



August 2021

Vol. 23 No. 8

<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

Due to COVID-19 restrictions our August is cancelled – see below.

A message from our President:

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is doing well! It has been so long since we have seen some of you at all, and others we only see at the virtual meetings but not in person. I know I miss you guys!!! We must get together again at some point. We had hoped it would be this month at our normal August party, however we have decided out of abundance of caution that we will **CANCEL the AUGUST PARTY!!!** With the spike in cases in the greater Houston area and indeed throughout the country, we would rather be safe than sorry. We have waited this long to see each other, but to wait another few months is just the safest thing to do.

David Hill of Wales gave us a great talk on the ferns of his region. I have never personally been to any of the places he showed us so now they go on the list. I don't think most of us can grow these as they seemed to be a little cooler weather type ferns. Maybe the San Francisco area or Maine could grow them.

As the virus has ramped up again, it seems unlikely that we will be meeting together in September for sure, and I'm getting doubtful as to whether we will meet in the county building at all this year. We will keep an eye on things and if it looks possible to meet at another location over the next few months, we will look into it. We are hopeful we might be able to pull off the winter party in December, so let's plan it for now anyway.

I would like to extend my apologies to our newest members that have joined over the last few months, it appears you got left off the email list. You are firmly added on now and I'm sorry! Welcome!

Next month we will be selecting our nomination committee, I have already appointed the chairperson and I will announce it in the next newsletter. We will need to add two more members to the committee to complete the bylaw process for selection of our officers for the 2022 year. Please think about both who we should have on this committee as well as what positions you would like to hold this coming year. Rotation is necessary and it takes everyone to make this a successful society.

We will be collecting dues for the 2022 year, so if you have not done so you might want to mail in your dues. It does not look like we can do this in person. You may also join for multiple years, so you don't have to remember to do this every year. Currently Beth Ayer is handling this, with Ruby Adams helping the rest of the year and then taking over in January. Thank you both!

We can only hope going forward life gets back to some state of normalcy. I hope you all stay safe and well; this is such a contagious virus, so we all need to stay vigilant to stay well.

Please join us at the September virtual meeting, we will have the details in that newsletter.

Talk care everyone!! And stay safe and hydrated!

Darla



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/>



2021 Officers and Committees:

- President: Darla Harris
- Vice President: Patrick Hudnall
- Secretary: Ceil Dow
- Treasurer: Beth Ayer
- Board Members-at-Large: Cherie Lee (Past Pres),

Outgoing Board Members at Large:

	Jere Noerager
	Ken Warren
Education Chair:	Darla Harris
Hospitality Chair:	Larry Rucker
Library:	Ruth McDonald
Membership Co-chairs:	Beth Ayer and Marcia Livingston
Newsletter:	Paul Geiger
Spore Exchange:	Patrick Hudnall
Ways and Means:	Larry Rucker
Raffle, Store, etc.	Biruta Claunch
Web Master:	Malcolm McCorquodale
Welcoming at Door:	Faye Stansberry



Minutes of Virtual Meeting via “GoToMeeting” July 18, 2021

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

A virtual meeting was held due to COVID-19.

Darla called the meeting to order at 2:00.

There were approximately 17 members in attendance.

Presentation: “Ferns and Lycophytes of Snowdonia, a small park!”

By David G. Hill, British Pteridological Society

August GCFS Party has been scheduled for August 22, 2021 at Patrick Hudnall’s home. Party starts at 1pm and buffet starts at 2pm. Contact Larry Rucker and let him know what dish you are bringing.

There will be a GCFS Board Meeting on Thursday, July 22 at 7pm.

Snowdonia National Park is located North Western part of Wales. It is approximately 700 square miles. Wales is actually 3 million square miles. It is sparsely populated. The weather is usually cloudy and wet.

Ynys Llandwyn Island in Wales is a tiny tidal island in NW Wales. Most coastal ferns cannot survive its frost and snow. However they have sea spleenwort fern which is tolerant of salts throughout the coasts of Europe.

Asplenium obovatum is a special fern of the Wales Coast but it has a sad looking appearance.

Ohloglossum azoricum is a small rhizomatous, deciduous fern of gently sloping coastal grasslands or coastal clifftops. Little fern of Azores in West Africa and it also appears on the Wales coast. Size of your thumb. It has the largest set of chromosomes in ferns: 26 pairs of chromosomes.

The Coastal Plain in Wales is pretty populated. The old woodlands does have the fern, *Dryopteris affinis subsp. paleaceolobata*. There are 12 species of *Dryopteris* in Wales and several hybrids.

Asplenium scolopendrium is a common fern in Wales. Diploid. Wall fern. Appears on walls of homes.

Polystichum aculeatum thrives in calcium rich environments like limestone quarries. It is a medium to large size fern.

Equisetum telmateia is a horsetail fern. There are 8 species in Wales and 9 hybrids. The “boulder clay” strata is a good environment for them.

