



July 2023

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<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

Our meeting this month will be “blended” by meeting in-person at the Judson Robinson, Jr. Community Center (2020 Hermann Dr., Houston, 77004 and/or via GoToMeeting – member’s choice.

TGCFS MISSION STATEMENT

Organized in 1998 by a group of fern enthusiasts (a.k.a. fern lovers, fernies, pteridologists), to cultivate, foster and promote interest in ferns and fern allies, the TGC Fern Society presents educational programs including “how to” sessions, presentations by local, national and internationally known fern experts, and field trips and tours-thus providing a forum for fern enthusiasts to visit, learn, share plants, ideas, information, and have a good time. A very informative monthly newsletter is published for members, and special events include presentations to other groups, fundraiser events, and a year-end holiday season party. **Regular meetings are held at 2:00 P.M. on the third Sunday of each month at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Herman Drive, Houston, TX, 77004. Phone (713) 284-1994.**

A message from our President:

Hi everyone!

First, I’m sorry this is running late this month. I upgraded my Wi-Fi at home and lost all connection for a week. Deep Breath. All who know me knows that techie is not part of my name.

The Summer Party last month was wonderful and not as hot as we had anticipated. Thank you, Claudia, for having our group over to enjoy your lovely home and fantastic back yard! Later in this *Newsletter* you will see photos that Betsy Robinson and Joe Harris took that day. The food was great and the members that were there, as always, were wonderful and fun! A very good day!!!

This month’s meeting will feature a speaker from Australia: Darryl Ruprecht, the author of “**The King of Staghorns**”. He will be talking to us about native staghorn ferns as well as a few other, but also, we will get a walk about through Australia in search for these ferns and a few other special native ferns. Darryl is working on his next book on *Platycerium wandae*

We are meeting in person and will have our refreshments, door prize, plant of the month discussion and raffle. If you cannot make it in person please join via GoToMeeting. We did have a computer issue in May and I’m sorry for those that had tried to attend. We hope this is all worked out for this meeting.

The calendar for the rest of the year is listed below.

Also, for those concerned, there will be a BOD meeting following the regular meeting.

Take care and stay hydrated,
Darla



Sunday’s Topic:

Staghorn Ferns from Australia

By: Darryl Ruprecht



Bio of Darryl Ruprecht



Darryl Ruprecht is a former soldier of the Australian Defence Force who served in the Regular Army for 22 years, attaining the rank of Warrant Officer Class Two. Having retired from the Army, Darryl, along with his wife Karen, has in more recent times owned and experienced the challenges of successfully running small family businesses.

Enthusiastic about staghorn ferns, Darryl extensively researched the *Platycerium* species, consulting leading experts in Australia and traveling widely throughout the rain forests of Australia and the jungles and forests of the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and most recently Papua New Guinea to produce a comprehensive guide to the Australian staghorn, *Platycerium superbum*.

Rather than being another technical gardening manual, “**King of the ferns**”: the Australian staghorn evolution, is

conversational and easy to read. Darryl provides a quick 'ready reference' of tried and tested ideas, techniques, and processes to help the reader successfully grow staghorns from spore to adult.

Darryl frequently appears at fern clubs and on a number of occasions, has been invited to speak to garden shows on his passion, the Australian *Platycterium* species.

With the success of his first book '**King of the Ferns**' – The Australian Staghorn Fern Experience, comes the commencement of his next: '**The Queen Staghorn**' – A *Platycterium* journey through New Guinea! An intriguing experience through the interiors of both Papua New Guinea and Western Papua in search of the giant staghorn they call the Queen *Platycterium wandae*.



Dues!

Dues are payable for 2023.

Your dues may be paid in person at a meeting or sent by mail to: Beth Ayer, 5815 Portal Dr., Houston, TX 77096.

Checks should be payable to: **Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society (TGCFS)**.

If you have any questions about the status of your dues, please contact Beth Ayer at either: beth.ayer@yahoo.com or 713.729.0994 (landline; you may leave a voice mail message) or Alicia Baker – See attached Membership form for further information.



2023 Officers and Committees:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	Patrick Hudnall
Secretary:	Ceil Dow
Treasurer:	Beth Ayer
Board Members-at-Large:	Ruby Adams Ken Warren
Education Chair:	Darla Harris
Hospitality Chair:	Larry Rucker
Library:	Fred Robinson
Membership Chair:	TBD
Newsletter:	Paul Geiger
Spore Exchange:	Patrick Hudnall
Ways and Means:	Larry Rucker
Raffle, Store, etc.	Rick Dow
Web Master:	Malcolm McCorquodale
Welcoming at Door:	TBD



Due to a technical glitch, the 2nd quarter Treasurer's report is unavailable and will be included in the August 2023 *Newsletter*.



The American Fern Society (AFS)

The American Fern Society is over 120 years old. With over 900 members worldwide, it is one of the largest international fern clubs in the world. It was established in 1893 with the objective of fostering interest in ferns and fern allies. It exchanges information and specimens between members via their publications and spore exchange.

AFS non-professional membership (\$20) includes access to the Spore Exchange and subscription to the Fiddlehead Forum.

Professional membership (\$40) includes the benefits above plus access to the American Fern Journal.

Please note that donations to the AFS are not tax deductible.

To find out more about the Society and/or join, visit <https://www.amerfernsoc.org/>



Library

Please be reminded about the very nice collection of books in our library. It's easy to borrow a book for your use and home study. Please contact Fred Robinson, our Library Chairperson. And please remember to return the books in a timely manner to allow others equal access.

If you're looking for our book on Tree Ferns, it is still out on loan and will be returned shortly (hopefully!).



New TGCFS Members

It is a pleasure to announce four new members of our Society.:

- Luke Hoy
- Lee and Gordon Rowell
- Larry Smith (husband of Carol Smith)

Fellow members, at your first opportunity, please extend them a hearty welcome.



Fern of the Month - July 2023
Osmunda regalis* var. *spectabilis
American Royal Fern
Submitted by Darla Harris
(Pictures by Darla)

The Royal fern was known worldwide as *Osmunda regalis*, then DNA decided that was wrong and the American Royal fern was born and now is known as *Osmunda regalis* var. *spectabilis*. This is a beautiful fern that grows throughout most of North America including here in Texas and close by to us too. We saw these growing at the little thicket on our field trip last year, growing there in the wilds of East Texas.

The genus name, according to some writers, originates from “Osmunder,” a Saxon name for Thor, the god of thunder. The specific epithet is from the Latin for “regal” or “royal,” in reference to the fern’s size and majestic appearance. The variety name is from Latin for “admirable” and “spectacular”.

In nature it prefers a habitat that is partly to mostly sunny areas with consistently wet to occasionally flooded soils, such as shallow, slow-moving drainages, bogs, marshes, seeps, moist bluffs, and open wetlands. I have also seen it growing in the medium of highway 60 near Nacogdoches in full sun.

This is a very hardy fern going all the way north to Minnesota. They go dormant over winter and lose all their fronds and push again in the early spring. That is also when they push their spore shoot and after it turns a deep green it is ready to produce new plants. The green spore can only be collected for a very short time, a couple weeks maximum. The spore also has to be put down just as fast or it dies and is not viable.

Over all it’s a fern that can reach three feet tall and two-foot-wide fronds. It is a clumping fern with a short rhizome trunk, very lacy and quite nice to grow. It does prefer its soil on the acid side, and watered well up to a bog plant.

A defiant winner in our gardens or potted though it will stay smaller then.



Highlights of the Summer Party

Photos submitted by Betsy Robinson:



Photos submitted by Joe Harris:

