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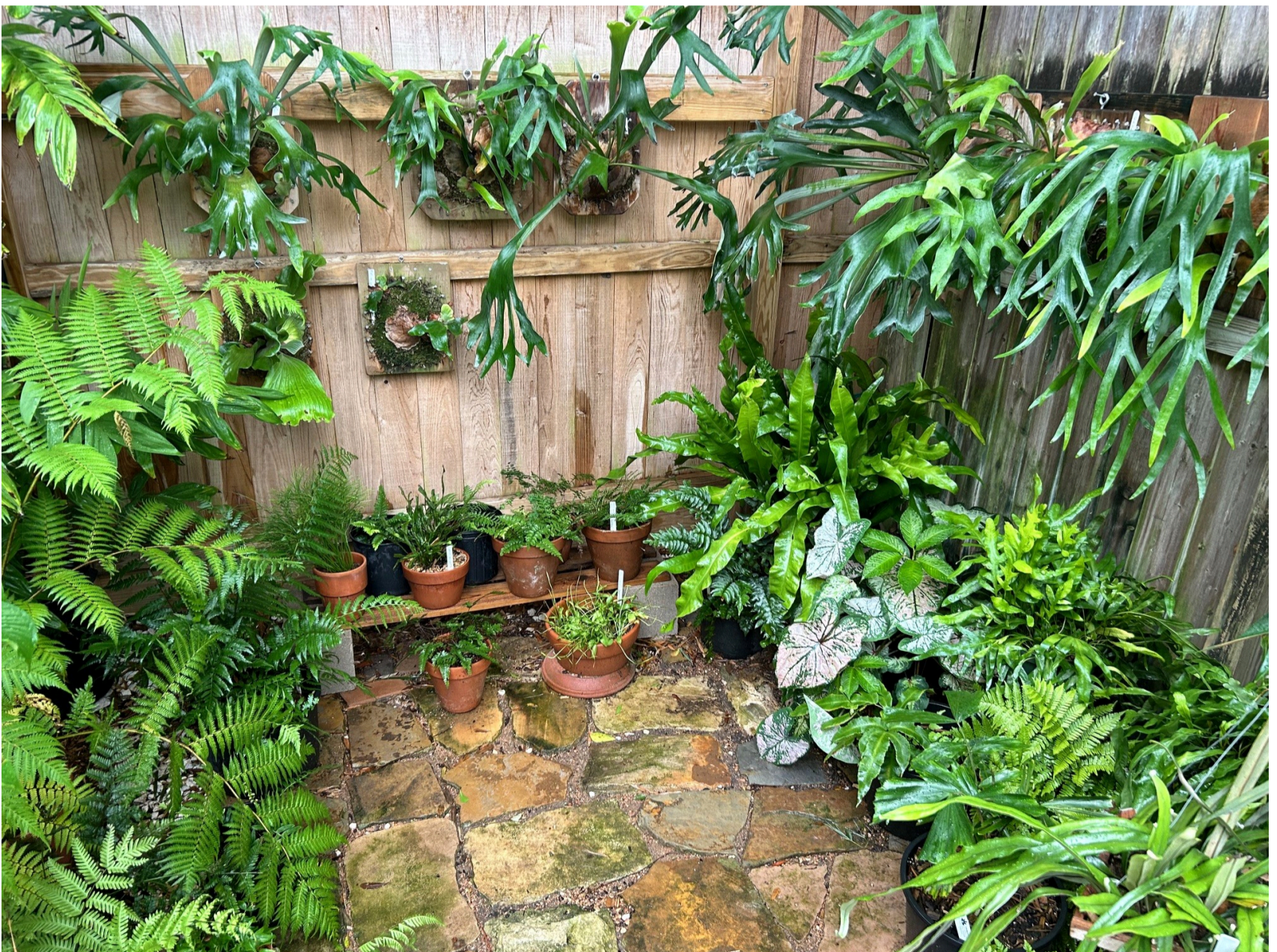
# The Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

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Newsletter

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EDITION 01 | YEAR 2026





<https://tgcfersoc.org/>

#### 2026 Officers and Committees:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	Larry Rucker
Secretary:	Carolynne White
Treasurer:	Ceil Dow
Board Members-at-Large:	Anne Swanson Christopher Goodgame
Education Chair:	Darla Harris
Hospitality Chair:	Anne Swanson
Library:	Fred Robinson
Membership Chair:	Ruby Adams
Newsletter:	Christopher Goodgame
Spore Exchange:	Patrick Hudnall
Ways and Means:	Larry Rucker
Raffle, Store, etc.	Rick Dow
Web Master:	Malcolm McCorquodale
Welcoming at Door:	TBD

#### Board Meeting

There will be a Board Meeting after the regular membership meeting on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center at 2020 Hermann Drive. Board members and all interested members are welcome to attend.