Equisetum hyemale is called Dutch Rush. It was imported en masse from the Netherlands for scrubbing pots and pans. It is calcium rich.

Asplenium ruta-muraria The common name is “Wall Rue”. It is very tiny and hard to find. Appears on maritime cliffs and likes to grow in the mortar on the walls of homes.

Asplenium ceterach is a wall fern which colonizes on limestone walls.

Asplenium trichomanes and *A. scolopendrium* are ferns growing in cracks of cars. It is common and colonizes easily.

Dryopteris filix-mas is commonly called the Male Fern. It colonizes on walls if they are damp enough. Grows to 3’ tall.

Polypodium vulgare colonizes in Wales. There are 3 Polypodiums in Wales. It is an arboreal epiphyte. Likes a bit of moss and moisture.

Freshwater and Wetlands are at the 3000’ elevation. Good range of climate. Lots of freshwater in Wales. Isoetes lawn is found in shallow water. Found washed up on shore after a storm. Can be put in an aquarium.

Equisetum fluviatile is the Water Horsetail. Unfortunately, nitrification and phosphate pollution increases algae and suffocates the natural water ferns.

Pilularia globulifera is called the Pillwort. It is found in seasonal ponds. Nowadays, most cattle have water troughs not ponds so it is losing its natural habitat.

Azolla filiculoides is hardy and comes back even after a frost.

Lycopodiella inundata is called Marsh Clubmoss. Its habitat is in decline because wetlands are being drained. Now only found in 4 sites in Northern Wales and 1 site in southern Wales. It is on the endangered list.

Thelypteris palustris is called the Marsh Fern. It is a little fern that grows in marshes.

Osmunda regalis or Royal Fern has suffered decline since the Victorian Period. In the late 1840’s through the 1870’s, ferns were all the rage as decorations in Victorian parlors. Unfortunately, most did not survive in homes. It was over collected almost to extinction. Then later after the fern fad, Royal Ferns were used as the growing medium for Orchids.

Atlantic Rainforest or Ffridd, is the upland habitat made up of glacial till. It is a pretty wet climate with 3000mm of rain per year. There are 9 valleys in Wales that have temperate rainforests which is a rare habitat. The high rainfall spreads evenly throughout the year. Lots of epiphytes enjoy this habitat.

Hymenophyllum wilsonii or Wilson's Filmy Fern is a creeping fern that is common in Northern Wales.

Trichomanes speciosum or Killarney Fern is a beautiful Filmy Fern. Collected to near extinction They only survived in several places in gametophyte stage so they don't find many with large fronds. The British Pteridological Society does not like to release locations of these to protect it.

Dryopteris aemula is a pretty lime green color found in ancient woods. It is a graceful fern found in more northern stunted Oakland forests.

Pteridium aquilinum is characterized by huge areas of bracken in the moorlands and found where woods have been removed. So when light increases, it get lots of bracken. Perfectly adapted to grazing animals and even fire. In olden days, they use to pay rent by bartering bracken because it was used in bedding. Now, it is composted with sheep wool to use as a peat substitute.

Upland Montane is a limestone scarp. Smaller and rarer ferns are found here.

Oak Fern is found among rocks. Limestone Oak Fern has fine glandular hairs that cover the fronds.

Rigid Buckler Fern suffered at the hands of Victorians too. One location is the last population in Wales. Only 20 plants survive. They are long lived and take a long time multiply.

Rigid Buckler Fern has glandular hairs that help it survive.

Moonwort is rarely recoded because it easily overlooked. It is very small.

Black Spleenwort is a graceful fern that lives quite happily in cities.

Forked Spleenwort is rigidly controlled by habitat. In Wales, it is a good indicator that lead is present.

Hard Fern is found in a wet habitat. Likes its feet in water.

Golden Scale Male Fern is a bright lime green color with an upright form. It grows best where grazing by sheep is limited. Lesser Clubmoss is a tiny fern often overlooked because of its size.

Fir Clubmoss are widespread and can survive grazing by sheep.

Adiantum pedatum. *Adiantum* is not typically found in Europe. Spores could have been introduced from a local garden.

Beech Fern is the size of your hand. Found in mountatins. Sori are found on the back of the frond.

Green Spleenwort is rare and found in the Basalt mountains.

Parsley Fern is a dimorphic fern. It has parsley shaped foliage and is a very graceful fern. Returns after grazing of the sheep.

Holly Fern is a very rare fern in the UK and in Wales. There are 8 locations with only a couple of ferns in those locations. Hard to cultivate.

Alpine woodsonia and Oblong woodsonia. Only a couple of plants left in Snowdonia. They resist cultivation. Spores germinate but doesn't want to go past this stage.

British Pteridological Society Field Visits consist of field botanists and horticulturists. Dr. Nathaniel Bayshaw invented pteridomania in the 1830's and 1840's. Because of this, ferns were over collected and some varieties were lost forever. The British Pteridological Society was established to find and protect ferns. It was a safe pursuit for ladies and men liked it too. The repeal of the glass tax allowed patrons to build ferneries. So the public started to collect ferns.

