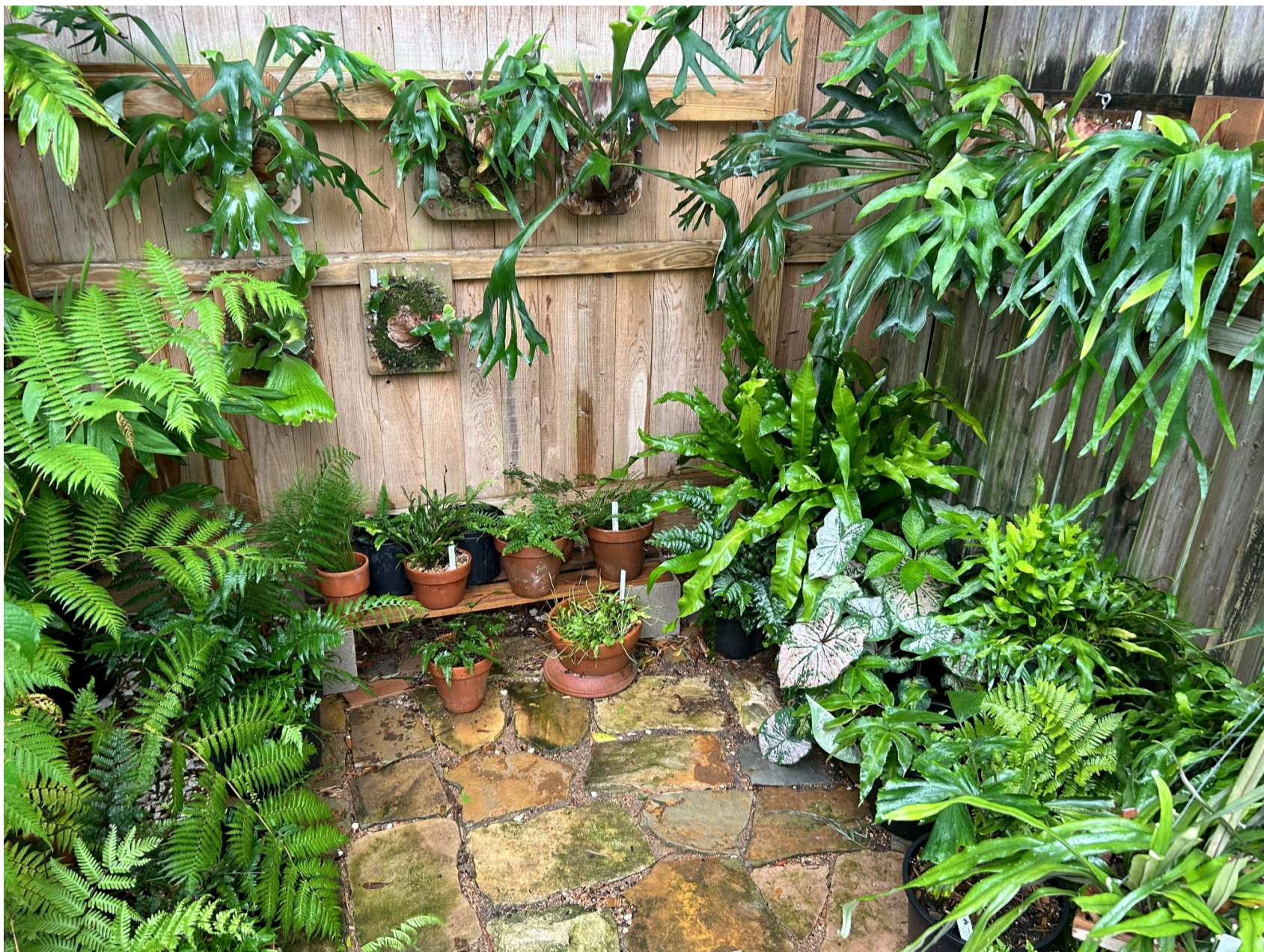

The Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

Newsletter

EDITION 03 | 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 |

A Message from our President

Hi Everyone,

The Million Dollar question right now, Is Spring Here?? Boy, I sure hope so; everything is springing to life and the trees are slowly putting on their leaves. I love spring, watching all the new life emerge from the dormant season we are just coming out of. Time to get everything ready for the new season of growing and making us very happy. Good time to pot up, plant, mount, fertilize, you name it, it's time. This is what we really enjoy - watching our plants flourish.