## A Message from our President

Hi Everyone,  
Wow, it's difficult to believe it is now 2026! I hope everyone has a wonderful year. The Society was formed in 1998; can you believe in two short years we will hit 30 years old? We have had so many great people in our organization, we have had speakers from all over the world from gardeners to many PhD people teaching us all about ferns. I hope this year will continue in the great tradition as it was conceptualized. We have a great group of members and board members to help make this happen.

What a wonderful party!! Thank you, Patrick and Diane Hudnall, for hosting the party this year. It was unfortunate that it fell on the day that was predicted to be the first freeze of the season city wide. Many had to finish up protecting their plants and with a 1pm start time they could not get everything finished up and get to the party! We had a couple ill and so our turn out was low, but we had lots of fun. Patrick is a great plant collector and grows beautiful plants. I know I always enjoy the tour. The food that was brought was outstanding. Thank you everyone!!!

We would like to extend the invitation to all our members to come to the meeting in person, even if life has taken you away for a while. We want to say thank you for attending virtually if you are out-of-towners or just not able to attend in person due to health or other obligations that arise. This year we are working on better camera work for the program. The first half of the year is in the calendar but keep in mind to check every month for changes.

I would like to thank our board that has rolled over from last year to this year, however some have taken on a different position. I would also like to thank our members that have been doing chair positions such as, hospitality, library, taking photos, signing into GoTo Meeting to make sure it's working, writing articles for the newsletter, membership, raffle (running it, bringing plants, etc. in and of course those that are playing), coming in early to help setup the tables and chairs, and helping carry in refreshments or plants for the meeting. We have a great group of people. Thank you! We can always use more help!! Please volunteer.

This month's meeting will be on the species *Pyrrosia*, the tongue fern. These are native to Asia, and many are cold tolerant to 7b and up. These are mainly strap ferns but not all of them. This will be a hands-on show of several different *Pyrrosia* and cultivars so you can see the difference in size and in some cases texture, for they are known as the felt fern. Garrie Landry will join us and help give the presentation. Come join us on this very unique fern family!

Don't forget that the Dues are Due!! If you have not already paid for your 2026 year, please plan on doing so seen we will be putting our membership booklet out in April.

We will have a board meeting after the raffle. Looking forward to a great start to this years programs.

Thank you everyone,  
See you soon!

*Darla*

# A Study of Platycteriums

## The African-American Group

### *Platycterium andinum*

*Platycterium andinum* is a large pup forming staghorn fern. This is the only Staghorn that is native to anywhere in the Americas. The morphology of how this occurred is an interesting topic. All the other staghorns are on the other side of the world. The plate side is often thought as a possibility, but the fossil record does not work with that dating. So where did it come from? Spore dispersal? Maybe, but then the plant would have had a sibling somewhere, and there is no record either current or fossil record of it growing anywhere else in the world. So, its only distribution points is the east side of the Andes Mountains in Bolivia and Peru at about 1000 feet.

This very special fern was near and dear to Roy Vails heart and he help establish sanctuaries to protect this plant so it could not be lost forever. It is thought be closely related to *P. elephantotis* or *P. quadridichotomum*. In shape it favors *P. quadridichotomum* with its spore patch location. However, its growing requirements like it like *P. elephantotis*, with light and water habits.

*P. andinum* is considered a challenge to grow outside of its natural habitat. Even though it grows in the Andes mountains it does not like cold weather, but some think it needs some moderate cold hours to really do well. The other say is it does not seem to like it very hot either. So, it is a bit of trial and error to learn to grow it in your personal area. It is a very slow grower and even though it does pup it is not considered a profuse mother.

I'm not sure, for the Houston area, this is what we have done with ours and have been having success growing. We treat it like a *P. elephantotis* and let it dry out before watering. It does like high light, no direct sun but very bright conditions. It has lots of silver hairs on the fronds much like *P. veitchii* and this has worked for us. Ours lived through the summer of 2023, which was 60 days over 100F (plus) for us with overnight lows in the 80s. That's pretty hot in my opinion. We had ours about four years before it really got happy and started growing and producing pups. That turned out to be a double-edged sword. We got four pups, but one came up about an inch above the mothers growing point. It was getting ready to smother its mom. So, I did surgery to remove the pup, but the mom died anyway. We did let the pups grow until large enough to grow on their own. So, three pups. I will continue to work with what this plant really likes.

It is a beautiful plant and the only one from the Americas I would recommend trying one if you get the opportunity. The bigger the better, it does get root rot easily.