Still don't know about some of the native ferns. Each year, the BPS gather data about different fern populations. Take counts of ferns and look to re-establish ferns into the areas where they had been damaged.

Questions & Answers

There is a spore exchange across the US but spore exchanges are not allowed in Europe.

Ceil Dow asked if sheep grazing from farmers is still allowed in the national park of Snowdonia. Answer: Snowdonia still allows sheep grazing from small and traditional farms since 1100 or 1200ad. Sheep have always grazed there. Farmers should be paid to conserve the land so sheep do not overgraze.

Darla Harris – In fern cultivation, what problems are you encountering getting gametophyte to sporophyte stage? Bunch of amateurs are trying different methods of getting gametophyte to grow. In *Lycopodella* the gametophyte stage spends 5 years underground. So getting gametophyte to spore stage is very challenging. Different members try to get spores to gametophyte stage and they just sit there for years and not maturing. Have you tried tissue culture? Answer: Yes, but that is done with popular varieties that sell well and not with rare plants.

Patrick Hudnall – Are people cultivating ferns? Answer: Yes. Ferns are becoming popular again. After the Victorian era, fern popularity faded. The ferns that had been collected in the government's conservatories declined. Now ferneries are becoming popular again. Collectors want unusual ferns and learn how to grow them. Some want wild ferns and others like rarer varieties, there are niche interest in growing ferns. There are even *Equisetum* collections. Members of the BPS are professional botanists as well as amateur gardeners.

Darla Harris – Are Tree Ferns popular? Answer: Yes, in the UK and Ireland, they are very popular. What is the most popular fern in Wales? Answer: Ostrich Fern, Tree Ferns and *Dicksonias* are very popular. Lady Ferns, soft shield Ferns are also popular. Why aren't Staghorn Ferns popular there? Answer: They are not common in cultivation. People are not familiar with them. The plants struggle with the temperature there. Winters are cold and summers are too dry. Darla commented that a gardener in Windsor is growing them and wants to make them more popular.

Darla Harris – Were you able to send spores to Europe before Brexit? Answer: Yes but now, you need a phyto certificate per variety. Inspection involves opening a packet, closing a packet and resealing the package. It costs 70 pounds per packet so it is very expensive. We can send spores to the US with a lot less fuss.

Darla Harris –Are there charges to move plants from one area to another? Answer: If it is within the UK, it is easy. Northern Ireland has a border, so it is considered a separate entity and needs a separate phyto certificate.

Ceil Dow – Do you have a problem with deer over grazing? Answer: In Wales, goats, sheep and Muck Jack Deer are a problem. In Scotland, the Red Deer are more of a problem with over grazing.

Respectfully submitted,
Ceil Dow



New Members

We have new members: Candy Friday, Patsy Herrington and Lisa Reed. Please welcome our latest members (when you get a chance).



Spring Fern Show?

From “The Mercer Society” edited by Pat Hudnall

The Mercer Society is considering a spring event for 2022, probably in April, that will feature the various plant societies in the Houston area. This would include plant sales open to the public. The Mercer Society would not sell plants. This would be a one day event, most likely a Saturday. It is their thought that this would provide an opportunity for exposure to a new group of visitors.

I am not proposing at this time that the Fern Society sell plants. However, I believe this would be an outstanding opportunity to introduce Houston area residents to the wide variety of ferns people are growing in the area. I propose an “Un-Judged Show” from the TGCFS. It would only be possible if most of our area members are interested and



Darla Harris on: *Doryopteris nobilis*

Doryopteris are a group of ferns that have about 30 species. Most are small to medium size, and can be grown indoors as they adapt very well to low light and drier conditions. They are not very cold hardy so growing in a pot is best so you can protect these for winter. The leaves are typically triangular and often have several blades to them, many look like Maple leaves. Several produce bulblets or babies where the stem meets the leaf. The stem is thin and black and meets the leaf at about center.

D. nobilis is from South America and is native to Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil and northern Argentina. It is the largest of the group getting up to 26’ tall. The leaves are dimorphic, so the fertile fronds look different than the sterile fronds. The plant does not like to be over water and especially over winter when it is not actively growing. This is an attractive fern with its different type leaves, and pretty easy to grow. Definitely worth adding to your collection.

willing to help in some way. I do not expect those that have large collections to provide all the plants. If people are willing to get a few fern plants to the show or several to the show that would be super. They don’t need to be super specimens, just examples of those types of ferns people grow here. The only criteria I would think important is that they be generally pest free. 1 gallon black plastic pots? Or clay pots? Larger plastic or clay pots or wire baskets? A wire mesh frame to hang epiphytic ferns? Maybe a few non-ferns mixed in to contrast or add color.

Please think about this idea. Many thanks, Pat



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All photos submitted by Darla Harris:

