, complete the membership form, and return it with your payment and any changes noted 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.



Up and Coming Attractions:

2016:

- Feb 21: “Easy to Grow Ferns”
by Linda Gay
- Mar 20: “From Spore to Staghorn Fern in 6 Months”
(hands on)
- Apr 16: Field Trip “Peckerwood Gardens”
(Sat.) 20571 FM 359, Hempstead, TX 77445
- May 15: “Ferns of Mexico Systematics”
by Alejandra Vasco
- June 19: TBD
- July 17: TBD
- Aug 21: Summer Party
at Larry Rucker’s home
- Sept 18: Annual Plant Swap
- Oct 16: TBD
- Nov 20: “Fern Holiday Ornaments”
by Larry Rucker (hands on, cost TBD)
- Dec 11: Holiday Party
at Biruta Claunch’s home

Submitted by: Lisa George & Larry Rucker, VPs



2016 Officers and Committees:

- President: Darla Harris
- Vice President: Lisa George and
Larry Rucker
- Secretary: Diane Hudnall
- Treasurer: Mary McConnell
- Board Members-at-Large: Biruta Claunch
Terri Dolney
- Education Chair: Darla Harris
- Hospitality Chair: Open
- 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



TGCFS Assistance at March Mart

In the 42 years since March Mart began, Mercer gardeners have developed tried-and-true plant selections for beginners, along with rare and exotic options for the discerning plant collector. All of these plants have been tested by Mercer staff and volunteers and are determined to perform fabulously in Houston and the greater Gulf Coast Region.

Each year, the March Mart Plant Guide is produced. The plant guide contains information gathered by Mercer volunteers and staff on plant selections featured during the sale. Developed from an extensive database on the cultivation of each plant, the guide is sorted by plant and includes botanical and common names, as well as hybrids and varieties. Other important information available in the guide includes the plant's size at maturity, bloom color, cold/drought tolerance, pest and disease vulnerabilities, pollinators, and other details. Most who purchase a plant guide add it to their horticultural library as a valuable reference tool. In only a few years, accumulated March Mart Plant Guides can offer a comprehensive how-to guide for Houston horticulture.

Energetic March Mart volunteers also create informative signage for each plant selection, including photographs of flowering plants if they are not in bloom during the sale. Most visitors arrive with a smart phone or tablet to quickly snap a photo of the sign to keep details of the plant handy.

Lastly, once all the plants and information are ready, volunteers begin setting up the sale, which requires installing the tents, tables, and chairs; setting up the plants, plant sale checkout area, the meal and hospitality area; and preparing the wagon masters who help shoppers transport and load plants. All of this is accomplished by hundreds of volunteers, assisted by Harris County Precinct 4 staff, who help make Mercer Botanic Gardens a better place.

I am soliciting your help in any and all phases of the sale. Most importantly, assistance is needed in the FERNS booth during the sale dates (Friday, March 18, and Saturday, March 19, 2016, from 8 AM to 4 PM). This is a fun event and volunteers get to shop the sale ahead of the general public. Besides working and shopping the sale, great friendships can be made! Grow with us by becoming a part of March Mart.

If interested, please fill out the *March Mart 2016 Volunteer Application* and hand it to me at our next meeting, or return it to Suzanne Chapman at the address shown on the form or email it to schapman@hcp4. The *March Mart 2016 Volunteer Application* can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.hcp4.net/Community/Parks/Mercer/Volunteering>.

Thank you, in advance, for any assistance you are able to provide.

Submitted by: Jere Noerager

Garden Quote:

“Anyone who thinks that gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year. For gardening begins in January with the dream.”

~Josephine Nuese



Refreshments:

Refreshments for January were generously furnished by:

Drinks: Beth Ayer, Rodolfo Reyes
Savory: Biruta Claunch, Darla Harris, and Ruth McDonald
Desserts: Diane Hudnall and Cherie Lee
Service ware: Cherie Lee

Refreshments for February will be generously furnished by:

Drinks: Bret Cunningham, Rodolfo Reyes
Savory: Biruta Claunch, Terri Dolney, Darla Harris, and Larry Rucker
Desserts: Raini Cunningham and Cherie Lee
Service ware: Cherie Lee

Please let Cherie Lee know if you can help with the refreshments for any months in 2016. Email to Cherie.d.lee@sbcglobal.net or call 832-566-5786. Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!



