Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

February 2025 **Vol. 27 No. 02**

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. **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,

I hope everyone and their plants survived our cold weather and snowstorm! Our weather has changed a bit in the last four years, I hope that we get out of this cycle and have a nice normal summer. It has been a challenge to keep our plants happy and ourselves happy too. I have gotten pretty tired of the summer heat the last couple years; I know my plants hate it. So, let's think positively and hope for the best!!

We had a wonderful meeting on the Ferns of El Salvador, presented by our own Daniel Soto! It was very informative, and I loved all the photos! I'm looking forward to hearing from him again on other ferns!! Thank you, Daniel!!

Our February meeting will be a talk on Filmy ferns, presented by Dan Yansura, who is also one of our members that lives in San Fransico. He has spoken to our group several times and in-person pre-Covid on tree ferns. He grows an amazing variety of ferns and is extremely knowledgeable about them all. This will be both in person and virtual

I would like to ask all that plan on or might attend virtually to please make sure you GoToMeeting app is the current one. It takes just a few minutes to update to the newest version, it makes a big difference on getting into the meeting or not! This past month we had issues with the updates going in right as we were having our meeting…

Don't forget that your dues are due! See more information in the Minutes.

We will be having membership drives in March if you would like to help, please contact Christopher and let him know, or me. John Fairy gardens on the 15th of March and Mercer Arboretum on the 21St-22and of March. I have not heard from the Azalia trail yet, so I don't know if we are participating with them yet. Your help is always apricated, plus they are great places to shop and look around.

Our March meeting has not been set for our speaker yet!

The April meeting needs some input from you guys. The Judson Robinson building is closed due to Easter. We could have a virtual meeting maybe the week before if we want to. I need to know what we want to do ASAP to secure a speaker. We will discuss this at the February meeting. If you are not attending and would like to attend in April virtually, send me a text or email.

Our May meeting is going to be given by Adam Black on the Ferns of Uruguay. We also will be holding our field trip the day before and Adam will lead this for us. See the Minuets for more information.

June is our Summer Party. We need a volunteer to host us! Please let me know if you are able and would like to do this for the Society. Get with me at the meeting or text/email/phone me.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting!!

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

November Door Prize:

