

May 2024

Vol. 26 No. 4

<http://www.tgcfernsoc.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. **Regular meetings are held at 2:00 P.M. on the third Sunday of each month at the Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Herman Drive, Houston, TX, 77004. Phone (713) 284-1994.**

A message from our President:

Hi everyone!

Urgent!!!

The field trip date has been changed by one week!!!

Sorry for the inconvenience but this field trip has just not gone together very smoothly. We had several not able to attend this Saturday as originally planned including Donita Brannon, so we felt it was better to push it one week. **The field trip is set for Saturday the 25th of May meeting at 11am ‘Moody Gardens’ at the Pyramid front entrance on the steps there. We need a head count for the group discount. Please email, text, or phone me to confirm you will be coming!!!**

I would like to thank everyone that attended the April meeting. Adam Black gave us a great talk and showed us many ferns and other rare plants in the Philippines and has promised us another talk, we hope next year, on his trip to Uruguay in South America. We are looking forward to this!!

The June Party is set for Saturday the 15th. That is the day before Father’s Day. It will be at 1pm and held at the home of Patrick and Diane Hudnall. We do have a food signup list started. See further in the newsletter with more information in the June newsletter.

Erin Mills will be presenting our July meeting, she is currently with the Houston Botanical Garden and will be talking to us on Bugs!! You know, the kind that get on your ferns and other plants and she will help us understand how to control them.

I’m rushing to get this out so that’s all for now. I hope everyone is safe and sound and looking forward to seeing you in Galveston. Don’t forget to let me know!!

Darla



Dues!

Dues for 2024 are currently being collected. If your 2024 dues have been paid you should have received an email from Beth Ayer in September. 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).



2024 Officers and Committees:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| President: | Darla Harris |
| Vice President: | Patrick Hudnall |
| Secretary: | Ceil Dow |
| Treasurer: | Larry Rucker |
| Board Members-at-Large: | Ruby Adams
Christopher Goodgame |
| Education Chair: | Darla Harris |
| Hospitality Chair: | TBD |
| Library: | Fred Robinson |
| Membership Chair: | Christopher Goodgame |
| Newsletter: | Paul Geiger |
| Spore Exchange: | Patrick Hudnall |
| Ways and Means: | Larry Rucker |

Raffle, Store, etc. Rick Dow
Web Master: Malcolm McCorquodale
Welcoming at Door: TBD



1st Quarter 2024 Treasurer's Report

January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024

(NB: The Treasurer's report for the opening quarter will be included in next month's *Newsletter*.)



Minutes of Blended Meeting via "GoToMeeting" and In-person

April 21, 2024

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

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

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2 pm by Darla Harris. Approximately 25 members present. Technical difficulties made it impossible for the "Go to Meeting" to be streamed.

Darla asked that everyone sign up to bring a dish or two to the June summer party to be held at Diane & Patrick Hudnall's home.

Adam Black is involved in plant exploration and conservation. He is currently assistant curator and head of propagation at Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories and Arboretum in Charlotte, North Carolina. He previously served as director of The John Fairey Garden (formerly Peckerwood Garden) in Hempstead, Texas where he assisted with the transition of this internationally acclaimed private garden into a public garden. Originally from Florida, he formerly managed the forest pathology and forest entomology laboratories at the University of Florida.

Ferns & Lycophytes of the Philippines by Adam Black.

In July 2023, his most recent international trip was sponsored by the National Science Project.

Local Philippine botanists wanted to preserve local specimens on their islands. The group of botanists only focused their study in the southern part of the Philippines called Mindanao. The western part of the island has an active group of terrorists so there is a lot of military presence there.

As soon as they got to the destination, one of the first things they did was to taste the popular Philippine dessert, halo-halo. It is a recipe made up of crushed ice, evaporated milk or coconut milk, and various ingredients like ube jam, sweetened kidney beans or garbanzo beans, coconut strips, sago, agar, boiled taro or soft yams in cubes, flan, slices or portions of fruit preserves and other root crop preserves. The dessert is topped with a scoop of ube ice cream.

