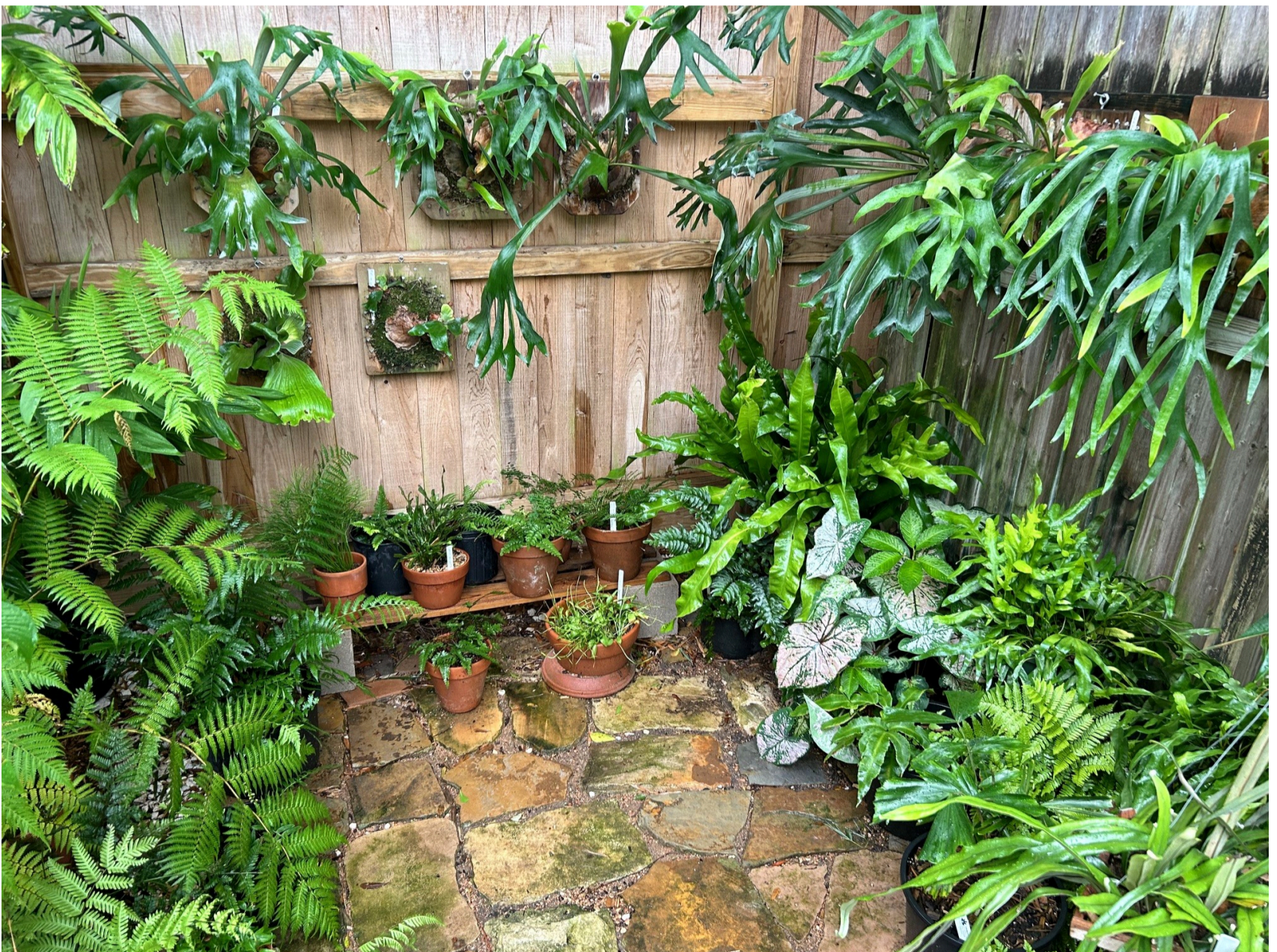

The Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

Newsletter

EDITION 04 | 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 |
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| 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 |

Request for Photos!

