



June 2019

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<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

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**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, June 16, at 2:00 p. m. – Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center,  
2020 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004 - Phone: (713) 284-1994**

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**A message from our President:**

Hi Everyone,

Summer is here and the extra watering has begun in earnest for me. We have not been getting the daily showers that some of the Houston areas are receiving. I hope you guys are getting the much needed rain with the exception of those who received too much rain and had their homes flooded this past month. Lee and Gordon Rowell flooded badly this time. They had only been back in their house a short time after the last bad flood a year or so ago. Our hearts go out to them for this huge hardship! It's been a tough two to three years for flooding rains for our friends and family. Let's hope Mother Nature starts spreading the rain out more and not so much in one spot.

I hope everyone enjoyed Michael Eason's presentation at the May meeting. I really enjoyed the talk and realizing just how truly diverse our state of Texas is. We knew from the Ferns of Texas book that the central and western part of the state had more ferns than the wooded eastern part but what was amazing to me was the true number of wildflowers that it also has. As Michael was saying, with the regular rains the western part of the state received over this past winter, plants that had been dormant or needed more moisture to bloom were really showing off this spring. I did get Michael's book on the Wildflowers of Texas. Maybe we could consider a field trip out to west Texas. The good news is, Michael enjoyed our group and has offered to come speak to us again in the future on a different subject. Thank you!

I know our June meeting falls on Father's Day but I do hope you are planning on attending. Larry is going to show you how to put a living fern wreath together. This is an expensive project in the way of supplies so please take note of the project article for the details. Everyone should really enjoy this.

We are still looking for a host for the August Party for the Society. The date is coming up fast so please

let us know if you would like to have everyone over to see your lovely ferns. This is always a fun social event and we get to visit and get to know each other better. We really do have one of the best, warmest plant groups out there and it's all because of you! We also get to see how others grow their ferns and other plants. If you can't host the summer party, please consider hosting the December Holiday Party.

It looks like our program calendar is now complete with one exception. The Plant Swap is planned for September, but may get switched to October depending on our speakers needs. So now is the time to get your plants ready for the swap. Remember, you may bring up to five really cool plants/ferns/garden supplies to swap. The more desirable the items are, the sooner they will be picked by others and the sooner you will get to pick plants or items to take home. This is a great opportunity to share your plants and to receive some really great plants in return.

Happy Gardening, but don't get too hot and stay hydrated.

See you soon,

*Darla*



**June Program Note**

**A Living Wreath with Ferns**

A living wreath is a fragrant and fresh way to decorate your home. You can think of them as the original vertical garden arrangement! Living wreaths are not difficult to make and are really quite fun – it just takes some time and a little thought choosing plants. The first step is deciding where you'd like to have your living wreath. Perhaps you have a gate leading into your garden? Or maybe there's a blank spot on that shady patio wall? They also work well placed on a flat surface such as a table.

For June's program, Larry Rucker will show us how to create a basic living wreath using three ferns: two *Polypodium scolieri* (a nice epiphytic 6"-8" green fern) and one Birdsnest Fern. All materials will be provided for the basic wreath: a sturdy wreath form, the ferns, long fibered sphagnum moss, and the line necessary to bind the plants and moss together. From there, the sky's the limit. Let your imagination run wild as you peruse the shelves at your local Michael's or other crafts store after our meeting for different colors, textures and shapes to intermix with the ferns. Some tortuous grapevine? A bit of ribbon for a red, white & blue 4th of July?

The Society will be picking up the tab for approximately half the cost of this project. All members who wish to participate must contribute **\$10 per wreath**.

Hope to see you all at the meeting for another fun project.

Submitted by Jere Noerager, VP



### **Please Welcome Our New Members**

**Alicia Baker,**

**Belinda & Muhammad Nasir,**

**& Marc Ace Pamisa**



### **Refreshments:**

Refreshments for June will be generously furnished by:

Drinks: Beth Ayer  
Savory: Darla Harris  
Desserts: Cherie Lee, Donna Williams  
Service ware: Larry Rucker

Refreshments for May were generously furnished by: Ruby Adams, Beth Ayer, Biruta Claunch, Cherie Lee, Ruth McDonald, Rodolfo Reyes, Larry Rucker, Brenda Wilson, and anyone else who forgot to sign the list.

Please let Larry Rucker, [herbie39L@att.net](mailto:herbie39L@att.net) / 832-453-2992 cell, 713-649-3535 home, know if you can help with the refreshments in May and what you plan to bring so he can make sure everything is covered and we don't have a lot of duplicates. It will make his job much easier. Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!



