



Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

April 2010

Vol. 12, No. 4

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

**Next Regular Meeting: Sunday, April 18, 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:

Greetings everyone. Summer is almost here 😊. You can almost watch the weeds in my yard grow - sigh, if we could just get our ferns to be that hardy. My holly ferns are doing well. I had one painted fern that looks great and a few autumn ferns that look awful but hopefully will recover. We're in the process of putting more hardy ferns in the ground but, like everyone else, I'm sure, I'm going to stock up on frost cloth and plastic for them this year, just in case we get hit again.

A big thank you to Frank Lee for last month's wonderful program on aquatic ferns, very informative. I hope all your new pets are doing great - thanks for sharing, Frank. I saw some really cute small "tanks" at Petsmart for those of you without aquariums. This month's program promises to be another interesting one, literally quite the opposite kind of fern, xerophytic. Those of us who attended last year's Fern Festival in Austin had an opportunity to hear our speaker and the rest of you are in for a treat.

This month's Houston Federation of Garden Clubs meeting is on the 9th. It will be an art show featuring talented members from all over town. On exhibit will be paintings, watercolors, sculptures, photography, yard art, and much more. The meeting starts at 10:30 AM at the Houston Garden Center. Since our fern society is a member, and by default we're all members, everyone is invited to attend and participate. By the way, in case anyone was wondering, the Federation is the organization that provides and maintains the plants inside the Houston Garden Center building.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at our meeting!

Donna



April's Program:

High Desert Hijack

Silver City, New Mexico is a far cry from Houston, Texas. The high desert of southwestern New Mexico is acrobatic in nature. How so you wonder? Well, when it rains at just the right time, wild poppies can blanket the countryside. Just the right nighttime temperature along with the right amount of rain and the cactus are in fragrant flower that is so intoxicating that you think tequila is in the air. With the right combination of early rain, hot days, and cool nights, you have the whole state roasting green chili with an aroma that is uniquely New Mexico. Acrobatics – it is that combination of weather which controls what grows that season, that year, that decade.

One year the acrobatics of weather, the right amount of this with the right amount of that, produced plants I had never seen before. On one morning hike, something caught my attention out of the corner of my eye: kinda small, kinda gray, kinda growing in gravel, kinda in full sun. Closer, closer on my hands and knees, closer, yep, close enough to say it was a fern. I marveled at the thought of this fugitive from some greenhouse, states away no less, to fall from heaven at my feet.

After patient weeks of watching the little fugitive fern not grow any bigger, I consulted my conscience (at that long ago time there was no such thing as, "If you're going to 'take' a plant make sure it's a picture"). The fern came up easily from its loose mooring. How could the poor thing go on surviving without my intervention? Determined to return this fern to its former glory, I daydreamed of lush green long fronds gracing a hanging basket in my entryway for all to admire. I potted, watered, and protected it from the harsh desert sun. I watched it wilt. I watered, it wilted. I watered again, it died. Where did I go wrong? All the ferns I had ever known loved rich damp soil, dappled to almost dark shade, misting, fussing, and they proliferated.

Now, many, many, years later I'm going to have the opportunity to hear about ferns from this dryer side of life. David Mahler, who developed an interest in ferns as a camp counselor in Pennsylvania in the 1960's (lucky man), is going to share his knowledge of xerophytic ferns of Travis County. Not to be left out, David will also include some ferns, while maybe not strictly xerophytic but certainly drought tolerant, that will grow in our area.

David is the ecologist for Environmental Survey Consulting, an Austin company that specializes in site analysis, seed harvesting, habitat restoration, native plant landscaping, naturalistic rockwork, wetland and pond construction, AND park and trail design and construction. He has been a pioneer in site-specific restoration in Central Texas since initiating restoration projects at Wild Basin Preserve in Austin in 1982. He is also a founding board member of the Society for Ecological Restoration and has designed and installed several habitat display areas at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Lucky us!

With the drought last summer we had a taste of this dryer side of life. This summer we'll have a chance to grow a xerophytic fern on our terms: in a dish garden. So hunt in the

garage, the Goodwill, or the trash for a smallish (6 inches or so) shallow dish to plant your new fern in. Ferns and suitable planting medium will be available for a reimbursable fee.

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



Up and Coming Attractions

April 18	Xerophytic Ferns by David Mahler
May 8	Casa Flora Field Trip
June 20	Workshop Weekend – Projects TBA
July 18	Platynerium Identification by Barbara Joe Hoshizaki
August 15	Summer Party and Plant Exchange
September 19	Ferns from A-Z by Darla Harris
October 17	Open
November 21	Open
December 19	Holiday Party

May: Field Trip to Casa Flora

Casa Flora is a wholesale greenhouse in Dallas who graciously supplies us with ferns for our projects. This is a rare opportunity to see a behind the scenes operation of a major supplier of ferns. There will be two parts to the tour: the production facility and a newly planted fern garden with 280 species. The itinerary for the tour is as follows:

11:15 am - Meet at Casa Flora's main facility on McCommas Bluff Rd.

