



October 2024

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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,

What a month this has been with hurricane Helene hitting Florida and spreading her misery over several states. The death and devastation have been horrific, and as I type this and before we get this sent [Editor’s note: I’m getting this out before the storm hits] out Florida is being stalked by yet another extremely dangerous storm. We have members of our society (and my friends) that call Florida home, and we want to extend our love and prayers to them and wish them well. We know full well what our Cat1 did to the greater Houston area back in July, they are looking at another Cat3 or more. We hope you are safe!!

We had a pretty good meeting this month, sorry more were not able to attend but we do realize that when the first Sunday of the month falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> that makes our meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday) be on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Many missed that thinking the 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept was the meeting date, but that was a week late. We will include a calendar of meeting dates in the newsletter so you can mark your phone or paper calendar for the next year. We do have this occurring again next year. See Ceil’s minutes for details of the meeting.

This meeting is our meeting where we elect the new board of officers for the society for 2025. Bob Swanson has informed me they have a slate of Canadettes to be presented and nominated for the positions.

Our meeting will be a fun project given by Ceil and Rick Dow, that will be both useful and pretty ferny cool.

Wear casual cloths so you don’t spill anything on your nice things or bring an apron. Everything will be provided for the members. Most likely it will be one per household so you will get to but your creative heads together.

Please come early!! Doors open at 1p, for setup and conversation every month. The meeting starts promptly at 2p. We have online people attending so we need to start on time. Thank you!

November we will have a virtual talk given to us by Don Delano and will discuss with us some of the changes of the family Polypodium. So you might want to bring paper for notes so you can make new name tags for some of you current ferns. This is a wonderful group of ferns and many are grown indoors. We will talk about the ferns as well as why they moved to new families. Don has spoken to our group before during Covid, and is a member of the Los Angeles Fern Society, is their current Editor for their newsletter and has been an active member for 30+ years holding most board positions at one time or another.

December will be our party; we are looking for a host for the get together for this year!

See you at the meeting

*Darla*



#### **Membership Drive at GCH Bulb & Plant Mart!**

We need volunteers for our membership table from 9-12 on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> at the Garden Club of Houston’s Bulb & Plant mart located at:

The Church of St. John the Divine  
2450 River Oaks Blvd., Houston, Tx 77019  
You can call or text Darla (281) 733-5564 or myself  
(Christopher Goodgame) (281) 785-1717 if you'd like to  
volunteer.

Friday parking is on the streets, Saturday the school  
across the street has parking as well.



### Dues!

Time to renew for 2025! If you haven't paid ahead,  
now is a great time to look at submitting dues for next  
year. If you have questions as to how long you've paid  
through, you can e-mail or ask me in person. Dues for  
2024 and 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](mailto: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:	Christopher Goodgame
Spore Exchange:	Patrick Hudnall
Ways and Means:	Larry Rucker
Raffle, Store, etc.	Rick Dow
Web Master:	Malcolm McCorquodale
Welcoming at Door:	TBD