### **2019 Up and Coming Attractions:**

- June 16: "A Living Wreath with Ferns"  
by Larry Rucker
- July 21: "Mulch – The Secret Weapon of Successful Gardeners"  
by John Ferguson
- Aug: Summer Party  
Date & Location TBD
- Sept 15: Plant Swap
- Oct 20: TBD
- Nov 17: "Looking for Ferns in All the Wrong Places"  
by Panayoti Kelaidis
- Dec: Holiday Party  
Date & Location TBD

Submitted by: Jere Noerager & Fred Robinson, VPs



### **May Raffle Donors:**

Our May raffles were amazing. A Special Raffle was held for a lovely planter donated by Biruta Claunch. Jim Migliavacca donated multiple flats of plants for our regular auction. These along with the many donations from Ruby Adams, Alicia Baker, Adam Black, Biruta Claunch, Jan Kramer, Cherie & Frank Lee, Malcolm McCorquodale, Ruth McDonald, Larry Rucker, Jacqueline Smith, Faye Stansberry, Cecil Strange, Donna & Johnny Williams, and anyone else who forgot to sign up made for a spectacular raffle. Thank you all for your generosity.



### **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. If there is a particular book you would like to check out at the meeting, please contact Ruth McDonald at [rmcdonald0@gmail.com](mailto:rmcdonald0@gmail.com) or 979-530-6186 prior to the meeting to make sure it will be available.



### **Editor's Comments**

**Deadline for the July Newsletter is July 1, 2019. Thanks.**

Cherie Lee, Editor, *TGCFS Newsletter*





## Fern Scale – How to Treat

Keeping our ferns healthy is an important task, whether it is with proper water and light, nutrients, or pest control. The good news is, ferns are nearly pest free except for the Fern Scale. I'm seeing more and more of this on ferns, both in the trade plants and in collectors' ferns. It can be tough to see it to start with and if they get really happy on your plant, they can be very challenging to get rid of.

Here in the Houston area, the collectors of *Platycerium* ferns started seeing black spots on the staghorn fertile frond. (Fig.1) These spots are the sweet honeydew type excretion that the scale exudes as it is sucking the underside of the fronds above these. We were seeing it on the oldest fronds and thought it was just a sign of an older frond. The black is known as sooty mold and it is the growth of fungal organisms that produce a black coating on the leaves. These fungi feed on the honeydew and do not attack or directly damage the plant. Sooty mold, however, has an unattractive appearance and is often the gardener's first noticeable sign of trouble, before we ever see the crawling scales.



Fig. 1

Now seeing the scale in the crawler stage is difficult. We typically see it in the white armor stage when it looks like an oyster shell or pear shaped tiny object on the back of the frond (typically) but can be on the front side too if there are a lot of them. (Fig. 2, 3)



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Once the scale has been sucking the life out of the frond, you will eventually see the damage to the frond itself. (Fig. 4) Once the insects bite into the fern to feed and pierce the plant's tissue with their sharp mouth parts, they never move again and become firmly attached to the leaves or stems. What we normally see is the white armor part of the scale insects once they cover themselves with waxy material that protects and hides the insect. Now if you only have a few of these white armors showing, you can dab them with a Q-tip dipped in alcohol. The alcohol will melt that waxy material, reach the sap sucker, and kill it. You have to kill every one of them or it will start all over again.



Fig. 4

Treating from the inside out and the outside is the best way to really get rid of the scale once you have it. Treating the inside is with a systemic insecticide. A good one is Bayer Advanced All in One Rose & Flower Spray concentrate or the pellets. These are good for about three months and then will need to be retreated. The insecticide gets into the sap of the fern and when the scale eats it, it will kill them. The second way is contact insect killer, but as the name suggests, it has to make contact with the pest. So if you spray your plant well and miss just one, you get them started all over again. A good contact spray is Sevin. Now for me, I thought it was working well and found I was not getting the plants sprayed well enough and the battle was never over. What I have tried now is Orthene soluble insecticide. It is both a contact and a slightly systemic insecticide and it seems to be doing very well. We mixed it up and put every staghorn fern we had in the dip, saturating the full plant, the moss, and the board. It killed any other pest like pill bugs, roaches that might have been hiding in the moss as well. After a couple of days, I was able to take the water hose and pressure washed the scale right off. They had died and let go of the tissue of the plant. However, this took almost two weeks of dipping with the number of plants I had to do. So now I have been told by a staghorn grower that has wonderful success both growing them and keeping them pest free, that he keeps a 16oz spray bottle with 5 drops of Permethrin 10 (buy it online or at a feed store) mixed up and at the first white dot he sprays them down with it. How long does Permethrin last? At the concentration level delivered in the aerosol, non-aerosol pump sprays and soak systems (all at 0.5% Permethrin), an application lasts for **six weeks** and through six washings. Permethrin breaks down through exposure to air (oxygen) and sunlight (ultraviolet light). You do not want to apply this at the heat of day when it is too sunny. Wait until the evening so as not to burn your fern fronds.