The group worked with the University of Mindanao. The officials at the University signed a memorandum to allow Adam Black to collect botany specimens and information

about the plants and export them out of the country. He has found that a lot of other countries do not allow information out of the country. The botany college is focused on ferns. The conservatory and greenhouses were full of ferns.

The group met at the first tribal Meeting House. Because the local tribes help the botanists collect specimens, the researchers brought them supplies like generators as a gift for their hospitality. At this location, the little outhouse had a hose hooked up to the freshwater stream. After a long day in the jungle, they would take a refreshing cold shower. The local Shaman sacrificed a chicken to ensure the group of researchers would have a safe journey. Local people were hired to help carry supplies.

The researchers were subdivided into different groups according to their specialty: Seed plant people, fern people, lycophyte people, and moss people. Adam Black was in the group studying seed plants. They went out to the jungle called "The Preserve". He found a new species of *Medinilla* all over the area with noticeably hairy bracts. They collected flowers and fruit of various plants and when they had enough material, they would start field pressing plants. They first took detailed photos of the plants and even dissected the flowers and fruit.

The group found the rare ginger, *Etilingera fimbriobracteata* and collected it.

Back near camp, the group was forced to press flowers on a rickety bamboo structure.

They saw epiphytes on the top of trees. Locals were very good at climbing trees. The locals would climb up the trees and drop the epiphyte specimens down to the waiting botanists.

The fern people found one super long fern frond growing along the ground. They discovered it was a new species with an indeterminate single frond.

There were many epiphytic orchids. Also, there were many epiphytic *Selaginellas* growing all over the branches. This was surprising because temperatures ranged from low 80's in the day and dropped to low 60's at night.

He found *Saurauia* species where the flowers bloom directly on the wood. There were so many ferns, he didn't know where to begin. *Oleandra neriiformis* were growing in the trees in massive clumps. *Antrophyllum sp.* had linear sori on the undersides of its fronds.

The deeper they went into the preserve, the denser the foliage became and the darker the light.

They found a new genus of ginger. Tasting the fruit, it did not taste gingery. Locals did not even know about it.

After the group pressed the plants in the field, the porters would carry the samples back to camp.

They found individual fronds of the *Asplenium* that were 3' long. *Tmesipteris zamorarum* grows only on Tree Fern trunks. There were so many gorgeous ferns and so many were unknown to him. Palm vines clamored around the

understory. Everything about these vines was thorny! Fruit has beautiful overlapping scales on them. Every surface is covered in plants with epiphytes, moss, ferns, and tropical pitcher plants. There was a species of ginger that were totally bat pollinated. The flowers looked similar to an *Alpinia*.

Evenings were powered by generators. Locals just watched them because the scientists were such a novelty.

To collect the herbarium presses, they tied the bundles together and slipped them inside a bag with ethanol. They will be taken back to a university where they will dry for a few months and eventually a student will go through them. They also collect DNA and put it in silica gel.

Unbeknownst to Adam until much later in the project, the locals thought he was “Thor”. The superhero from the movie, “Thor”. He looked a lot like the character with his long blonde hair and a height at 6’6”. They liked to watch him.

They traveled to a new area, Talangisog which is a special forest preserved as a natural area. While there, they met a new tribe, and the shaman held a new sacrificial ceremony. The soil in this area is ultramafic which contains high levels of magnesium & iron. Pitcher plants do well here. There were specimens of *Odontosoria chinensis* with wide fern fronds.

Myrmecodia tuberosa are called ant plants. Ant colonies live off the nectar and help to pollinate the flowers. The ants also help to disburse the seeds. He cut open the base of the plant and found hollow channels where ants live other channels were designated for depositing poop.

Hoya darwinii grows leaves with a medium green, lanceolate shape while other leaves roll up into a ball. These leaves are hollow and are a plant mass where ants live. These ants were especially large and vicious.

Dischidia has inflated leaves where ants live inside them.

