



Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

June 2005

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<http://www.rwsarchitects.com/fern.htm>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, June 19 at 2:00 p. m. – Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park,
1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77044 – Phone: (713) 529-3960**

A message from our President:

Hi Everyone,

We sure had a great meeting last month. Patrick really gave a wonderful presentation. It's too bad anyone missed that one. Thanks, Patrick!

Well, summer is here already! Whew!! It makes one wonder why we don't grow more house ferns. Working out in this heat is not for the fainthearted. We did have a wonderful spring, though – one of the best I can remember. Now we need some rain!

I had the pleasure of speaking at the Galleria Garden Club this past month. The interest level was very high. I told them all about our Society so hopefully we will see one or more of their members at one of our events. The funny thing was how your own light bulb can come on when asked the right questions. One of their members wanted to put in a fern bed and asked for some suggestion. After thinking on the question, my answer to her solved my own garden dilemma at home: What to do with that one bed that just seems not to work? She and I are now the proud parents of our new "Where the Red Fern Grows" bed. We went over the ferns that have either new red leaves or red stems, and put together a design. Plants we decided to use include **Brazilian Tree Fern** (*Blechnum braziliense*), **Rosy Maidenhair** (*Adiantum hispidulum*), **Lady in Red** (*Athyrium filix mas*), **Silver dollar Maidenhair** (*Adiantum peruviana*), **Pteris Flame** (*Pteris cretica*) and **Rasp Fern** (*Doodia aspera?*). I'll let you know how it progresses.

I'm sorry, but I'll miss the meeting this month. Joe and I will be attending a Fathers Day reunion with his family. The meeting will be in good hands, though. Larry Rucker will be leading a "hands-on" activity. We will be preparing a full wire basket or half basket, whichever is personally preferred. All materials, including moss and a small fern will be provided. I'm planning on doing a follow up meeting (or part meeting) next year to review progress with the planting.

I look forward to seeing you in July.

Darla

Officers and Committees:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	Martha Burg
Secretary:	Patsy Geiger
Treasurer:	Al and Susan Peacock
Board Members at Large:	Ted Richardson, Cecil Strange, Jr. and Larry Rucker
Membership Chair:	Cecil Strange, Jr.
Newsletter:	Paul Geiger
Library:	Patrick Hudnall
Raffles:	Jean Keiser
Hospitality:	Lulu Mae Leonard
Welcoming at Door:	Emma Lee Payne



Minutes of Meeting

May 15, 2005

A regular monthly meeting of the TEXAS GULF COAST FERN SOCIETY was held at 2:00 p.m., May 15, 2005 at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Dr., Houston, TX 77044. President Darla Harris presided.

Patrick Hudnall was the speaker/activity leader for the meeting. He provided his opinions on cultural requirements for growing most of the *Platycerium* species of Staghorn ferns in the Houston area. Examples of five species and a few cultivars were available for inspection and Hillii and *Quadridichotomum* cultivars were available for purchase. Also covered were different mounting ideas. A large basket of *bifurcatum* 'Netherlands' was divided resulting in enough plants for everyone to mount and take home. Many P.h. 'Talnadge' offsets were also mounted or taken to be mounted latter.

Refreshments were provided by Darla Harris and Cecil Strange, Jr.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. and most attendees remained to enjoy the delicious refreshments and fellowship.



TGCFS Membership Rosters

Our membership roster has been revised and updated and available for pick-up at our meetings. If any member cannot attend a meeting soon, just let me (*Newsletter Editor*) know and we'll gladly mail you one.



Members: - Spread the word – encourage someone you know to visit us - we always have room for more!

Membership dues:

Individual:	\$10.00
Family:	\$15.00
Student:	\$5.00



June Refreshments:

Refreshments for our next meeting will be generously furnished by Martha Burg. Come out and enjoy her delicious food!



Our Next Meeting – June 19

As mentioned earlier in Darla's column our main activity will be a "hands-on" project led by Larry Rucker. It's one you really don't want to miss.



Library

Don't forget the great resource of information available in our library. At each meeting there are take-home sheets that contain a brief review of available books. Also at each meeting is a wide variety of books available for immediate checkout.



Robbin Moran will be our guest speaker in October 2005. If you want to plan ahead, perhaps a copy of his latest book would be worthwhile purchasing (or borrowing). A review of that book, "A Natural History of Ferns", was published in *The Fiddlehead Forum*, November-December 2004. Following is a reprint of that review:

A Natural History of Ferns Robbin Moran

Review by George Yatskievych Missouri Botanical Garden

"A Natural History of Ferns", by Robbin C. Moran. 2004. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. \$29.95. ISBN 0-88192-667-1, hardcover, 301 pp.

Here is a book in which the American Fern Society can take justifiable pride, for its origins lie with the newsletter [Edited] *The Fiddlehead Forum*. In 1992, Robbin Moran published his first major article in the newsletter (on the vegetable lamb of Tartary) and more than twenty others have continued to appear over the years. These columns caught the attention of well-known AFS members Oliver Sacks and Ken Wilson, who joined other avid readers in urging Robbin to collect his popular essays into a book. When the subject of a title came up and the emphasis on the natural history of ferns and their relatives was discussed, the author and his publisher agreed that not only would it be necessary to update and expand some of the existing materials, but that some new chapters would be necessary to do full justice to the theme. According to Robbin, twenty-one of the chapters represent extensively rewritten articles from *Fiddlehead Forum*, one had its origin in the British

Pteridological Society's newsletter, the *Pteridologist*, and eleven chapters are entirely new.

Some of the best praise one can offer on a book of this sort is that it does not read like a textbook. Instead readers learn about pteridophyte life cycles, classification, fossil history, ecological adaptations, biogeography, and ethnobotany (the major sections of the book) through a series of delightful stories that weave unusual facts with engrossing examples. Readers learn about the biology and evolutionary history of *Equisetum* by sharing 19th century explorer Richard Spruce's sense of wonder upon first encountering giant horsetails in Ecuador. Similarly, we learn about the right way and the wrong way to prepare Marsilea sporocarps for human food (and of the disastrous results when explorers don't follow the aboriginal cookbook), and incidentally get lessons in the phytochemistry, morphology, life history, and conservation of these odd aquatic ferns. And the great importance of plant and insect taxonomy to humanity is lovingly detailed in an account of the weedy giant salvinia in Africa.

In large part, because the author has devoted his professional life to pteridology, this volume is among the most thoroughly researched and precisely written texts of this type for an amateur audience. Indeed, it is amazing that a book so rich in biological data can be such a good read! Robbin Moran, who previously has co-authored such excellent pteridological tomes as the *Fern Grower's Manual* and *The Ferns and Allied Plants of New England*, is to be congratulated on another superlative job!