Howdy everyone,
This is a quick note from the editor that as Spring continues and our plants begin to show real growth, I would love it if some photos of your plants would be sent my way so I can place them in the newsletter.
Having photos from our members' gardens would be a great addition to all months of our newsletter and it could be a great way to strike up a conversation at next month's meeting about that cool-looking fern you saw.
It also would be really helpful to have more contributions.

A Message from our President

Hi Everyone,

First: I would like to welcome all our new members that joined in March!! I would like to thank the renewals thank you so we could get you in the 2026 Membership booklet. **We did have two renewing members that sent their money in to Beth Ayer. She is no longer in charge membership!** She forwarded your envelopes to Christopher Goodgame who also is no longer in charge of membership and had the Fern Society mail go to a Post Office Box that he no longer has. Ruby Adams is our current Membership Chair and has been for a year and a half. So those two memberships are floating out there in No Mans Land. I understand from Beth that there had not been a return address on the envelopes. You may want to stop payment on the checks as we do not know who they are from. This newsletter had Ruby Adams information (mailing address) in the body of the newsletter. Please resend so we can keep you on the books.

This Month's meeting is NOT going to be the Field Trip - that has been moved to May.
April's meeting will be on Adiantum aka Maidenhair ferns. I will bring several examples of some you may have never seen before. We will discuss growing them, how to grow them in pots, and also in-ground types for our area. Please come and join us. I will bring a few extras if some of you would like to try them.

Our May field trip will be to Mercer Botanical Gardens. Jacob Martin will be leading the field trip around both the greenhouses and the Gardens, where they have been steadily adding more and more ferns. This will be on Sunday on our normal day at 10:30am, the meet up place with be in the next newsletter but I'm guessing the Greenhouses.

June is our Summer Party. We have not had a volunteer yet for the Party, so please get with me if you would like to host. Looking forward to being able to visit with everyone without the rush of the meeting.

Thank you for setting the Membership tables at Mercer Botanical and John Fairly Gardens **We are looking for volunteers to set the table at PlantCon the 25/26 April** – it's coming up fast. Let me know by the meeting or at the meeting. We plan a nice display for people to see what ferns and our society is all about.

Well guys, Happy Gardening and see you at the April meeting @ 2PM CDT.

Darla

A Study of Platycteriums

The Bifurcatum Complex

Platycterium willinckii

P. willinckii is one of our favorite staghorns. Being in the bifurcatum complex group and has been called a subspecies of *bifurcatum* but is viewed as a species of its own and is included in the 18 species count.

This is another very easy staghorn to grow, as is the full complex. The requirements of *P. willinckii* are medium to high light and no direct sun. It likes to be well watered but then time to dry out and it needs very good air circulation. It grows in the Islands of the Pacific Ocean with most of Indonesia being its main home. Java seems to be the center of its growing area and; you will often see cultivars with the Java in its name. There are lots of different looks of *willinckii*, but most have very long narrow fronds that fork at the bottom. We have some that the fronds are four foot long. The shield frond grows in the basket format, with *willinckii* being one of the tallest basket fronds of the complex. The fronds grow out from the bud and what I would call up and down, with the fronds pushing from the bud across from each other. Making it look like a bowtie.

Like the others in the complex, growing mounted is a very attractive display of the length of fronds and the bowtie growth. In a basket the look gets too clustered and you lose the appeal of this beauty. It pups easily, but the pups need to be older when you remove them or it takes them a long time to get established again.

This is one for your list to have some variety of looks on your staghorns.





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

President Darla Harris called the meeting to order at 2:03 on March 15.

The first order of business was the unveiling of the new sign. Darla and Bob held it up so everyone could see it. Then it was entrusted to Claudia Leffler because she will be at March Mart for the first morning. Darla encouraged anyone working at our tables this spring to try and find (sign-up) people who would become ACTIVE members. Mention our meetings, newsletters and field trips!