11:30 am – Divided into two groups:

Group One will go to the Trial Fern Garden

Group Two will tour the basic production facilities

12:30 pm – Lunch provided by Casa Flora

1:00 pm - Group One and Group Two swap tour sites

2:00 pm - Tour ends at Casa Flora

The tour to the trial gardens will go to an old greenhouse facility that was started in 1928 with glass houses that they do not use, and the fiberglass greenhouses they do use. The fern garden has wonderful sandy loam soil, is shaded by large oak trees, and is in front of the house of the previous owner. The trial garden shows what plants will survive the Dallas 100 degree heat of summer to the freezing winter, with temperatures as low as 19 degrees. Bring camera and note pad!

The group at the production facilities will further be divided into smaller groups. One group will tour and have an explanation of the tissue culture and spore room, while the other group tours the greenhouse facility.

This field trip will REPLACE our usual meeting scheduled for May 16th. Since it is a 5 hour drive to Dallas from Houston, many of us are going up on Friday. I will have the signup sheet at this month's meeting to help coordinate who is driving, who is riding with whom, who needs a roommate for overnight, etc. Maps will be available at that time.

We have many other possibilities and speakers being pursued for our Society. As always, suggestions for programs are always welcome so please let me know if you have any, especially for the open dates.

Submitted by: Jessica Sheldon, Vice President



Membership and Auction Committees:

Hi Everyone,

As announced at the last meeting, I will be chairing our Marketing Committee. I need your help!!! What I need from each of you is the following information please!!

- A list of Garden Societies and clubs that you are a member of.
- A copy of your local community newspaper.
- The top five web sites you like to go to regarding plants and any others that you just like the layout, how information is accessed etc.
- The two or three nurseries you go to most often, including any local neighborhood type that others may not know about.
- Any Plant sales you go to that are private, like Jerry's Jungle.

Our goal this year is advertisement, increase membership, and prepare for our upcoming Auction next spring. I'm looking for any ideas that you have, or that you have seen, that work.

I'm also chairing the Auction Committee and looking for some volunteers to be on this committee. I am planning a committee meeting on Sunday at 1PM before the General Meeting at the Garden Center. This is a planning stage to develop our game plan so, everyone is invited to come and participate. Participation is the fun part of the Society and I want everyone to have fun!!

Thank you in advance for all your help to make this a big success!

Submitted by: Darla Harris, Marketing Chair



Dues:

If you haven't paid your dues for 2010, this is a reminder.

TGCFS 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.



Refreshments:

Refreshments for March were generously provided by:

Drinks: Patrick Hudnall
Snacks: Sharon Banister
Fruits/Veggies: Jessica Sheldon
Desserts: Marcia Livingston
Service ware: Cecil Strange

Refreshments for April will generously be furnished by:

Drinks: Ted Richardson
Dips & Chips: Mary McConnell
Fruits/Veggies: Darla Harris
Desserts: Jean Richardson
Service ware: Cecil Strange

Come out and enjoy some really delicious food!



2010 Officers and Committees:

President: Donna McGraw
 Vice President: Jessica Sheldon
 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
 Marketing: Darla Harris
 Newsletter: Cherie Lee
 Library: Frank Lee
 Raffles: Patrick Hudnall
 Hospitality: Cecil Strange
 Welcoming at Door: Marcia Livingston



Auction Committee Meeting

Meeting scheduled for Sunday, April 18, 2010 before the General Meeting at the Houston Garden Center at 1PM. The auction is in the planning stage and this meeting is to develop our game plan so, everyone is invited to come and participate.

Submitted by: Darla Harris, Auction Chair



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.



April Book Review

By: Frank Lee

Time-Life Encyclopedia of Gardening "Ferns" by Philip Perl

The Encyclopedia of Gardening was the first long series about gardening by Time-Life, but it was followed up by many more. This set was published in the late 70's, but a lot of the information is still pretty relevant today. The "Ferns" edition discusses ferns grown indoors and in the garden. It has a section on identifying ferns by their family and discusses various techniques for propagating ferns. It also has an illustrated encyclopedia of ferns which includes growing tips.



Minutes of General Meeting, March 21, 2010

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

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

The meeting commenced at 2:20 PM with President, Donna McGraw calling the meeting to order.

General Meeting: Donna McGraw discussed the committee for the TGCFS's first auction to be held in 2011. If you are interested in participating, please let her know. Also, folks are needed to babysit plants for the auction.

Marketing Committee: Darla Harris is chairperson for this new committee to promote TGCFS and increase membership. Patrick Hudnall and Malcolm McCorquodale are committee members. Let Darla know if you are interested in participating.