# January - June 2026 Calendar

Date	Topic	Speaker
January 18 <sup>th</sup>	Pyrrrosia	Darla Harris & Garrie Landry
February 15 <sup>th</sup>	Platycteriums – African-American species	Darla Harris
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Fern: Lessons in Survival from Earth's Most Adaptable Plants	Jacob Suissa
April	Field Trip	
May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Tree Ferns	Dan Yansura
June	Social – Date TBA	



## From the Library:

*Ferns, Fossils and Fuel*; by Adolf Carl Noé; Chicago: Thomas S. Rockwell Company; 1931; 128 pages; seven plate illustrations.

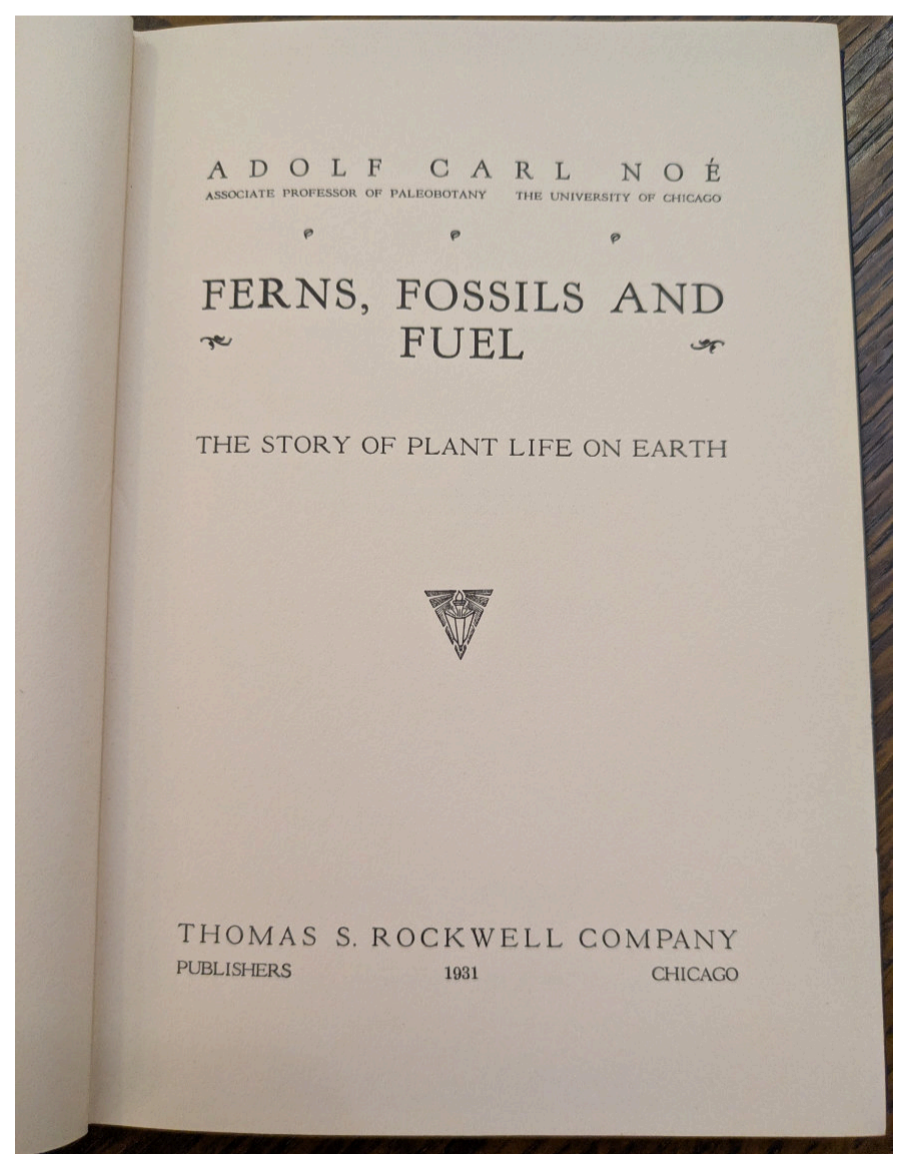
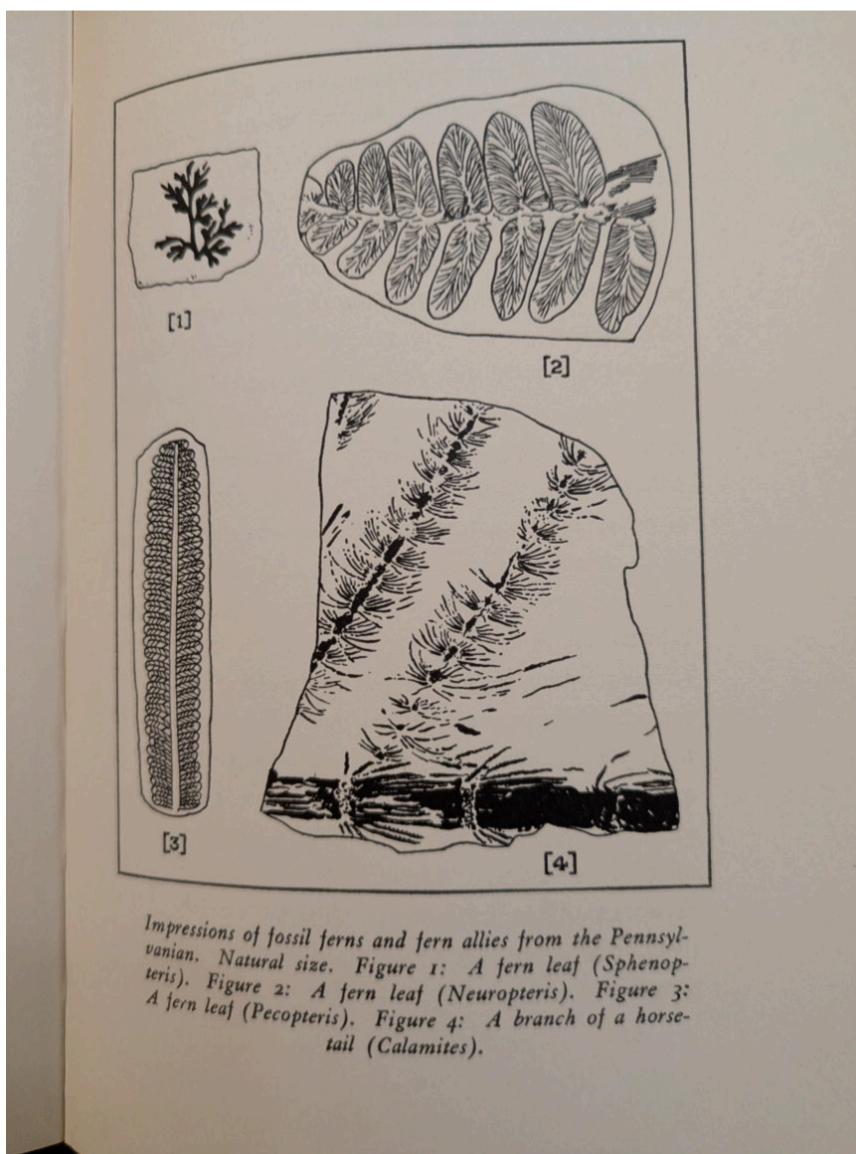
by **Bob Swanson**