Cyrtomium littorale

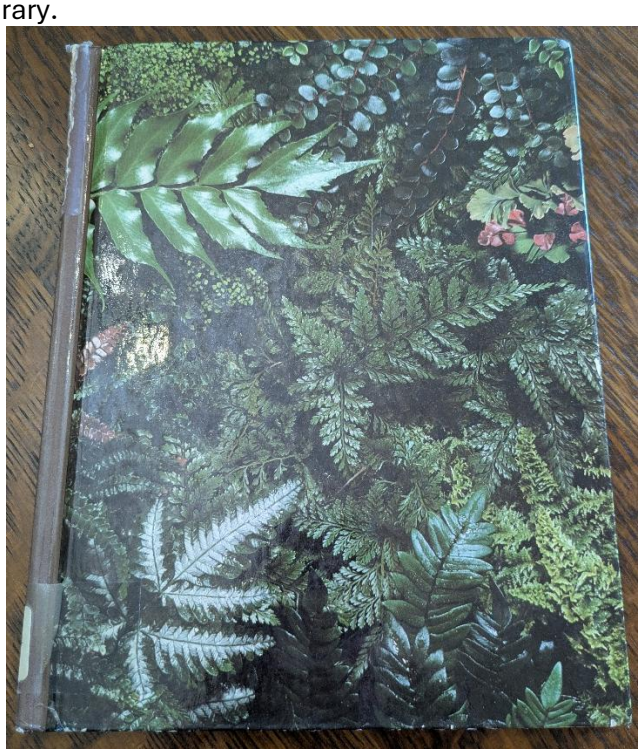
Daniel Soto (winner) and Darla

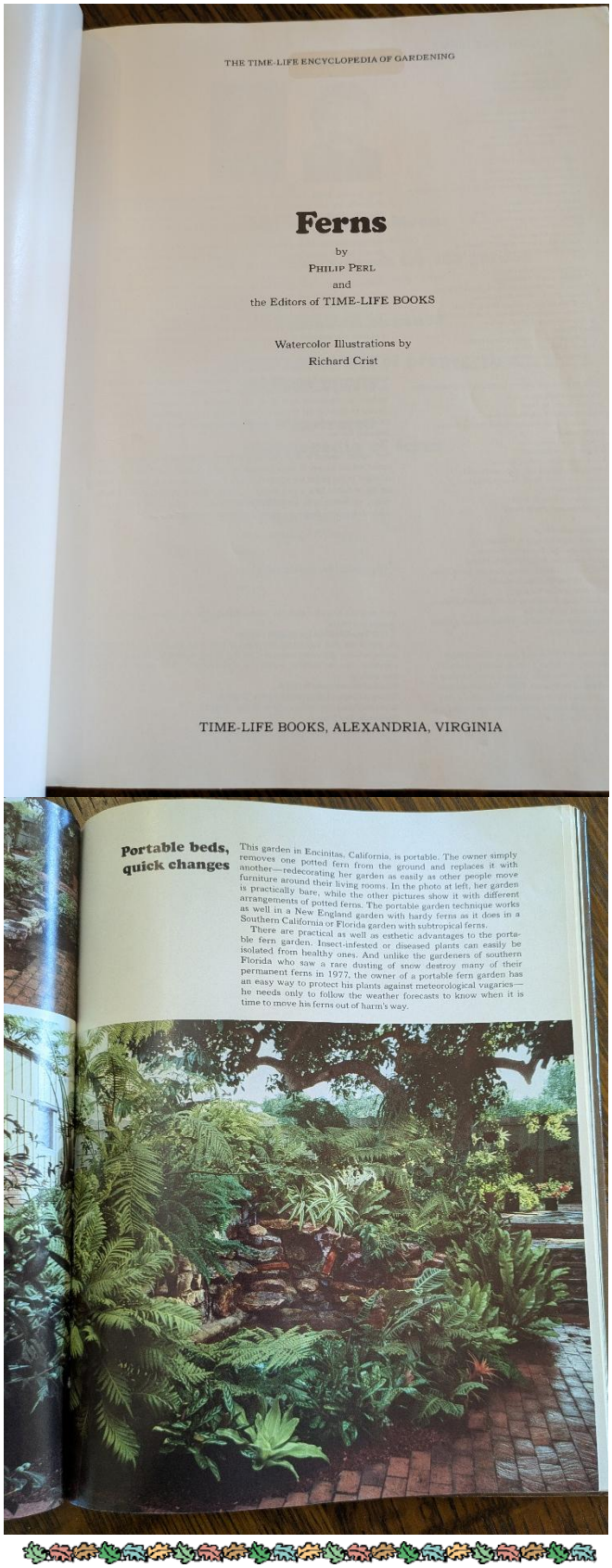
From the Library:

Ferns: Encyclopedia of Gardening: The Time-Life encyclopedia of gardening; by Philip Perl; Time-Life Books, 1977; 159 pages illustrations (some color);

"Ferns" by Philip Perl is a comprehensive guide that delves into the fascinating world of ferns, offering readers an in-depth look at these ancient and diverse plants. Published as part of the Time-Life Encyclopedia of Gardening series, the book is well-structured and richly illustrated, making it accessible to both novice gardeners and experienced horticulturists. Perl's writing is clear and informative, covering a wide range of topics including the biology, cultivation, and care of ferns. The book also provides practical advice on how to incorporate ferns into various garden settings, highlighting their aesthetic appeal and ecological benefits.

One of the best things about "Ferns" is the high-quality photographs, which can help you identify different fern species and understand their unique characteristics. Perl's passion for these plants is evident throughout the book, as he shares interesting historical and cultural insights about ferns. This is a good introduction to ferns. It's a good volume to loan to a friend who's just starting out on their fern journey. In my perusal of used bookstores, library sales, and garage sales around the country this is probably the most common fern book I run across. So, if you want it, it's not hard to find. Or just check it out from the society library.





THE TIME-LIFE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GARDENING

Ferns

by
PHILIP PERL
and
the Editors of TIME-LIFE BOOKS

Watercolor Illustrations by
Richard Crist

TIME-LIFE BOOKS, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Portable beds, quick changes

This garden in Encinitas, California, is portable. The owner simply removes one potted fern from the ground and replaces it with another—redecorating her garden as easily as other people move furniture around their living rooms. In the photo at left, her garden is practically bare, while the other pictures show it with different arrangements of potted ferns. The portable garden technique works as well in a New England garden with hardy ferns as it does in a Southern California or Florida garden with subtropical ferns.