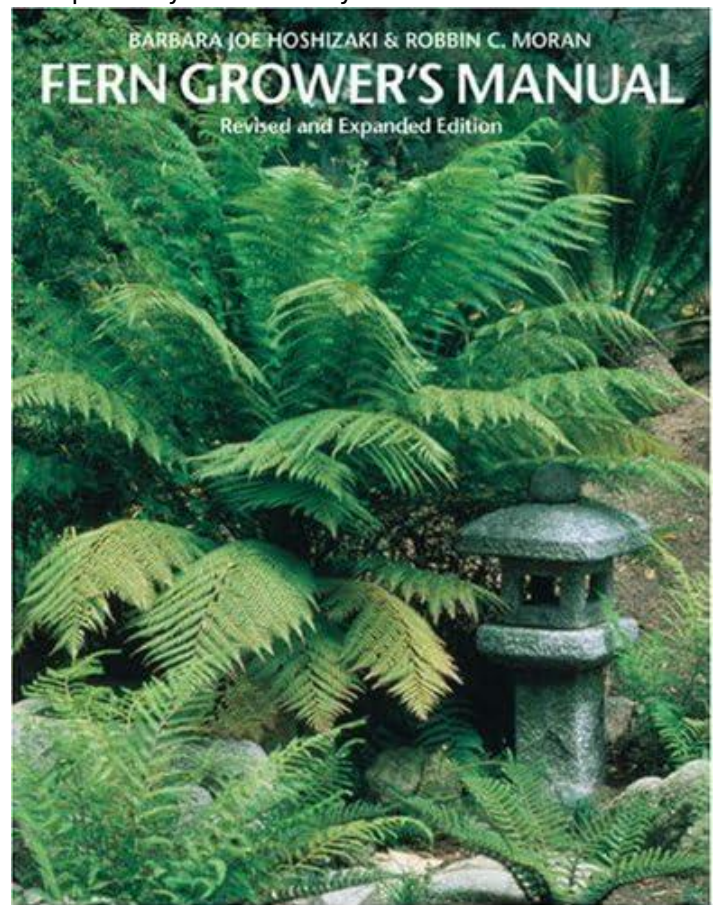
### Library Book of the Month

Title: **Fern Grower's Manual**  
Author: **Barbara Joe Hoshizaki & Robbin C. Moran**  
Published: 2001  
ISBN: 9781604694673

Synopsis: Ferns have graced our planet for  
hundreds of millions of years. With about 12,000  
named species of ferns worldwide, the variety to be  
found among them is staggering in its array of forms,  
textures, and even colors. From towering tree ferns to  
tiny water clovers, ferns and fern allies offer a wide  
range of uses in the garden and home. This book offers  
useful advice on ferns and fern allies for any region,  
with details on cultivation, identification, landscaping,  
and more. The bulk of the book consists of an  
encyclopedic treatment of all the ferns in cultivation in  
the U.S. Some 700 species from 124 genera are  
described in detail, including physical descriptions,  
cultural requirements, hardiness, common names,  
synonyms, special uses, geographical range, and  
notable cultivars or related species. Each species is  
accompanied by a black-and-white illustration to allow  
for easy identification and to provide a useful means of  
comparing species.

Updated and greatly expanded, this new edition of  
Hoshizaki's original 1975 book is the most  
comprehensive book available on fern cultivation.

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/>



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2024 Treasurer's Report Income:

Deposits and Interest:	\$36.12
Withdrawals:	\$150
Total Balance on 7/31/24	\$14561.16

Deposits and Interest:	\$.12
Withdrawals:	\$385.24
Total Balance on 7/31/24	\$14176.04

Deposits and Interest:	\$99.12
Withdrawals:	\$85
Total Balance on 9/31/24	\$14190.16
Net loss for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter:	\$371

Submitted by Larry Rucker, Treasurer



## The August Meeting

September 15, 2024

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

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

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:09pm by Darla Harris. Approximately 16 members were present.

The "GoTo Meeting" was streamed to members who could not make it to the in-person meeting.

A nominating committee is needed. Bob Swanson will chair it. Patrick Hudnall nominated Malcolm McCorquodale and Carolynne White to sit on the nominating committee. Christopher Goodgame seconded. The motion passed. Next month, TGCFS members will vote on the slate of officers. The president oversees making sure people follow through with their

assigned duties. The vice president oversees the program content.

TGCFS website lists programs we have had before. Typically, a member is not paid for being a speaker. The budget for speaker fees is \$1500 a year. The bank balance at the end of the second quarter was \$14,685. The treasurer's big issue is dealing with the IRS and fourth quarter report. The secretary takes minutes at monthly meetings and board meetings. At-large members serve as additional representatives for board meetings.

## 'What is wrong with my Fern?'

**Presented by: Patrick Hudnall & Darla Harris**  
**Covering media, treatment, fertilizer & troubleshooting**

Patrick often refers to the book, "Fern Grower's Manual", by Barbara Joe Hoshizaki & Robbin C. Moran. He prefers to grow in the same conditions where the fern is native. As well as sun/shade conditions, he works to provide the substrate/planting mix similar to its natural soil. Providing protection in winter is crucial. Some plants need coolness at night. Humidity is important as well. For instance, filmy ferns prefer high humidity. If growing ferns as houseplants, then you will need to be aware of the drying aspect of air conditioning and give the plant more humidity.

After a bad experience, he now prefers to use Miracle Gro soil mix and provide excellent drainage. Most ferns prefer a slightly acid PH. Fertilize when the plant is not putting on mature fronds or if not growing well. Tender ferns are more sensitive to fertilizers. There is a difference between dry and liquid fertilizers. Good fertilizers list the Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium ratio. Patrick's favorite fertilizer is Medina liquid. He dunks the pots in a weak liquid fertilizer blend. Do not over fertilize. If you find that you have, try to take out the dry fertilizer or wash out the liquid fertilizer by flushing it with water. Be careful *where* you put the fertilizer. Do not place the fertilizer in the center crown of the plant.

