



March 2025

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<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

Our meeting this month will be “blended” by meeting in-person at the Judson Robinson, Jr. Community Center (2020 Hermann Dr., Houston, 77004 and/or via GoToMeeting – member’s choice.

TGCFS 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, 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.**

A message from our President:

Hi Everyone,

First, I would like to apologize for the February meeting, or lack thereof. We had a technology issue that would not allow the sharing of the presenters PowerPoint. I’m not sure what happened as it did not get fixed and after an hour of trying on both ends, we ended up rescheduling the meeting for a future date. I will say this was a first. We will go back to having a dry run prior to the meeting to ensure everything is working on both sides before the meeting. We had a very nice turnout for the meeting, lots of nice refreshments and time to discuss a few things while the tech issues were being address.

We decided to have a meeting on **March 16th at 2p**, on Platyceriums. The topic of the plant articles have been the P. bifurcatum complex group, which includes Platyceriums *bifucatum*, *hillii*, and *willinckii* as well as *veitchii*. We will be covering the first three at this meeting with several examples. We will show you how to tell them apart, and what growing conditions that separate them from each other. If you have a hand lens, please bring it to the meeting. If you don’t have a hand lens you might consider buying one. I will bring a few with me for everyone to share. I use a 20X power most of the time, but 10X will work fine for what we will be viewing this meeting. Larry Rucker, Patrick Hudnall, and I will bring examples of these ferns. This is meant to be both informative and a fun meeting.

The first thing we discussed was our April meeting. It falls on Easter Sunday and the building is closed. So,

we talked about having a virtual meeting on a different day or to skip April all together this year. This is a first, but it was decided to not have an April meeting.

May we will have a full weekend of ferns, starting with our field trip to the Monument Hill State Historic Site near La Grange. For those that love hardy and native ferns this will show you several in a very scenic backdrop of the beginning of central Texas ferns. It takes you away from the Piney woods and takes you to the soft hills of a part of Texas that is often overlooked. We did this field trip several years ago, but went in April and many of the ferns had not popped their heads up from being dormant.

June we will have our Summer Party??

Please don’t forget to pay your dues!! This is the last month you can pay for they year without getting dropped from the newsletter. We will be putting out a membership booklet this year. I know this will be the first since Covid hit.

We do have membership drives going on at John Fairey Gardens on the 5th of March, 8a-4p. and at March Mart at Mercer Botanical Gardens on the 22nd-23rd of March, 8a-4:30p. Please get with me and/or Christopher Goodgame.

We will have a Board Meeting following the March meeting.

See you soon!

Darla



Dues!

Dues for 2025 are currently being collected. If you have any questions about the status of your dues, please contact Christopher Goodgame at: chris.goodgame@protonmail.com.

Your dues may be paid in person at a meeting or sent by mail to: Christopher Goodgame, PO Box 66116, Houston, TX 77266

Checks should be payable to: Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society (TGCFS).

2025 Officers and Committees:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	<Open>
Secretary:	Ceil Dow
Treasurer:	Larry Rucker
Board Members-at-Large:	Anne Swanson Christopher Goodgame
Education Chair:	Darla Harris
Hospitality Chair:	Anne Swanson
Library:	Fred Robinson
Membership Chair:	Christopher Goodgame
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

February Door Prize:

Adiantum Raddianum Fragrans



Ruby Adams

The March Meeting: The Platycerium Complex of Ferns

Board Meeting

There will be a Board Meeting after the regular membership meeting on February 16, 2024 at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center at 2020 Hermann Drive. Board members and all interested members are welcome to attend.

The February Meeting

February 16, 2025

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

The meeting was held at 2:00pm at the Justin Robinson Community Center in Hermann Park.

Approximately 16 members were present. The "Go to Meeting" was streamed to members who could not make it to the in-person meeting. Four people attended the meeting online.

Presentation on "**Filmy Ferns**", presented by Dan Yansura. Unfortunately, the presentation was cancelled. There was a problem on Dan's end due to a software error.

Membership fees are due now. Dues are \$15 per couple, \$10 for a single person and \$5 for a student.

The April meeting will be cancelled because it falls on Easter Sunday and the Justin Community Center at Hermann Park will be closed.

The March meeting will highlight *Platycerums*.

There was a group discussion about future presentation ideas.

*A few years ago, TGCFS did a workshop on *Ceratopteris*, a water fern. The spore is placed in a petri dish. No matter what direction it is planted, the spore will correct itself and germinate.

*The *Azolla* fern commonly used in Asian rice fields to improve soil nitrogen is *Azolla pinnata* which forms a symbiotic relationship with the cyanobacterium "*Anabaena azollae*", allowing it to fix atmospheric nitrogen and provide a natural nitrogen source for the rice plants; essentially acting as a green manure. Farmers often cultivate Azolla in rice paddies and then incorporate it into the soil as a natural fertilizer.

Scientists are figuring out how to use them in other areas of interest.

As a side note, it was mentioned that terrestrial ferns suck up bad minerals out of the soil.

*Darla suggested a presentation on “Cooking with Ferns” perhaps scheduling it this year. Ceil Dow will look into it. (Follow up: Maine’s Fiddlehead Ferns are only available in a 3 week window in mid-May. Since Adam Black is scheduled in May, the presentation will be scheduled for May 2026.)

Another presentation idea is to ask a paleobotanist about ancient *Sigillaria* tree ferns.

Anne Swanson has example logos for printing on shirts: Green logo on white shirt, white logo on green shirt, neon green on black shirt. The cost is \$10 per shirt if variable colors are ordered. There is free shipping if shirts and logos are all ordered in one color.

March is the month of the TGCFS membership drive month. The John Fairy Garden Conservatory plant sale is scheduled for March 15, 2025. Chris Goodgame will sit in for the morning and Rick & Ceil Dow will sit for the afternoon membership booth. Mercer Botanic Gardens March Mart is scheduled for March 21 & 22. We need members to man the Membership booth there on both days. There are morning and afternoon shifts. We also need members to man the membership booths on May 31-June 1, 2025 at the Houston PlantCon. There are multiple shifts from 10am – 6:30pm. The Bulb Mart is

held in October and we will need membership volunteers there as well. The Azalea Trail is held in April.

The June party is open for someone to host it. Respectfully submitted by Ceil Dow.



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/>



A Study of Platyceriums

By Darla Harris

P. willinckii

P. willinckii is one of our favorite staghorns. Being in the bifurcatum complex group and has been call 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, 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 Java in its name.

There are lots of different looks of *willinckii*, but most have very long narrow fronds that fork at the bottom 12’ 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 easy, 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 verity of looks on your staghorns.

Growth Bow Tie vs Bifurcatum Walking Upwards



Third photo is how the drying spore will curl the tips of willinckii



Several *P. willinckii* cultivars mounted around the tree on the left, *P. willinckii* 'Mandy', photo Neil Baillie



P. willinckii 'Omo'



Showing the long fronds