There are practical as well as esthetic advantages to the portable fern garden. Insect-infested or diseased plants can easily be isolated from healthy ones. And unlike the gardeners of southern Florida who saw a rare dusting of snow destroy many of their permanent ferns in 1977, the owner of a portable fern garden has an easy way to protect his plants against meteorological vagaries—he needs only to follow the weather forecasts to know when it is time to move his ferns out of harm's way.

The February Meeting:
Filmy Ferns - what are they??

Filmy ferns make up over 300 hundred ferns mostly around the tropical equator. They are easily identified by the fact they are only one cell thick. This means in nature they grow in very high humidity areas. For us to grow them they do require a terrarium. This is going to be a exciting program for those that have never seen or heard of them before. For those that have heard of them, this will still be a very informative talk, many beautiful plants and even more in the trade so they can be enjoyed by many.

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 January Meeting

January 19, 2025

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

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

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:03pm by Darla Harris. Approximately 12 members were present.

The "Go to Meeting" was streamed to members who could not make it to the in-person meeting. Three people attended the meeting online.

Membership fees are due now. Dues are $15 per couple, $10 for a single person and $5 for a student. April meeting falls on Easter so when do we want to meet? In May, there is a field trip to Monument Hill State Park near LaGrange, Texas. Adam Black will be the guide through the park and present ferns from Uruguay on the following day, Sunday. We should put the field trip to Houston Botanic Garden for next year because very few ferns are on display. San Antonio Botanic Gardens is renovating their fern grotto. In a few years, it will be fabulous.

The California fire affected a 90 year old member of The Fern Society. He is now living with his son.

Mike Moody passed away. He was a good fern grower.

We will need a place to host the June party.

"FERNS of EL SALVADOR"

Presented by: Daniel Flores Soto

El Salvador is small country of 8,124 sq miles. The population is around 6,029,976. It has a tropical climate with pronounced wet and dry seasons.

El Salvador has 27% tree cover, which includes natural ecosystems and shaded coffee plantations.

Vegetation includes cloud forests, mangroves, pine forests, crescentia savannas, broadleaf forest and scrublands. There are 3,992 native plants or endemic species. There are 28 families and 398 species of ferns.

Montecristo National Park

With over 4,876 acres of forests at altitudes ranging from 730 to 2,418 meters above sea level (MASL), Montecristo National Park is located in the department of Santa Ana. Vegetation is composed of semi-deciduous tropical forest at lower altitudes and pine-oak forests at the middle altitudes with cloud forest at the top.

Research about distribution and diversity in Montecristo National Park in 2013. The research was conducted in July and December 2012 and January 2013, covering the three forest strata of the park, based on the altitudinal gradient. The sampling points were selected at random, with which a total of 36 plots (12 plots per gradient) of 50x20 m (1,000 m^2) were made, covering an area of 36,000 m^2 (387,500 ft^2) respectively. In each plot, all individuals belonging to the paraphyletic group ***Pteridophyta*** were observed and identified, while species that are difficult to identify in the field were collected and classified thoroughly at the end of the sampling using the corresponding guides, and the support of the Ms.Gabriel Céren.

The results showed that during the scouting in the cloud forest, a total of 12 families, 22 genera and 39 species were determined: ***Dryopteridaceae*** family with 15 species, ***Polypodiaceae*** family with a total of 6 genera, and the least abundant family was ***Dennstaedtiaceae*** represented only by three specimens of ***Dennstaedtia*** spinosa.

In the Pine-Oak Forest, a total of 6 families, 7 genera and 11 species were determined, ***Blechnaceae*** with 2 species was the most diverse family, being also the most varied family with the same number of genera while the least abundant family was ***Polypodiaceae*** represented by ***Pleopeltis mexicana*** with only one individual found.

In the Semi-decidous tropical forest, a total of 6 families, 7 genera and 13 species were determined: ***Pteridaceae*** family with 6 species and 6 genera was the most diverse family found, Lygodiaceae family was the most abundant only represented by ***Lygodium venustum***, a characteristic species of this kind of forest. The least abundant family was ***Dennstaedtiaceae*** only with three specimens of ***Pteridium aquilinum*** found.

