

April 2025

Vol. 27 No. 04

<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!!! NO MEETING IN APRIL!!!**

We will resume normal meetings on May 18!!

Adam Black will be presenting our program on the Ferns of Uruguay. Those that know Adam know he knows his stuff! He’s a great speaker and a wonderful person. So please plan on being at this meeting. More in the May newsletter

**Field Trip on May 17<sup>th</sup>!!** Adam Black has agreed to lead our field trip. We are discussing the best spot with the most native ferns to been seen that is both an easy walk and close to Houston. See more in the May newsletter.

We would like to welcome our New Members that signed up at the Mercer Botanical Gardens during March Mart!! Looking forward to seeing you in May for a great program.

Thank you to everyone that came to/signed in to the March meeting. What a mess!! The Judsen Robinson Jr Community Center forgot us! Thankfully they were able to get there to open up for us only 30 minutes late, but we still had setup to do. With everyone helping everyone it was done in a fast manner. Thank you!!! This has only happened one other time and then we had to move our meeting place and Carolynne White was giving that talk and her home was around the corner so we all drove over to her house. What a great group of people we have in our Society!!

We would like to formally welcome Carolynne White as our Societies Vice President to replace Craig Jackson

that had to step down for personal reasons. So we now have a full board again! Thank you!

We will be having our **June Party on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June** at the home of Bob and Anne Swanson. They graciously offered to host this year. Due to Father’s Day the party will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in June so mark your calendars. We will have the refreshment list at the May meeting. Remember you can bring your significant other with you to the party or a friend if you would like. We want everyone to have an enjoyable time.

In July, we will try again with our program on Filmy Ferns by Dan Yansura. We will do a practice session beforehand to make sure we don’t have any hangups this time. I know there is a lot of interest in these very unique, one-cell thick ferns that work so well in a terrarium. We will try to have some examples at the meeting so you can see them other than just on the PowerPoint screen.

I want to suggest to all the Facebook users out there that the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society has a group page, and we do update the page with speakers, issues, and of course ferns. So please join! It is a way for fast communication!

We will be putting the membership booklet together to give out to the members. It’s been a while, but we are back on track now. If you have a photo you would like us to use, please send it to me or Christopher Goodgame, our membership chair.

We had our first of two Board meetings in March; please read the minutes to catch up on what we are thinking for the society for the remainder of the year.

Thank you everyone and enjoy your April and the great weather while it lasts!!!

*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](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).



**Quarter 1 2025 Treasury Report:**

Summary of accounts		JANUARY	
<i>Checking and Savings</i>			
	Ending balance last statement	Ending balance this statement	
	585.46	585.46	
	13,481.71	13,481.82	
	<u>\$14,067.17</u>	<u>\$14,067.28</u>	
Summary of accounts		FEBRUARY	
<i>Checking and Savings</i>			
	Ending balance last statement	Ending balance this statement	
	585.46	682.46	
	13,481.82	13,481.93	
	<u>\$14,067.28</u>	<u>\$14,164.39</u>	
Summary of accounts		MARCH	
<i>Checking and Savings</i>			
	Ending balance last statement	Ending balance this statement	
	682.46	717.46	
	13,481.93	13,482.04	
	<u>\$14,164.39</u>	<u>\$14,229.50</u>	



**2025 Officers and Committees:**

- President: Darla Harris
- Vice President: Carolynne White
- 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:**

*1kg Sphagnum Moss Bundle*



**The March Meeting**

March 16, 2025

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 2:30pm by Darla Harris. Approximately 18 members were present. The "Go to Meeting" was streamed to members who could not make it to the in-person meeting. Ken Warren attended the meeting online.

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

TGCFS needs a Vice President. Caroline White has volunteered to fill this position.

Anne & Bob Swanson have volunteered to host the June party. The party will be held at the following address:

5227 Starkridge Drive, Houston, Texas 77035  
Westbury area, near Chimney Rock and West Belfort.

**A Study of the *Platyserium bifurcatum* Complex Presented by Darla Harris**

Varieties of *Platyserium bifurcatum* were once considered one species but now has been broken down into 4. Variations are getting more complicated because of hybridization. DNA studies reflect the mother parent, so Dad is not identified.

There are 4 distinct varieties: *P. bifurcatum*, *P. willinckii*, *P. wallechii*, and *P. veitchii*.

**Vascular Bundle Variations** Darla cut into the stipe (base of the fertile frond) of *P. hillii* and *P. bifurcatum* so that the members could see the vascular bundles with a jeweler's loupe. The vascular bundles are arranged circularly around the inside of the stipe. Different species, like *P. alcicornis*, have a different vascular bundle. They will have an extra row of vascular bundles in the middle of the cross section of the stipe which depends on the maturity of the frond.