First of all, we have had a scheduling change with Jacob Suissa; he is currently in Scotland at the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens doing research and does not get home until the day before he was scheduled to talk to us. His schedule has been tight these past few months, so we are going to try another date in the future. He sends his regrets and says he owes us one! Maybe we can try to catch him later this year or next year, and maybe even in person. He is a super nice guy and you guys will love him when you get a chance to meet him.

At the last meeting I asked the question on what you would like to have a talk on. Well, one was house ferns and another was care/dividing footed ferns. So, this month we will do a combined topic on just that. We will discuss care of ferns and things like substrate, fertilizers, and best pots/baskets for which ferns. I hope you will enjoy and learn from this meeting. Let me know if you have a question on any particular fern so I can try to include it in the discussion.

We need to know who and what hours the membership is going to help with the membership drive at the upcoming events. March Mart is the weekend after our meeting (2 days, Friday and Saturday) and the John Fairy Budding Out sale is the weekend after that. (1 day Saturday) It's nice to break these into half days if possible. Guess what! You get to shop, too!! So, call me or text me or sign up at the meeting. Thank you in advance for helping our Society Grow!

I want to thank everyone for the refreshments and want to encourage everyone to bring something for the raffle.

Happy Planting and see you on the 15th at the meeting.

Darla



**Minutes for the Gulf Coast Fern Society Meeting
February 15, 2026**

President Darla Harris called the meeting to order at 2:06 on Feb 15, 2026.

Darla reported that Anne Swanson has made a design for a sign to primarily hang from a table, but also be double sided so that it may be hung from above and viewed from either side. The design was passed around the meeting so that members could view it. Anne is currently getting cost estimates for printing it. Hopefully it will be available for our spring recruiting drives.

Mercer Botanic Gardens's March Mart - Friday & Saturday, March 21 & 22, 2026

The John Fairey Garden near Hempstead, March 8. 9 or 10 am – 3 or 4 pm, lots of vendors.

Claudia Leffler has volunteered to work at March Mart and PlantCon.

Darla then asked about a Spring Field Trip, possibly in April or in the Fall.

- Possible sites: Ima Hogg? Butterfly Garden? Cactus and succulents?
- Some discussions, but nothing resolved
- Potential Conflict: Bromeliad conf in California in April
- Anne also asked about printing Club shirts
- Discussion on colors, nothing resolved but contrasting colors were preferred

PROGRAM by Darla Harris on Staghorn Ferns of Africa and South America

BUYING PLANTS: Darla started out cautioning members to not order ferns from Malaysia or Indonesia because the plants were often not viable.

HYBRIDS: She then spoke briefly about hybrids pointing out that most of these species were geographically apart from other species so that natural Hybrids did not happen. However, now there are some hybrids that have been developed manmade or in a nursery. In the latter case, who are the parents? There is a naming issue with same cross having different names.

BUYING AFRICAN AND SOUTH AMERICAN STAGHORN FERNS: These staghorn ferns are available to growers through both Tissue culture and Spore.

LOCALES: Darla explained via maps the locations that Staghorn Ferns grow in the wild in Africa and South America. The areas of Africa are the tropical and subtropical coastal regions of East Africa, Madagascar, and the Seychelles up into the Congo, and along the west coast near Senegal. South American staghorn ferns grow in Peru and Bolivia.

AFRICA: The staghorn ferns in Africa are represented primarily by the epiphytic species *Platycerium alcorni* and *P. elephantotis*, native to tropical and subtropical coastal regions of East Africa, Madagascar, and the Seychelles.

The *P. quadridichotomum* is from Madagascar and considered a difficult species to grow. In their native habitat, the ferns grow on limestone cliffs and have a lengthy dry season, during which the shields are crispy and brown. The fertile fronds roll tightly and also appear dead. Darla showed an example.