Let's cut to the chase. This is not really a fern book. The title is sort of a bait-and-switch. I think the triple alliteration was just too tempting to pass over. 'Ferns, Fossils and Fuel' is an overview of paleo-botany as it stood almost a hundred years ago.

This book is a semi-popular account of the development of plants throughout geologic history, together with a discussion of the relationship of plants and plant fossils to coal and petroleum geology. The first mention of ferns is not until page 34 and even then it's only a couple of paragraphs. Chapter Four is titled "The Era of The Ferns". It covers the entirety of the late Paleozoic era. Getting the entire history of plant, plus how fossilization works, plus how they became fuels, was a hard task in 128 pages.

That's not to say there aren't many interesting nuggets scattered about this east to read history. Take this for instance, "Fossil Plants, indeed, have frequently been called the thermometer of geologic time." Professor Noé also alludes to the beginnings of the conflict over the concept of continental drift (now referred to as plate tectonics). In a discussion on how temperate climate must have been present in the arctic he raise the possibility that the land moved more than the climate changed. And really, you know it is a time capsule when you can still have a chapter charmingly titled "The Romance of Coal and Oil".

One last little note, this work has recently (2021) been released in a paperback edition - <https://www.amazon.com/Ferns-Fossils-Story-Plant-Earth/dp/1013443470>. I can only guess that it is being used in some modern history of science, or history of botany course.



# December 2025 Social



# Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society 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 with previous issues available online at <https://tgcfersoc.org>, and special events include presentations to other groups, fundraiser events, and a year-end holiday season party. **Doors open at 1:30pm and regular meetings begin at 2:00pm on the 3rd Sunday of each month at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Herman Drive, Houston, TX, 77004. (713) 284-1994.**



*Athyrium niponicum* 'Godzilla'

## 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/>



## Dues!

Dues for 2026 are currently being collected. If you have any questions about the status of your dues, please contact Ruby Adams at [radams13@sbcglobal.net](mailto:radams13@sbcglobal.net) Your dues may be paid in person at a meeting or sent by mail to:

**Ruby Adams**  
**3906 Woodmont Circle**  
**Houston, TX 77045-3514**

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



*Acrostichum danaeifolium*