

FERN SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER

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September/October 2011



Fern Society of Victoria Inc.

ABN 85 086 216 704

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Objectives of the Fern Society of Victoria

To bring together persons interested in ferns and allied plants

To promote the gathering and dissemination of information about ferns

To stimulate public interest in ferns

To promote the conservation of ferns and their habitats

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Subscriptions

Single	\$17.00
Pensioner/student	\$14.00
Family	\$19.00
Pensioner family	\$16.00
Overseas	\$25.00 (overseas subscription

payments by international bank cheque in \$Aus, by airmail please)

Subscriptions fall due on 1 July each year

Meeting venues

The Kevin Heinze Garden Centre, 39 Wetherby Road, Doncaster [Melway 47 H1]

Other meetings as advertised in this Newsletter

Timetable for evening general meetings

7:30 Pre-meeting activities – sale of ferns, spore, books, merchandise and special effort tickets. Also library loans and lots of conversation.

8:00 General meeting

8:15 Workshops and demonstrations

9:15 Fern identification and pathology, special effort draw

9:45 Workshops and demonstrations

10:00 Close

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are the personal views of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Society, nor does mention of a product constitute endorsement.

Next Meetings

7:30 pm, Thursday 15 September 2011

Kevin Heinz Centre

Warren Simpson: Ferns of Tasmania

Fern competition: Tasmanian fern

Sunday 23 October 2011

Excursion: Fern Acres Nursery, Kinglake West; Wirrawilla Walk; Murrindindee

On Sunday 23 October we meet at 11 am at Robin and Eddie Sabljak's Fern Acres Nursery, 1052 Whittlesea-Kinglake Road, Kinglake West. It is opposite the Kinglake West Primary School. Melways reference Map 610 N11

We will lunch at the picnic ground opposite Fern Acres (coin operated BBQ). After lunch we will drive though Toolangi, take the Myers Creek Rd turn-off, then the Sylvia Creek Rd turn-off which leads onto the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk.

The final visit is to Murrindindi Cascades which are further up Sylvia Creek Rd/Murrindindi Rd.

See page 10 of this newsletter for a list of ferns previously noted for the two sites. (NB no Thursday/Kevin Heinze Centre meeting in October)



Above: *Dryopteris felix-mas*. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

Cover image: *Gymnocarpum disjunctum*. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

(see article on deciduous ferns starting on page 6 of this newsletter)

President's Note

Can you believe this? (hardly believed my eyes when I saw it). Browsing through plant websites I came across a website called eHow Home. In their Gardening & Plants information pages updated Dec 16 2010, in a section titled: What are the Different Kind of Ferns? they started their list with the following:

Asparagus Ferns

Asparagus ferns include three common types of fern. *Asparagus meyeri*, or Foxtail fern, has bright green shoots with erect stems, while *Asparagus sprengeri*, or emerald fern, produces thorny green fronds with sharp, narrow leaves. *Asparagus plumosus*, or lacy fern, has very fine fronds covered with hair. While you can grow asparagus fern on the open ground, install it in a container as it is an invasive plant and will spread to attack nearby flora.

Hope they didn't fool too many people or maybe it was their intention to have a laugh at readers' expense?

We mentioned in the last Newsletter that Gay & I will be absent from the August meeting, and probably also the September one, but we look forward to seeing lots of members at the excursion to the Kinglake area in October. Members are also encouraged to come along to the 2011 Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday November 17th, to have their say in the running of FSV and their preferences for Society activities (and it's hoped that some new nominations for Committee positions will be forthcoming beforehand – please contact Secretary Barry White).

When I spoke about ferns to an Environmental Seminar organized by Manningham City Council a couple of weeks ago a very interested audience asked lots of questions and clearly appreciated the opportunity to learn more about ferns. After I had introduced the subject of conservation of fern habitats, and promotion of the possibility of rehabilitation projects in sites where diversity of fern species has been reduced substantially there was obvious sentiment in favour. Some of the attendees talked of their involvement as volunteers in native vegetation conservation activities at various locations, and how they would see a place for more information about ferns and how to conserve them. Chances are that in the future we'll be invited to visit some of the locations they are involved with, and consulted on the subject of Victoria's indigenous ferns. It may well be that some will visit FSV meetings (many collected the FSV website address on the night), which would be satisfying for us, of course.

There is one environmental rehabilitation project, where we understand ferns were identified as a priority, which has been under way for some time on the Mornington Peninsula. Gay & I have been talking on and off since we heard of this project about approaching the group managing it to seek an invitation for a FSV visit (it's not open to the public). We're thinking that it might be about time to make this approach – perhaps we may be able to arrange an excursion in the autumn.

Barry Stagoll

Editor's Note

My inbox of forthcoming Newsletter articles is now running pretty close to empty, so please if you have a short article or news item that would be of wider interest to FSV members, please put pen to paper, or fire up the word processor, and send me your writings for the next issue. Email is the best method of sending me Newsletter content (articles or images, or both if at all possible), and my email address is rwilson@museum.vic.gov.au or give me a ring on 9597 0742 if email is not your preferred method.

The last Newsletter of the year should come out just prior to the Annual General Meeting and

associated fern sales night on 19 November, so members who know in advance which fern species they will bring as sale items could send me a list (even if it is incomplete) for inclusion in the next Newsletter. I'm sure I am not the only member who would be interested to see a list of some of the fern species that will be available for purchase on the night, so please send me your lists if you can.

Lastly, I need to remind those who have not yet paid their membership fees for the current year to please help the Society and do so now. See page 13 for further details.

Robin Wilson



Blechnum penna-marina. Photo: Barry White.