Pothos luzonensis is a climbing Aroid. It has beautifully textured leaves.

Dipteris conjugata is extremely difficult to propagate.

Psilotum complanatum is a whisk fern. It only grows on tree fern trunks.

Medinella peltata has gorgeous transparent petals and the anthers were also very showy. It is not clear what pollinates it.

He saw a *Medinella* species with a branching inflorescence that blooms underneath the forest floor. He isn’t sure what pollinates it.

They took photos of the multitudes of various moths. There are also lots of varieties of snakes.

He saw the gorgeous fronds of the *Seginella magnifica*.

He saw a cousin to our Beautyberry (*Callicarpa*) with red fruits.

Platyserum coronarium was growing high up in the trees. Locals cut down the trees just to get a mature specimen to sell in town for a large amount of money.

Before leaving, they had to check to make sure there were no diseased specimens. There were 178 different plant specimens in total. Boxes were wrapped and banded with tape. Herbarium specimens were loaded on top of the Jeepneys. The Jeepneys is a type of Philippine jeep vehicle with 4-wheel drive.

Question: Where do specimens go?

Answer: Georgetown University and Amazon Spheres in Seattle. The Amazon Spheres are three spherical conservatories comprising part of the Amazon headquarters campus.

Question: Can you grow the yam that makes hole-hole here in the US?

Answer: Not very well. The Southeast Asian population in the US grows the plant but do not sell it to the major public.

Question: Where are the new places to explore plants?

Answer: Philippines, Borneo, & Indonesia. The problem is that there are no botanists in their homeland.

Respectfully submitted by Ceil Dow.



April 21, 2024

TGCFS Board Meeting

Meeting was brought to order at 4:06pm.

Officers present:

President: Darla Harris, Vice President: Patrick Hudnall, Secretary: Ceil Dow, Treasurer: Larry Rucker, Board Members-at-Large: Ruby Adams, were present.

Issue: We must decide on the budget. Darla suggested \$1,500 per year.

Larry motioned to accept the budget.

Ruby seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:08pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ceil Dow.



Treasurer’s Report

Beginning Balance – January 2024:

Checking: 1,023.84

Savings: 13,980.05

Total: 15,003.89

Ending Balance – March 2024:

Checking: 803.84

Savings: 13,980.84

Total: 14,784.51

Submitted by Larry Rucker



Membership Report – New Members

(Submitted by Christopher Goodgame)

Welcome to new members!

This spring we've experienced some good growth of the society and at John Fairey Garden's Budding Out Festival and Mercer's March Mart we were able to sign up some wonderful new folks and combined for those two weekends

we have eleven new members! Please join me in welcoming Dwight Bohlmeier, Adam Cernea Clark, Gwen Carrington, Kim Clark Renteria, Adam Derewetzky, Carlos Jimenez, Zoe Matranga, Jim & Barb Roson, Zachary Taylor, and Jeffrey Yeh to the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society! We're glad to have y'all join us and we hope that you enjoy learning about ferns and hanging out with us. If there is a particular topic you'd like for us to have a meeting on, please feel free to make a request for it. And if you know of any others who would be interested in joining, we'd love to have them as well!



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/>



Library:

Please be reminded about the very nice collection of books in our library. It's easy to borrow a book for your use and home study. Please contact Fred Robinson, our Library Chairperson. And please remember to return the books in a timely manner to allow others equal access.



April 2024 Door Prize

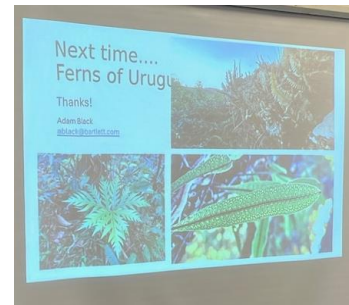
The door prize was won by Frank Lee: a hanging basket of Pacific Maidenhair.



Congratulations Frank!



Pictures from our April 2024 meeting: (Submitted by Betsy Robinson)



Fern of the Month

There is no featured "Fern of the Month for May."