Helpful hint: Growers can use a jeweler loupe to tell if spores are ripe. Unripe spores are green.

### **Fertile Fronds**

The name bifurcatum means forked frond. *P. bifurcatum* is native to Australia and has a pendulous look to it. There is an upright version., *P. 'Netherlands'* is a cultivar. Fronds look very similar, but it is upright with wide fronds. *P. hillii* has very wide fronds with short, forked fingers. *P. bifurcatum* has deep forks that look like long fingers. *P. willinckii* have fronds with very elongated fingers.

### **Shield Fronds**

*P. bifurcatum* have fertile fronds and shield fronds. Shield fronds are short and form an open basket. The basket collects debris and then breaks it down for useable food. *P. hillii* does not have much of a basket. There is no opening in the shield to form an open basket. The closed shields usually indicate a fern from a rain forest which prevents it from getting too much water. *P. vietchii* is a lithophyte which means it grows on rocks. It has a huge open basket to collect water. It is very draught tolerant. The white hair on its fronds helps to reflect sunlight. *P. willinckii* has tall shield fronds. Back shields can grow to 1' - 1 1/2' tall when mature. Fertile fronds can grow to 6' long. Native to Indonesia and the Philippines. *P. elephantotis* is native to the north of the equator in Africa. *P. bifurcatum 'Mt. Lewis'* is named for where it was collected, Mt Lewis National Park of northern Queensland, Australia . DNA verified that it is *P. bifurcatum* but it looks like *P. willinckii* with fronds that can vary from narrow to broad.

Ruby suggests that all plants in the raffle be labeled with at least a common name, but a botanical name would be most welcomed.

Respectfully submitted by Ceil Dow



## **TGCFS Board Meeting Minutes**

Attended by:

President:	Darla Harris
Vice President:	Carolynne White
Secretary:	Ceil Dow
Treasurer:	Larry Rucker
Member-at-Large:	Anne Swanson Chris Goodgame
Library:	Fred Robinson

Larry Rucker filed 2024 taxes. He paid the accountant \$200.00 this year. Last year, he had to pay \$250.00. The tax numbers will be listed in the upcoming newsletter.

Budget Discussion: To date nothing has been spent on programs or speakers. Darla will ask Adam Black for his presentation fee. Last year, we gave him a book on Platyceriums.

There will be no meeting in the month of April because it falls on Easter and the Community Center will be closed. In May, there will be a field trip on Saturday and then a presentation by Adam Black on Sunday. In June, there will be the party. In July, the Filmy Fern presentation will be given by Dan Yansura. The months of August – October are open.

The following are ideas for the upcoming Presentations & Programs:

\*Azolla- Tropical Water Fern. Used to improve soil. It easily sprouts from spore in a petri dish. It will right itself even if it is planted upside down. It is easy to grow with a lot of water circulation.

\*Larry once decoupage Styrofoam Christmas balls with holiday napkins. We could do this with fern napkins.

\*Can etch glass with a certain chemical.

\*Can rub a leaf print on an apron.

\*Using a brick with large holes, members could plant different kinds of epiphytic ferns in the hole using Chilean moss as a substrate. May use a raffle to determine who gets first dibs at picking their plant for the craft.

\*Creating sealed terrariums with small ferns. Ceil Dow will look into how much the sealed terrariums would cost. May do this one in August.

The following are ideas for Speaker Topics:

\*October could be on "Winter Care for Ferns". We could discuss what makes it through different freeze levels. Protecting Platyceriums in the winter would also be covered.

Approximately \$1500 is allocated for the operating budget to be spent on presentations, craft programs & projects.

Epiphytic ferns could be a speaker topic for next year.

Ceil Dow made the motion to accept \$1500 for the yearly budget. Chris Goodgame seconded the motion. It was unanimously accepted.

Chris Goodgame asked if the society wanted to stick to the "GoToMeeting" or do we want to go to "Zoom"? He will compare prices. People have tried to go to the "GoToMeeting" but have encountered problems. Many people do not have a problem with "Zoom".

Another board meeting will be scheduled for later in the year.

Meeting adjourned at 5:07pm.