A common debate is whether clay or plastic pots are best. Plastic pots hold water better. Clay pots leach out calcium and lime. You must scrape off the outside of the pot when this happens.

Some amendments are added to the soil to improve its quality.

**Expanded shale** is formed when shale is crushed and fired in a rotary kiln at 2,000 F. This process causes tiny air spaces in the shale to expand. This product is a

lightweight, gray, and becomes a porous gravel which helps to hold water better.

**Un-milled, long strand sphagnum moss** can become hydrophobic which means when dry, it is a challenge to get it to absorb water. [There is a controversy about peat moss because its sourcing is inherently unsustainable long-term. Peat bogs are delicate ecosystems which are formed over thousands of years. Digging them all up will have inevitable environmental consequences. They'll also eventually run out of peat and everyone will be forced to switch to an alternative. One notable substitution is coco peat (coir).]

**Surface** is sized and baked. It holds onto water. It is a clay product with fine pores. It has similar properties to expanded shale but is smaller, 1/4" instead of 3/4" in size.

Some ferns like to grow on **pea gravel** because it does hold water. **Lava sand** is a reddish brown to black volcanic slag. It has a texture full of holes. Lava sand makes soil nutrients more available to plant root. It provides aeration and porosity to the soil which helps to absorb a fair amount of water.

**Native mulch:** is a fine mulch blend.

**Perlite:** It is quite porous. The cavities in perlite help store nutrients and some moisture. It is slow to decompose. (Expanded perlite is formed when normal pyrite is heated. Heating perlite to a range of 1,560-1,650 °F (850-900 °C) causes the mineral to soften. As it does, the water that's trapped in the volcanic glass vaporizes and tries to escape. This causes the glass to expand to 7-16 times its original volume, and the remaining trapped air changes the color from dark to a brilliant white due to the reflectivity of the remaining water inside the glass.)

**Vermiculite:** is made by heating raw vermiculite, a type of mica. It then expands up to 30 times its original size. This process makes vermiculite take on an accordion shape which expands as it absorbs water, and helps soil retain water, meaning your plants' roots stay moist longer.

**Play Sand:** adds porosity & permeability.

**Blood Meal:** contains 14% Nitrogen. It is a slow-release organic fertilizer that takes time to break down and release nutrients to plants.

**Ironite:** was a common fertilizer made from mine tailings (mining waste, specifically from the Iron King Mine in Arizona.) The active ingredients are Nitrogen, Potash, Calcium, Sulfur, Iron N-P-K Ratio is 1-0-1.

**Microlife Humate:** is high in carbon and lets roots grow well. Excellent amendment for lawns.

**Molasses:** Supports microbe growth. Patrick likes to use it on *Amorphophallus*.

**Ground Limestone:** is used to raise the soil's PH.

**Azomite:** can improve plant and root system growth, crop yields, and quality as well as re-mineralize nutrient depleted soils. (This is a natural mineral product mined in central Utah. This unique deposit was formed when an ancient volcano erupted and its ash settled into a prehistoric seabed creating a complex mineral composition.)

**Kelp Meal:** is derived from Kelp, a type of seaweed that grows in cold, shallow waters. It's rich in nutrients like potassium, nitrogen, and phosphorus, and also contains trace minerals like iron and manganese. It acts like a hormone stimulant similar to Super Thrive.

### **Fungus on your Ferns**

**Darla Harris**

**Rhizoctonia** (*Rhizoctonia solani*) is a fungal pathogen which causes damping-off, root rot, crown rot, and web blight. Darla has lost a lot of plants to this fungus especially tree ferns. "Daconil Fungicide Concentrate" works on it. "Fertlome Liquid Systemic Fungicide" also treats it.