Our scheduled speaker, Jacob Suissa, could not join us today as his departure from Edinburgh Garden is delayed. Therefore, Darla has agreed to present a program on:

Which Ferns Make Good House Plants and How to Divide Ferns

She pointed out that when we think of house plants, we need to think about alternatives to pots such as mounting ferns on boards or inside a picture frame. These options are popular for bathrooms.

The next question is: Which ferns would do well indoors? Frond thickness is a good indicator of a fern's ability to live indoors. Some likely ferns are Bird's Nest (*Asplenium fimbriatum*) (which can be grown from spore relatively easily) and Rosey Maidenhair.

Darla answered a question about a damaged Bird Nest fern. She suggested NOT cutting back all of the fronds until new fronds were growing. It is OK to remove brown sections but even when damaged, a frond may still be able to photosynthesize and provide energy to the plant.

Another fern that would do well as a houseplant is *Microsorium musifolium* which has an unusual texture to the fronds. She passed one around so we could better appreciate its crocodile common name. If you have one of these, don't overwater it or put it in the sun.

The Heart Fern, *Hemionitis arifolia*, is an attractive indoor alternative



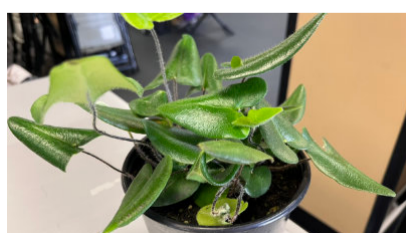
Asplenium fimbriatum

but it may be tricky to grow. It will grow well in low light but is fussy about water. The leaves curl when stressed so make note of the ideal time to water. Using a wicking pot may be the easiest option.

Pteris aspericaulis 'Tricolor'. Candy stripe is an excellent candidate for indoors as it is somewhat forgiving on watering and is relatively small at 1.5 ft tall. *Pteris quadriaurita tricolor* "Flame", *Pteris cretica Albo-Lineata* and *Pteris nipponica* are also good house plant choices.



Microsorium musifolium



Hemionitis arifolia

Many *Pteris* are dimorphic ferns, a plant that produces two distinct types of fronds: vegetative (sterile) fronds for photosynthesis and specialized, separate fertile fronds for producing spores.

Microsorium thailandicum is another fern that does well inside as it grows in low humidity. It is a blue oil fern from Thailand.

Doryopteris cordata (Antenna Fern) and *Doryopteris nobilis* (Arrowhead Fern) are clumping, evergreen ferns featuring distinctive, star-shaped, or palmate, hand-like fronds on dark, wiry stems. They thrive as houseplants or in terrariums. The *D. cordata* is smaller than the *D. nobilis*.

The Lemon Button Fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia* 'Duffii') is a compact, low-maintenance, and easy-to-care-for plant. *Pellaea rotundifolia*, commonly known as Button Fern, is a small evergreen fern with pinnate arching fronds rising and spreading to 12" tall and as wide. Both are good house plants.

The Blue Star Fern (*Phlebodium aureum*) has silver-blue-green fronds and hairy golden rhizomes. Native to tropical forests, it thrives in medium-to-bright indirect light, high humidity, and consistently moist, well-draining soil. They are epiphytes, making them ideal for hanging baskets or bathrooms.

East Indian Holly Fern (*Arachniodes simplicior* 'Variegata') can thrive indoors in bright indirect light.

Aglamorpha coronan, Snake Leaf Fern, is popular as a houseplant due to its tolerance of low humidity. Kangaroo Paw Fern, *Microsorium diversifolium*, is also an easy fern to grow as a houseplant. On both of these ferns, it is important to get and active growing tips when getting a division. A piece of root without a tip is very hard to grow. A tip with roots is best.

Pyrrosia lingua or felt fern will grow well indoors.

Rabbit's foot fern, *Davallia fejeensis* can be grown in the house but dividing it may require perseverance to divide it. The "feet" may be loosened or softened by soaking in water. Breaking a pot and planting divisions with part of the pot may be a good option.