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/>



### From the Library:

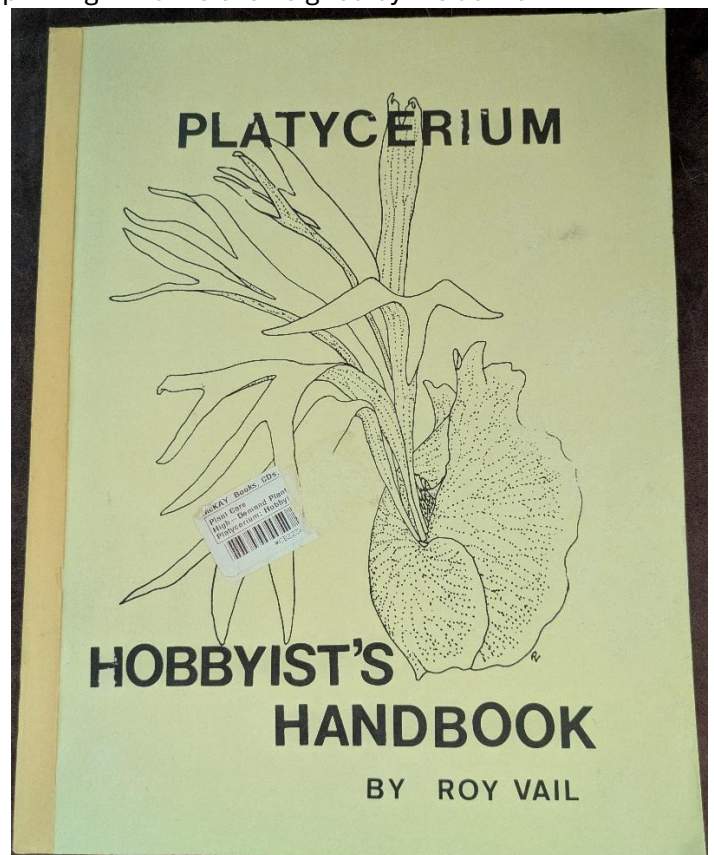
Platynerium Hobbyist's Handbook; by Roy Vail; Desert Biological Publications, 1984; 174 pages, illustrated.

Since we've been studying staghorns, let's take a look at "Platynerium Hobbyist's Handbook" by Roy Vail. The book meticulously covers all 18 species of Platynerium,

providing detailed descriptions, distribution maps, and cultivation techniques. This has a lot of practical advice on mounting, treating for pests and diseases, and propagating these unique plants. The inclusion of contributions from various growers adds depth and a range of perspectives, making it a comprehensive resource for both beginners and experienced hobbyists

One of the standout features of this handbook is its user-friendly approach. The clear, concise writing style, coupled with black-and-white illustrations and a color photo of the giant P. Wandae, makes the information accessible and engaging. Vail's passion for Platynerium is evident, and his thorough explanations ensure readers can confidently care for their ferns.

This title is now out of print. Looking around the web I see that most copies are over \$150. But just keep looking. I got my copy for a small fraction of that at a used bookstore in Tennessee. It is the seventeenth printing. And it's even signed by the author!





## A Study of Platyceriums

By Darla Harris

### Platycerium veitchii

#### Bifucatum complex

Platycerium veitchii is an Australian native growing in the central part of the country in very rocky landscape. In nature this species grows on rocks in the canyons. There it receives a lot of sun during the day and less water than other parts of Australia. It is a medium sized fern and works very well in sunnier location being equipped with the white hairs on the fronds that help reflect the sunlight. In these sunny locations the fern gets very grey to silver on its fronds.

The P. veitchii puts on a nice basket type shields/base frond with new growth being a light grey/green color that quickly turns to a paper brown color. These shields are very forked, and some cultivars can be several inches tall (10-18") getting larger with the age of the plant. The fertile frond grows very upright and stays that way until it's time for the oldest fronds to start to fall off.

There is a lot of variation within P. veitchii, so you have several cultivars. It grows very isolated to the other platycerium that call Australia home, so you do not see hybrids in nature just cultivars. The Auburn River area hails some of the most renown cultivars there are.

I find P. veitchii to be a slower grower than the rest of the complex, but very durable plant to grow. It will take shade to full sun (must be hardened off to the sun), moderate water and can take a drought. It does produce nice pups and does nice on both a board mounted or in a hanging basket grown as a ball form.

The most commonly grown form is P. veitchii 'Lemoinei' which is a common trade fern here in the United States. It was discovered growing in a nursery in France and its name was Lemoine & Son Nurseries in 1924. It is defiantly in the bifurcatum complex and has been called a cross between P veitchii and P. willinckii for many years, because of the fronds not standing erect like a typical veitchii does. It could also just be a cultivar of P veitchii. Either way, it is a nice fern to grow and easy to get.



*P. Veitchii 'Auburn River'*



*P veitchii* 'Auburn River' thin form



*P veitchii* 'Lemoinei' showing downward fertile frond growth