Alsophila tryoniana- Stem up to 26 ft high. Frond about 8 ft long. Habitat: Cloud forest. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua.

Cyathea divergens Kunze var. tuerckheimii- Stem up to 40 ft high. Frond about 13 ft long.

Habitat: Cloud forest, rainforest. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Belize.

Dicksonia sellowiana- Stem 9 to 19 ft high. Frond about 12 ft long. Habitat: Cloud forest, Pine-oak forest. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Uruguay.

Other tree ferns are ***Alsophila salvinii*** and ***Sphaeropteris horrida***.

Elaphoglossum peltatum- It is the only species of the genus with the sterile frond that look very distinctive. Habitat : Epiphyte in moss trunks or fallen branches, cloud forest. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, West Indies, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana.

Elaphoglossum ellipticifolium- This species is characterized by having a short crawling rhizome with whole scales marginally. Habitat: Epiphyte, cloud forest. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras.

Elaphoglossum erinaceum- This species is part of a complicated group, and it is distinguished by its linear scales in the margin and middle vein of the frond. Habitat : Epiphyte and rupicolous, cloud forest. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, West Indies.

Arachnoides denticulata- It is the only species of this genus in El Salvador. Habitat: Cloud forest.

Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, West Indies, Guyana, Brazil.

Selaginella martensii- It is characterized by having thick, straight rhizophores, and an almost a metallic green color. Habitat: Cloud forest. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama.

Marattia excavate- Sporangia are elliptical structures that are partially open in two parts. Habitat : Cloud forest.

Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama.

Botrychium virginianum- It has a single axis with sporangia. Habitat: Cloud forest. Distribution: Canada, USA, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, West Indies, Guyana, Brazil, Europe, Asia.

Pteris quadriaurita- It is characterized by its completely free venation. Habitat : Cloud forest, Pine-Oak forest, coffee plantations. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, West Indies, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, French Guiana, Argentina, Africa, Asia.

Lygodium venustum- Climber with frond of indefinite growth. Habitat : Semi-deciduous tropical forest, disturbed areas. Distribution: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, West Indies, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, French Guiana, Paraguay.

Anemia salvadorensis- It is distinguished from other Anemia by having patent to slightly ascending fertile pinna similar to the sterile ones in size. Habitat: Rainforest, disturbed areas. Distribution: Endemic.

Question: How is the accessiblility to the National Park. Answer: Everyone is welcomed.

Question: What is a cloud forest? Answer: 1900' above sea level. Water comes from cloud condensation.

Question: Can these ferns grow here? Answer: Some plants in El Salvador can live here but most cannot survive a freeze. Most plants that grow in the rain forest cannot survive Houston weather. Tree ferns would be really hard to grow here.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:13pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ceil Dow.

Daniel Soto (front) and the attendees of the Jan. meeting

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. hillii

The Bifurcatum complex includes P. bifurcatum, P. hillii, P. veitchii and P. willinckii which some consider to be varieties or subspecies of P. bifurcatum. Here we will treat them as separate species, which is how they are currently known as. This complex is close in many ways including the base or shield fronds are slightly to moderately lobed to very tall. The foliage, fertile fronds are erect to pendent with a short stipe and forking fronds. They also all have the same vascular bundle, which is shown in a cross section of a cut fertile frond that is in a circle. Each of the four in this

complex are represented by their own DNA markers so that is how we put them into the correct species on the questionable ones.

P. hillii for me is generally pretty easy to tell apart from the other by is shield frond, it is entire kidney-shaped that hugs close to the host plant, with a wedge-shaped or fan-shaped, wide fronds. They are forked with short, stocked fronds, and stipe. Like the others in the group the sori are on the fork part of the fronds.

This is an easy Platycerium to grow, as is all really in this group. They are generally more forgiving on water and temperature. The requirements are moderate amounts of water but can take a bit of a dry out or overwatering occasionally. Morning sun, and bright conditions are good, but can be grown shaded. It can take a light freeze without killing the plant. This is a pup producing staghorn so does not have to be grown from spore.

This plant does well mounted and in hanging baskets where it can form into a large ball. It's a lovely plant with wide fronds and a very compact shape.

P. hillii 'Norwegiense'

P. hillii ‘Plumlia’ (spelling on tag is incorrect)

P. hillii ‘Panama’

P. hillii ‘Panama’