January Raffle Results:

Thank you to our Donors: Bret & Raini Cunningham, Darla Harris, Cherie Lee, Rosalind Speed, and Cecil Strange

Congratulations to the Winners: Beth Ayer, Biruta Claunch, Ruth McDonald, Donna Williams, and Brenda Wilson



Microsorium thailandicum
Oil fern or Blue strap fern

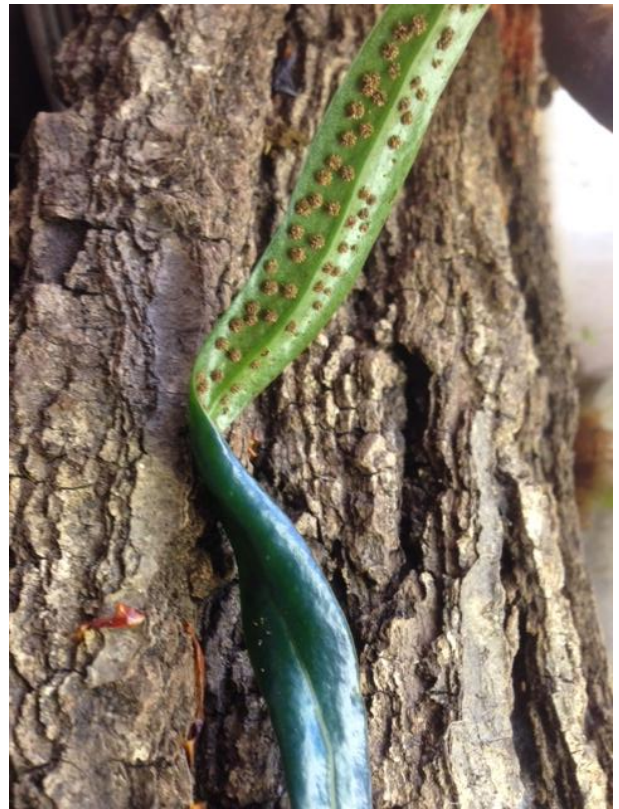
Family: [Polypodiaceae](#)
Genus: [Microsorium](#) my-kroh-SOR-um
Species: [thailandicum](#) ty-LAN-dih-kuh

This is by far one of the most stunning ferns due to its color. The iridescent Cobalt Blue, although not unique to this fern, makes this an impressive fern. It is not a large fern with fronds reaching only about 7" long developing from long rhizome. It is native to parts of Asia including the Thailand peninsula, Vietnam, Cambodia, Taiwan, and southern China.

It prefers to grow in limestone in a very humid area with very low light. This fern makes a great terrarium plant. I have found the number one killer of *M. thailandicum* is water. It really needs to be on the dry-moist side. It will rot out if over watered. The leaves love the damp high humid air, but not soggy rhizomes.

If you have a limestone rock, you can mount this fern as it grows as a lithophyte as well as an epiphyte on trees in the understory of the forest.

The sori grow on the underside of the frond and are yellow/light brown, round, and in a scattered pattern. It is said to be easy to grow from spore. I will be putting some down and we will see what happens.



Submitted by: Darla Harris



Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society General Meeting – January 17, 2016

The general meeting was held at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, Houston, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by President Darla Harris.

General:

Darla opened the meeting by making several annual announcements and discussing ‘Fern-ish’, an article that was written by Jill Harris of the Houston Chronicle and printed in the Saturday January 16th paper. Darla and Pat Hudnall contributed to the article.

Annual announcements: Dues are being collected by Beth Ayer and Marsha Livingston. Mary McConnell will handle collecting dues during next month’s meeting. Cherie Lee is taking pictures for the directory. The April meeting will be a field trip to Peckerwood Gardens on Saturday April 16th. The December meeting (Holiday party) will be moved from the 18th to the 11th.

Cherie asked for articles and pictures for the newsletter.

Jere Noerager, a volunteer at the Mercer Botanical Gardens, is organizing the Tropical plant sale portion of the annual March Mart. He is looking for ideas on what ferns to purchase for the sale and also for volunteers to help with the sale. The Fern Society will be hanging a banner at the sale event.

Biruta Claunch mentioned that the Kingwood home and garden show will be held on tax week-end.

Program:

Larry explained how to mount an *Aglaomorpha coronans* fern.

Attendance: 31 members were present.

Raffle: \$50.00

Dues: \$125.00

Project: \$285.00

Submitted by: Diane J. Hudnall, secretary



February Book Review

“Ferns – A Comprehensive Guide to Growing Ferns for the Home Gardener” by Gillean Dunk

This book is filled with information about ferns – their history; the folklore surrounding them; the structure and life cycle of ferns; pests and diseases, and how to combat them without harsh chemicals; how to successfully propagate and grow ferns in a house, greenhouse, glasshouse, or garden; how to grow ferns in terrariums and hanging baskets; and a list of over 200 species of ferns - readily available from nurseries and growers throughout the world. It is an enjoyable reference for the home gardener, whether expert or beginner.

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.



Editor’s Comments:

Deadline for the March Newsletter is March 1, 2016. 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:
March 3, 2016

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 16, 2016



SPRING BRANCH AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB

Spring 2016 Judged Show and Sale

Saturday, March 5 Plant **Sale**: 9:00 – 5:00
Saturday, March 5 Plant **Show**: 1:00 – 5:00

Sunday, March 6 Plant **Show and Sale**: 10:00 – 3:00

Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Drive
Houston, Texas 77004

Free Workshops will be held both days:
10:00 on Saturday
11:00 on Sunday

“Mounting *Aglaomorpha coronans*”
Presented by Larry Rucker



Our Presenter Larry Rucker