The easiest to grow is the *P. alcorni*, which has a “sucker



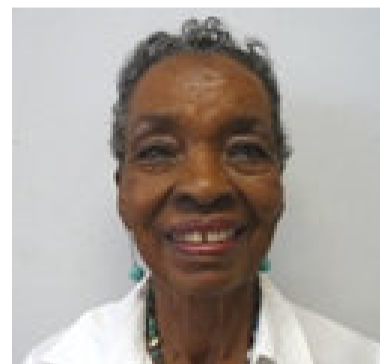
shield” to protect from too much water. The fronds have a ruffle and are darker green.

The *P. elephantotis* is a slower grower and has wide fronds that do not fork. It winters well in our climate. Pups do better if they are left to become more mature before removing them. This species grows well in a hanging basket.

P. stemaria, thrives in the moist, shaded treetops of Western and Central tropical Africa. It resembles its relative, *P. elephantotis*, but is distinct with its large, broadly separated shield fronds that form a triangle shape at the top. These ferns pup pretty well and have similar watering needs to the *P. elephantotis*.

SOUTH AMERICA: *P. andinum* is the only staghorn fern species native to the New World (South America), specifically inhabiting seasonally dry forests on the Amazonian slopes of the Andes in Peru.





In Memoriam

Sandra Rigsby

It is with a heavy heart that I'm sharing the News that Sandra Rigsby has passed away after a long illness. Sandra was always a fun and cheerful plant lover and friend. She passed away in the fall of 2024 and we only got confirmation this past month. I had spoken to her in the Spring of 2024 and at that time she thought she was getting better and would make it back to the meetings again and stayed a member of our society. As time passed, I did try to reach out to her but never got a call back or a text message in answer to How are You! Her son emailed us to give us the sad news.

Sandra will continue to be missed as she has been for the last several months. Now we know she is at peace.

2026 Calendar

| Date | Topic | Speaker |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| March 15 th | Growing Ferns indoors and knowing how to divide footed ferns | Darla Harris |
| April | Field Trip | |
| May 17 th | Tree Ferns | Dan Yansura |
| June | Social - Date TBA | |
| July 19 th | Project - Coasters to Match our Serving Trays | Ceil Dow |
| August 16 th | | |
| September 20 th | | |
| October 18 th | | |
| November 15 th | Ferns of Jalisco | Adam Black |
| December | Social - Date TBA | |



From the Library:

The Complete Book of Ferns: Indoors - Outdoors - Growing - Crafting - History & Lore; by Mobee Weinstein; Beverly, MA: Cool Spring Press; 2019; 256 pages; color photo illustrations; hardcover.

by **Bob Swanson**

We call this column 'From the Library'. When I started, I expected to just be going through the books that Texas Gulf Coast fern society has. Over time the focus has expanded to include books I have that the society does not. So, where next? The logical answer is the Houston Public Library. That counts as 'From the Library', right?

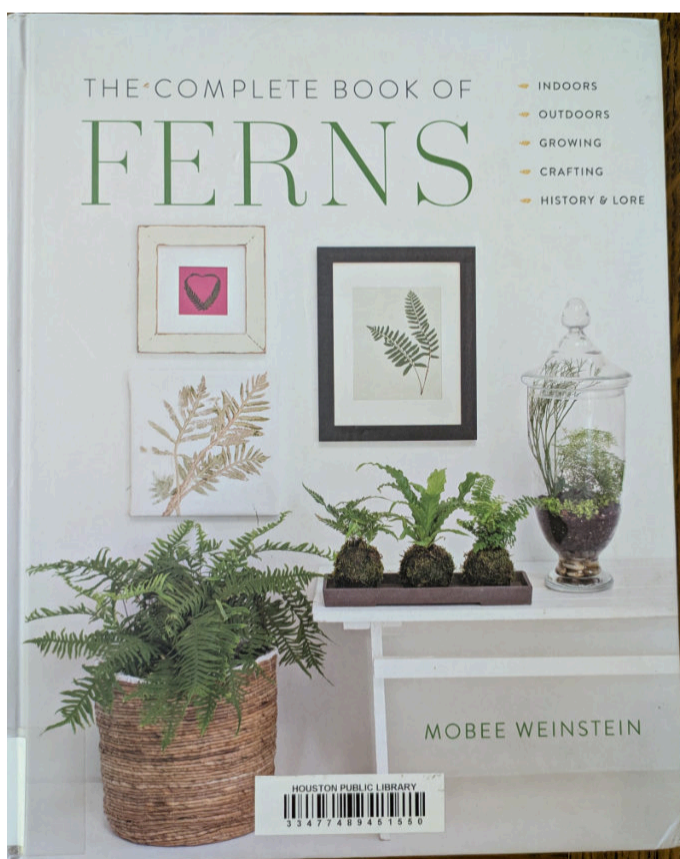
The book opens with the History, Lore, and Uses of Ferns. One thing I learned that I certainly would have never guessed is that the spores of club-mosses have such a high fat content that they are flammable. You can throw them into the air and light them. They've been used as flashes for photography.