Library: Chair Frank Lee reminded all that the Library was open for checking out books and to please return books at the next meeting.

Membership: Chair Mary McConnell reminded attendees to pay their dues if have not done so already. Member list was distributed. Members were asked to check their information and let Mary know if they had any changes.

Newsletter: Editor Cherie Lee reminded members that the Newsletter is posted on the TGCFS website for viewing and /or printing. Please let her know if you are willing to accept an email notification that the Newsletter has been posted and forgo receiving the mailed Newsletter to help save money. Deadline for April Newsletter is April 3rd.

Hospitality: Chair Cecil Strange reminded everyone to please sign up to bring refreshments at upcoming meetings.

Upcoming Programs: Vice-President Jessica Sheldon discussed the upcoming trip on May 8th to Casa Flora in Dallas. The trip will include a tour of Casa Flora, lunch, and a trip to the Dallas Arboretum. Starting time for the tour is being worked. Let Jessica know if you plan to attend so she can give a head count to Casa Flora for lunch. Also, Darla Harris is checking into a group rate for a hotel. Please let her know if you plan to stay overnight on Friday and/or Saturday.

Program: Frank Lee presented a program on water ferns. The various types and growing conditions were discussed. Examples of several of the water ferns were on display. Four water ferns were available for purchase at cost: *Bolbitis heudelotii* "African Water Fern", *Microsorium pteropus* "Java Fern", *Ceratopteris thalictroides* "Oriental Water Fern", and *Microsorium pteropus* "Java Fern Windelov". Ted Richardson prepared plant data sheets for each to be added to members' notebooks.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Submitted by: Cherie Lee, Secretary



Editor's Comments:

As most of you are aware, the Newsletter is posted on the TGCFS website at the same time as it is mailed out to the members. In an effort to save money on mailings, it has been suggested that email notification be sent that the Newsletter has been posted on the website instead of mailing the Newsletter. Members can then visit the website to view the Newsletter and print it for themselves if they wish. **If you have not done so already, please let me know if you are willing to accept the email notification and forgo the mailed Newsletter.** You can contact me by calling 281-999-8368, emailing cherie.d.lee@sbcglobal.net, or let me know at the next meeting. If I don't hear from you, you will continue to receive the Newsletter as usual. Thanks.

Deadline for the May Newsletter is May 1, 2010.

Cherie Lee, Editor, *TGCFS Newsletter*



Upcoming Events – Other Societies in Houston Area:

If you have the time and would like to expand your horticultural activities, take note of the following announcements by the Houston Bromeliad and Orchid Societies.

Bromeliad Society/Houston Inc.
www.bromeliadsocietyhouston.org
 Regular meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM at: The Houston Garden Center.
 Next regular meetings are April 20, 2010

Spring Sale
 April 10 9 AM – 5 PM
 Gethsemane United Methodist Church
 6856 Bellaire Blvd
 ½ mile east of the S.W. Freeway and Bellaire Blvd

The Houston Orchid Society, Inc.
www.houstonorchidsociety.org
 Regular meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 PM at: The Houston Garden Center.
 Next regular meeting is May 6, 2010



Annual Show and Sale
 Houston Museum of Natural Science
 April 17 – 18, 2010
 Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM & Sunday 10 AM to 4 PM



Jessica Sheldon’s Morphed Broccoli Salad

I made this broccoli salad, as with much of how I do things, starting out one thing and ending up with another. The only thing from the original receipt was the broccoli! All of the ingredients are ‘more or less’. This is for you Larry!

- 6 cups fresh broccoli, broken into small pieces
- 1 cup red pepper, chopped and sautéed
- 1 – 8oz package of cream cheese
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 cup of canned French fried onions, the kind you use for green bean casserole

Preheat oven to 350. In a large sauce pan, over low heat, stir cream cheese until it is smooth. Add broccoli, sautéed red pepper. Stir in parmesan cheese and mayo. Transfer to a casserole dish and put the onions on top. Put in the oven until warm, about 20 to 30 minutes. I might have even run it under the broiler to crisp it up.

Serve warm with Broiled Flat Bread.

Broiled Flat Bread

I like to keep ‘Kontos’ Flatbread (they come with different seasonings) and Pizza Crusts on hand. I brush olive oil on the flatbread and pizza crusts, put them under the broiler until the desired crispy is obtained. Cut them up into bite size pieces.

You can pretty much dress this dish up or down: add more or other vegetables, different grated cheese, even ricotta instead of the cream cheese. Leave out the mayo and add lemon juice for tang. Croutons instead of the French fried onions. Just don’t leave out the broccoli.



March Meeting

Aquatic Ferns



Bolbitis heudelotii



Microsorium pteropus ‘Java Fern’



Microsorium pteropus ‘Windelov’



Azolla caroliniana