



# Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

February 2009

Vol. 11, No. 02

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, February 15, 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,

I hope everyone is enjoying the wonderful, if intermittent, weather we've been having. I have friends who own a "soil and rock yard" as well as a landscaping business and they tell me that our part of Houston is in a gardening frenzy. I know for a fact that I'd like to be. Has anyone found any wonderful new ferns to plant? If so, why not share that info with the society at the next meeting? I've been checking my local big box stores as I shop for things for the new house and they don't have their new crop of plants in yet – at least not the most important ones that we're interested in seeing.

Did everyone get the word about the really interesting votive candle holders with ferns etched into the glass sides that have appeared in the Big Lots stores? Thanks to Sharon Banister for that one. If you have any unique finds pass them along to your newsletter editor or me so we can get the word out.

At this month's meeting we'll be learning about Thelypteris and Dryopteris, two favorite groups of garden ferns. We'll learn how to tell the difference between the two and about varieties suitable for planting in our Houston landscapes. We just might have some babies for you to take home.

If you have a (magnifying) loupe, bring it to the meeting. If you need one and we have enough interest, we could place a group order with one of the sellers on eBay. You really need a 20 to 30 power loupe to be able to use it as a portable microscope. The cost is around \$10 each. I really believe everyone could benefit from this handy little tool even if it's just to look at those nasty little critters sucking the life out of your plants.

We have a special program lined up for next month. Don Callard, a Platycerium expert from San Diego, is coming out to give a program showing us how to identify and tell apart the different specie of Staghorn Ferns. I for one have needed this one for a long time. I can finally tell the difference between a P. hillii and a P. bifurcatum but some of the others are still difficult. I'm trying to talk him into bringing some plants for sale.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all on Sunday.  
Donna

### Mini Workshop News and Info

During this month's "Mini-Workshop" we will be mounting *Nephrolepis pendula*. This fern's fronds can grow up to 20 feet long under ideal circumstances so plan on finding a suitable location for it. The only tool you'll need to bring with you to the meeting is a portable drill/screwdriver if you have one.



### DUES ARE DUE

If you haven't paid your dues for 2009 yet, this is a reminder – **please don't forget!**

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

Our Treasurer will be available to collect them at the next meeting or you may mail your payment to:

Mary McConnell  
6218 Wister Lane  
Houston, TX 77008

Please make your checks payable to Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society or simply TGCFS.

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



### Officers and Committees:

President:	Donna McGraw
Vice President:	Sarah Chumley
Secretary:	Cherie Lee
Treasurer:	Terri Dolney
Board Members at Large:	Sharon Banister, Darla Harris and Lulu Leonard
Membership Chair:	Mary McConnell
Ways and Means:	Ted Richardson
Special Projects:	Larry Rucker
Newsletter:	Paul Geiger
Library:	Frank Lee
Raffles:	Jean Keiser
Hospitality:	Jessica Sheldon
Welcoming at Door:	Emma Lee Payne





**Minutes of General Meeting, January 18, 2009**  
**Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society**

A regular monthly meeting was held at the Houston Garden Center, Houston, Texas

The meeting commenced at 2:00 PM with President, Donna McGraw presiding.

Meeting called to order by Donna McGraw.

Committee reports:

- Membership: Mary McConnell reminded attendees to pay dues if have not done so.
- Hospitality: Jessica Sheldon reminded attendees to sign up for refreshments for future meetings.
- Library: Frank Lee reminded attendees that the Library was open for checking out books and to please return books at the next meeting.

**Mini-workshop:** Sharon Banister presented a hands-on workshop showing how to plant the prothalia covering your peat pellet into a nursery container. All attendees planted a nursery container to take home.

**Program:** Donna McGraw presented the program “How to Tell the Different Fern Families Apart”. Many ferns from various families were shown with a discussion of their characteristics.

**Plant Raffle:** Jean Keiser ran the plant raffle with the member plant going to lucky winner Martha Burg.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Submitted by: Cherie Lee, Secretary



**Meeting Refreshments**

Jessica Sheldon, our Hospitality Chairperson wants to remind everyone of the several categories of refreshments that are usually offered each month. The categories are: **Drinks** (sodas, ice tea, water); **Snacks** (chips, dips, crackers, cookies); **Fruit or Veggie Tray** (seasonal foods); **Desserts** (bought or yum, homemade); **Service Ware** (plates, cups, plastic ware, napkins). And for those who would like to express their culinary talents, think outside the usual and surprise us with your own creation!

Refreshments for the **January meeting** were generously furnished by Jessica, Cherie Lee, Marcia Livingston and Mary McConnell. Thanks to all of you.

**February Refreshments:**

Refreshments for our next meeting will be furnished as follows:

- Drinks: Cecil Strange
  - Snacks: Susan Peacock
  - Veggies/Fruit: Jessica Sheldon
  - Desserts: Marcia Livingston and Jean Richardson
  - Service Ware: Lulu Leonard
- Come out and enjoy some really good and delicious food!



**Library**

We encourage you to take advantage of 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 and videos available for immediate checkout.

Don't forget to visit our web site (see link in header, page 1) and click on **Library** to see the current list of books available. There you will see some pictures of the books we have and links to reviews at Amazon and elsewhere.

Following is a review of one of our most cherished and important books:

**“Fern Growers Manual”** by Barbara Joe Hoshizaki & Robbin C. Moran

Anyone interested in growing hardy, semi hardy, or tropical ferns will find a wealth of information on this group of plants. This book provides detailed, useful advice on cultivation, identification, and landscaping for ferns in any region.



**Tips, Hints, and Information**

From: Donna McGraw

1) I received this from a friend: “Here’s an interesting website from a Brit who immigrated to New Zealand because of all the wonderful ferns there – talk about obsession – just kidding, Mark.”

[www.thefernhouse.moonfruit.com](http://www.thefernhouse.moonfruit.com)

2) I used Zep Orange Concentrate cleaner from Home Depot to control insects on and around some of my plants. The citrus soap dissolves the outer coating of the insects rendering them dead almost immediately. Use about a 10% solution but use caution when using it on your ferns until you know which ones can take it. Under no circumstance use it on Maidenhairs or any other fern with thin delicate leaves.

I regularly soak my Platyceriums for about 15 to 30 minutes in a tub of this mixture – you should see what comes scurrying out when I haven’t dipped them for a while. I got this tip from an Aroid person who cautions against using it on succulents or any other plant with a waxy coating as it will dissolve that too.