Darla shared that she uses an orchid fertilizer with high nitrogen for her indoor ferns.

There was a discussion on techniques for maintaining attractive Boston Ferns including the Kimberly Queen variety with "potatoes" on their roots. Darla pointed out that these ferns have a large fast growing root ball that needs a lot of water.

Note, during the meeting, Darla also showed a *P. madagascariense* with its unique texture as she did not have one to show us last month. Because it had several pups, she cautioned us to treat it VERY carefully because the plant was both rare and expensive.

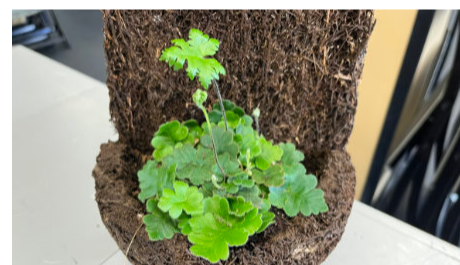
Respectively submitted by Secretary, Carolynne White



Pteris Aspericaulis var. *tricolor* 'Candy Stripe'



Microsorium thailandicum



Doryopteris cordata



Doryopteris nobilis



Aglamorpha coronan



Platycerium madagascariense

Plebodium aureum

Bears Paw Fern or sometimes called Mandaianum

This is a large fronded fern that has blue coloration and a very fussy and large rhizome. It is divinified by its rows of sori having two rows between the costa and the margin.

This is a semi-tender fern so is a zone 9-10 so I protect mine for winter cold. It grows fronds that are 2-3' long and spaced by rhizome so does very well in a hanging basket. It like regular water but once established it does well with just a regular once a week watering unless the weather is really hot or windy drying them out sooner.

One notable point of interest is the white dots you see on the leaf are Hydathodes they act as water-secreting "pressure valves" or "water stomata," remaining constantly open unlike regular stomata, and are found in vascular plants like orchids, ferns, and various angiosperms. These are not to be confused with white scale.

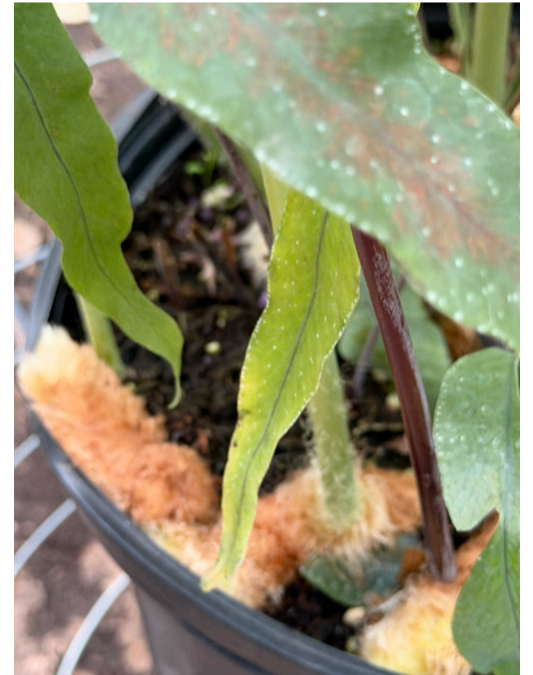
Like bright filtered light, it is a light-colored leaf and can burn easy so dapple is best. Plant in loose soil or in sphagnum moss.

I find it is a thick enough leaf that it can be grown indoors if you have the room.

This is a very confused name, because there is also Phlebodium pseudoaureum and they are very similar, the sori and size is what reflects the difference.

This use to be very common in the trade back in the 1980s and is more difficult to be found now. The Blue Star is very similar, but much smaller but less hardy.

I grow this in a 24' wire basket.