Always remember a healthy plant is less likely to get scale in the first place. Keep good air movement going and don't let the plant get stressed, too much water, too little water, too sunny! Let's knock out these pests from our gardens.

Submitted by Darla Harris





## Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society May 19, 2019

The May meeting of the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society was held at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, Houston, Texas. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by President Darla Harris.

**General Meeting:** Darla thanked everyone for coming to this meeting. She offered her condolences for member, Rosalind Speed, who died in December. The May newsletter had an article in remembrance of her.

Darla said she was recently in Florida and was able to obtain a *Platycerium wallichii* there. This is a fern that goes dormant for two months or more (much like the resurrection fern). She brought an example of a dormant one and one that had “revived” and the difference was startling as the dormant one looked totally dead. It is a very attractive fern (when revived).

Darla stated that Beth Ayer was handing out the membership booklets today so, if you have paid your dues and didn't get one yet, or if you need to pay your dues, please see Beth. Those who don't have a picture in the yearbook or who want a new one should see Cherie Lee. Those who need to return a library book or want to check one out can see Ruth McDonald.

Darla said that the June program has not been finalized yet so suggested that we watch for the next newsletter to come out. The July meeting will have a speaker from Nature's Way. The program will be held in the other room. She asked for anyone who can host the August or December party to please talk to her or to Jere Noerager or Fred Robinson.

Larry Rucker thanked everyone who brought food for this meeting.

**Program:** Our program today was “**West Texas Ferns & Other Plants**” and was given by Michael Eason. He was introduced by Adam Black of Peckerwood Gardens. Mr. Eason presented a slide show on the region from Valverde County west to El Paso. He talked about the various zones, temperature ranges, rainfall averages, and elevation as he showed slides of various ferns, cacti, and wildflowers growing in that general area. He has recently had a book published which is entitled, Wildflowers of West Texas, and he had some available for sale at this meeting. It is really a nice, beautiful book which is in full color. He said his next book on West Texas will include ferns.

Darla then adjourned the meeting for the raffle and more refreshments. There were once again many, many beautiful plants on the raffle table.

**Attendance:** 34 members and 3 guests were present.

**Raffle:** The special raffle today brought in \$20 and the general raffle brought in \$140.

Submitted by Donna Williams, Secretary



### 2019 Membership Dues

Renewals for 2019 membership are now being accepted. Thank you to all of you who have already renewed. If you have not renewed, please 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.



### Support Our Society Using Amazon Smile

AmazonSmile is a way for you to support our society every time you shop with Amazon.

At smile.amazon.com you will find the same Amazon items that you know and love, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the price of eligible purchases to the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society.

Signing up is easy!

#### Here's how to signup and shop at AmazonSmile:

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3. Then either go to “Your Account”, and under the box “Shopping programs and rentals”, select the option to “Change Your Charity”; or you can also hover your mouse over the small arrow next to the charity you are currently supporting and click Change.
4. Type Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society into the search and the click select.
5. Start shopping! You can add a bookmark for [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

Submitted by Beth Ayer

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## Upcoming Events in the Houston Area:

### **Bromeliad Society/Houston Inc.**

– [www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org](http://www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org) –

Regular meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM at the West Gray Multi-Service Center 1475 W. Gray St., Houston, TX 77019

Next regular meeting is:  
June 18, 2019

### **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 meeting is:  
June 6, 2019

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## May Program

### “West Texas Ferns & Other Plants”



**Presented by  
Michael Eason**



*Bommeria hispida*





*Astrolepis integerrima*



*Anemia mexicana*



*Selaginella lepidophylla*



*Selaginella viridissima*





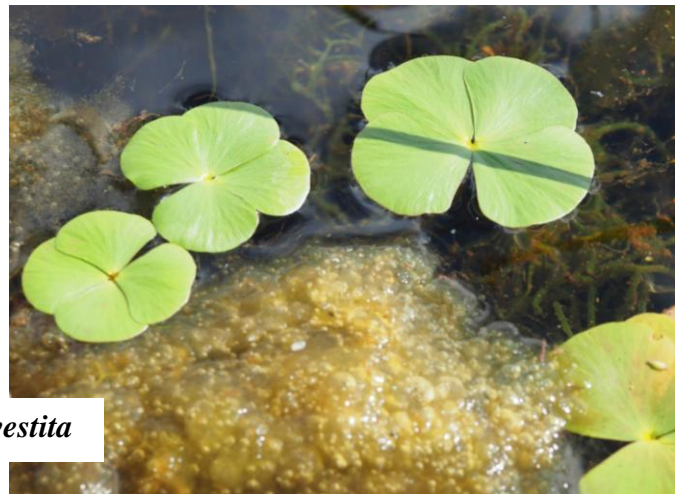
*Notholaena copelandii*



*Asplenium resilens*



*Azolla microphylla*



*Marsilia vestita*

Photos courtesy of  
Michael Eason