The number one bug on ferns is **scale**. Staghorns get scale the most. *Platyserium elephantotis* is a scale magnet. They do respond to treatment but you must use a light touch. The number two plant that is affected by scale is the Birdsnest Fern, *Asplenium nidus*. However, scale hardly ever appears on *Polypodiums* or *Dryopteris*. There are lots of ways to treat scale which can be white or brown scale. Orthene can be used as a dip. If dipping ferns in a fertilizer solution, make sure the plant does not have scale because it can be spread in the dipping process. Use "BioAdvanced Systemic All in One Rose & Flower Care". It is a fertilizer, insect control and disease control and lasts for 3 months. Takes 2-3 years for the plant to recover. Scale can eat your plant up. Ready to use systemic granules can be added inside the moss. Use a liquid paint sprayer for distribution of a liquid systemic. The Cordless Paint Sprayer is available on Amazon for about \$35. It comes with 3 different heads.

**Grasshoppers** eat tender foliage especially in spring. Diatomaceous earth gets rid of **slugs**.

*Dryopteris* gets **lace bugs** which make yellow spots. If you get **aphids**, use insecticidal soap.

To fertilize sporophytes, use 1/4 strength and an even nitrogen-phosphorus-Potassium ratio. Ferns do not like odd number ratios.

**Cinnamon** can be used for **rot** which can be caused by too much water. It heals the skin and is used as a drying agent.

When **heat** is too much, it can cause heat stress so plants should be put in the shade. This especially happens when nighttime temperatures are too high. Plant will look like it has browning all over it.

Fertilizer Baskets or Fertilizer Box with Cover for Osmocote Orchid Bonsai Flower Plant can be used to put systemic granules in the center of the plant. These are very inexpensive box-like plastic containers available at Amazon.

## Q & A Problems with Ferns

**Question:** What is wrong with my Macho Fern?

**Answer:** It looks as if the fern is planted in a pot with no drainage hole. Macho Ferns are tender tropicals and must have a lot of water because they have a large root system. It needs a pot with a drainage hole.

**Question:** Pteris problem?

**Answer:** There is browning all over the fronds. A tree fell down during the last hurricane so it is getting too much sun & heat.

**Question:** Rabbit Foot Fern is green on one side and absolutely no foot or greenery on the other side of the pot.

**Answer:** Because this fern is an epiphyte, repot the fern in a wire basket with sphagnum moss as medium. This way the rhizomes can grow everywhere. Also, a problem that can occur in rhizomatous ferns is when watering the fern, people only water in the center. The plant in the center can drown and die.

**Question:** Staghorn looks bad.

**Answer:** The plant looks overwatered. Old shields act like a sponge and soak up all the water. Repot and take off the old shields.

Respectfully submitted by Ceil Dow.



Patrick discussing media and fertilizers



Rick gathering tickets for the Raffle



Diane Hudnall won the door prize (*Adiantum fragrans*) for September!



### What's in a name?

I know we all love ferns! Many don't care what the name is and other want to know the name. Why is the name important?

Over the past few months Facebook fern groups have had several debates over the use of common names. The main group is *Platycterium* of which are 18 species that grow around the world, and their plant class is under the name *Platycterium*.

In Australia where several grow there in nature they have some common names for them. *P. superbum* they call Staghorn, the *P. bifucatum* they call elkhorn, the *P. veithcii* they call the Silver Elkhorn, and *P. hillii* they call the Northern Elkhorn. Here in the US we call all 18 species of *Platycterium* with the common name of Staghorn. So, you can see already there is a slight problem.

Last week on one of the *Platycterium* pages a lady here in the US posted what she bought as an elkhorn and was so disappointed with what she received. Apparently, she did an ebay search for elkhorn and

bought this plant and when she received it was not a *Platycterium* at all. She did buy a plant that has that as a common name here in the US. So, was the seller at fault? Was the Buyer at fault? Good question!

This is why it's really helpful to know the name of what you have or want. So, what did she end up with?

- *Micorsorum Punctatum* 'Grandiceps' This plant has been in the trade for at least 40 years, I have grown it that long. Great fern, but defiantly not a *Platycterium*. I'm sure several of you are growing it now. It has gone through several name changes of the years, when I bought my first one it was a *Polypodium polycarpon* 'Grandiceps'. Some call it *Micorsorum polycarpon* 'Grandiceps' and other just *Micorsorum punctatum*. The common name did always follow on this plant, elkhorn.
- It is a rhizome type fern that grows either terrestrially or mounted.
- It gets about 2 foot tall
- Is not cold hardy only taking about 35F, lower than that you do lose all the fronds and its 50/50 if you lose the plant too.
- Medium water, and like bright light.
- Can be grown indoor with adequate light.

Our speaker in November is going to share more information about some of the changes of names that have been happening in this family.