The second chapter is Botany. Here I learned something new about propagation. In addition to spores, division, and rhizome cuttings, there is information on propagation by proliferations or bulbils. This allows you to grow new plantlets directly from the frond. I don't know if any of my ferns do that. But I will find out.

Chapters three and four are the obligatory encyclopedia of species, they are not the most comprehensive but cover all the big ones you expect. Interestingly, it is divided into indoor and outdoor ferns. I don't see that very often.

The final chapter is 'Do-It-Yourself Crafting With Ferns'. There are eight planting projects and three art projects described in detailed steps and plenty of photos. Those of you who like to lead our hands-on sessions should definitely take a look at these for next year.

This particular copy is from the 24th printing. It has been a pretty popular book. So you can find it pretty easily on the second-hand market. But you could also Support Your Local Library.



Door Prize



Mary Sobieski wins the door prize, a *Platycerium bifurcatum*



Upcoming Houston Plant Events

The logo for Mercer Botanic Gardens March Mart features a vertical bar with five colored stripes (purple, pink, orange, yellow, green) to the left of the text. The text reads "MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS" in a smaller green font, followed by "MARCH MART" in a large, bold, green font.

MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS
**MARCH
MART**

20

Mar 20 at 8:00 AM – Mar 21 at 3:00 PM CDT

March Mart Plant Sale

22306 Aldine Westfield, Humble, TX, United States, Texas 77338

A banner for "THE JOHN FAIREY GARDEN BUDDING OUT PLANT SALE & FESTIVAL" with a green and white background. The text reads "THE JOHN FAIREY GARDEN" in a large, serif font, followed by "BUDDING OUT PLANT SALE & FESTIVAL" in a bold, sans-serif font, and "A Premiere Spring Event at The John Fairey Garden" in a smaller font.

THE
JOHN FAIREY GARDEN
BUDDING OUT PLANT SALE & FESTIVAL
A Premiere Spring Event at The John Fairey Garden

RARE AND DISTINCTIVE PLANTS • PLANT RELATED PRODUCTS • ART • CLOTHING • JEWELRY • CERAMICS DEMONSTRATIONS • GARDEN TOURS • FOOD • DRINK

Saturday, March 28th 10 am - 3 pm
20559 FM 359 Rd, Hempstead, TX

Member Early Entry 9 am General Entry 10 am
Member Admission \$5 General Admission \$10
Children 12 and Under are FREE

Rain or Shine - Email INFO@JFGARDEN.ORG for details

A poster for "PLANTCON™ HOUSTON" with a dark green background. The text reads "PLANTCON™ HOUSTON" in a large, bold, white font, followed by "April 25-26, 2026" in a smaller font. Below that, the location "NRG Arena" and time "10:00 AM-6:00 PM" are listed, along with the address "1 NRG Pkwy Houston, TX 77054". At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Get Tickets" and "Learn more".

PLANTCON™
HOUSTON
April 25-26, 2026
NRG Arena
10:00 AM-6:00 PM
1 NRG Pkwy
Houston, TX 77054
Get Tickets Learn more



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 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