2026 Calendar

Date	Topic	Speaker
April 19 th	Those Amazing Maidenhairs and How To Grow Them	Darla Harris
May 17 th	Field Trip - Mercer Botanical Gardens & Greenhouses	Jacob Martin
June	Social - Date TBA	
July 19 th	Project - Coasters to Match our Serving Trays	Ceil Dow
August 16 th	Tree Ferns	Dan Yansura
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.

Hardy Ferns: Foliage Plants in Garden Design; by Michael Jefferson Brown; London: Ward Lock Limited; 1992; 96 pages; color photo illustrations and drawings; hardcover.

by **Bob Swanson**

Well, I bought this a while back at some used book store. I figured I could stand to learn about ferns that can withstand epic Houston summer heat. Now that I've read it I realize I should have known from the author's name and the London publishing house that this would not be about us. It's about plants that can survive a British winter in the ground. Oh well, now I've read it so you get to hear about it.

We get the usual 'here's what ferns are and how they reproduce' sections. But the focus of this work is these three chapters: Ferns as Foliage Plants; Using Ferns in the Garden; and Creating a Fernery. This is the heart of garden design and there is a lot to learn for most people about using plants that don't flower. I'm not very arty myself and don't think about placement enough. My focus is always 'can it survive here' instead of 'will it look best here'.

Now the fun part. With an English writer we get interesting pearls such as:

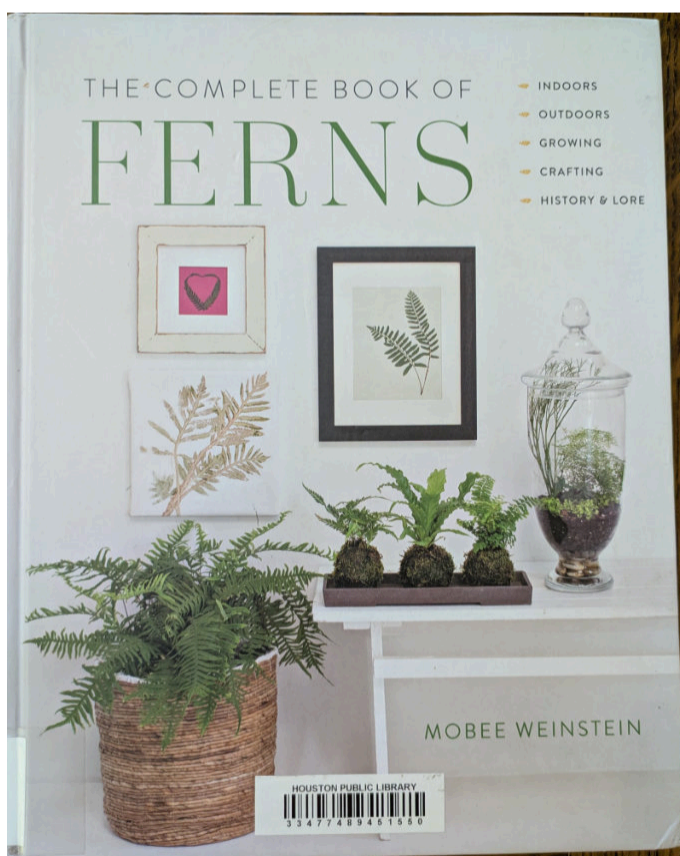
"Ferns will associate well with almost all types of plant, their party manners are immaculate. Dignity and decorum are all. Never themselves in their cups, they will bring sobriety and distinction to more flamboyant and extrovert neighbours."

and

"The corner of a bed or border can be made dramatic by the planting of a strong-growing fern such as one of the interesting male ferns able to stand up like Horatius at the bridge and let no one pass..."

The final chapter, as is so common in fern books, is a descriptive list of ferns. This one is called "Selected Alphabetical Fern Species and Cultivars". The plants listed are not for us here near the tropics, but the pictures of them in garden settings are quite nice. From the book's bibliography I need to find a copy of "Welsh Ferns" by Wade and Harrison and go down that rabbit hole for fun.

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.




Upcoming Houston Plant Events

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