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Deciduous Ferns

Barry Stagoll

Summary of a talk given at the July 2011

Fern Society of Victoria Meeting

What is a Deciduous Plant?

All plants, in common with other organisms, shed spent cellular material regularly and grow fresh. 1

Comprehensive shredding of foliage periodically/seasonally, in response to seasonal changes in the environment they inhabit, is what defines a deciduous plant.

Non-deciduous (“evergreen”) species do not shed comprehensively, although they sporadically part-

shed foliage. Many plant species shed leaves, phyllodes, or needles in minor quantities more-or-less continuously (for instance, eucalypts).

“Semi-deciduous” species fall in between, in gardener’s parlance (although it’s not a scientific category as such) – they retain a proportion of foliage supporting photo-synthesis at all times, but their appearance changes more noticeably at times than is the case with non-deciduous plants.

Deciduous trees and shrubs

A great many different species are deciduous, including numbers of coniferous species such as the famous ‘Dawn Redwood’ from China (Metasequoia)

Although most of (continued next page)
our native



Matteuccia struthiopteris. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

Deciduous Ferns (continued)

Australian plants are “evergreen” (which can be a misnomer because not all plants commonly described in that way have green foliage anyway) some are deciduous.

Add seasonal interest and colour to a landscape – many are popular in gardens for that reason.

Deciduous ferns

Plants, in common with other organisms, shed spent cellular material regularly and grow fresh. Many plant species shed leaves, phyllodes, or needles in minor quantities more-or-less continuously, and are referred to as Evergreen or Non-deciduous. Those plant species described as Deciduous cast off leaf material comprehensively in response to seasonal changes in the environment they inhabit, and produce new leaves in a later part of the seasonal cycle. It's common for such plants to drop their leaves in the autumn, but some species normally do so at other times of the year.

Like trees and flowering plants, certain fern

species also are deciduous, discarding their old fronds in their entirety. Others tend to retain just a few old fronds right up to the emergence of new croziers, and may be described as semi-deciduous. Most deciduous species inhabit the northern hemisphere, in cooler regions, going into dormancy over winter (like plants of other orders). Many are partly rather than fully deciduous

Only a small proportion of fern species are truly deciduous, which correlates with the fact that the majority of species inhabit warmer regions

Deciduous Ferns of other parts of the world

Deciduous ferns found in other parts of the world include:

Adiantum aleuticum - Western maidenhair (Western N America – to the far north)

Athyrium niponicum – Japan (*Athyrium niponicum* ‘Pictum’ known as Japanese Painted Fern)

(continued next page)

Variations in the timing for individual species from year to year (along with variations in the timing of such events as flower bud and leaf bud formation and opening) are used as input data in scientific research relevant to examination of issues such as climate change. Phenology (the rigorous study of the growth of plants and their responses through the seasons to changes in factors such as ground moisture, hours of sunlight, and temperatures) goes beyond mere observation to provide chronologically-ordered data for selected plant populations in selected locations.

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Deciduous Ferns (continued)

Botrychium multifidum – Grape fern (North America)

Cyathea mexicana (formerly *Alsophila firma*) – (Deciduous tree fern (in summer - Mexico)

Dryopteris expansa - Dryopteridaceae (Wood fern family, North America)

Dryopteris filix-mas (Europe)

Gymnocarpium disjunctum -Dryopteridaceae – Western oak fern (E Asia & western N America)

Matteuccia struthiopteris - Dryopteridaceae - Ostrich fern

Matteuccia struthiopteris var. *pennsylvanica* - (temperate Canada and E USA)

Osmunda claytoniana – Interrupted fern

Osmunda regalis – Royal fern (Europe & N America, with a form as far south as S Africa)

Osmunda japonicum – (Japan)

Osmundastrum cinnamomeum (Cinnamon fern E Asia & Americas)

Phegopteris connectilis – Northern beech fern (N America)

Woodsia polystichoides – Holly fern woodsia

Woodwardia areolata – Blechnaceae - Northern beech fern (N America)

Woodwardia fimbriata - Giant chain fern. (British Columbia (s. coastal islands) to California, Nevada and Arizona).

Australian Deciduous Species?

Not so many Australian ferns can be classed as deciduous:

Cheilanthes species could qualify as semi-deciduous.

Davallia denticulata, *Davallia pyxidata* and *Davallia solida* may shed all their fronds in a

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stressful dry season, and are arguably deciduous.

Marsilea sp. and *Isoetes* sp. (closely related to true ferns) are clearly deciduous in response to seasonal stress in dry periods.

***Osmunda regalis* : the “Gold Standard” for the garden?**

That’s what I prefer to call it, anyhow!

A fabulous changing display throughout the seasons: commencing with the emergence of fiddleheads covered with downy pale scales, slightly bluish in colour, in spring; shooting up a “shuttlecock” of vibrant pale green immature fronds in the next few weeks; fertile fronds with pale green spore-cases turning golden as the spore ripens; the fronds extending and the pinnae enlarging until the plant is a beautiful green fan shape through summer; suddenly beginning to turn to pale yellow, then later to bronze, then to

(continued next page)

Deciduous Ferns (continued)

burgundy, and eventually brown as they collapse when the fern enters the dormant season.

And easy to grow and care for.

Osmunda regalis grows readily from spore (as long as it's fresh enough to be viable – which is only for a matter of days when it matures and begins to shed naturally from the spore cases).

Like many ferns, it loves moist ground (but being deciduous it wouldn't care much if there was little free moisture in the ground in its dormant season – as in the snowy/frosty conditions of its native origins). In our climate especially, the way to grow it is to place it beside a body of water, or a 'soak' or boggy area (or a stream, if you had one), and it will be quite happy. In our experience, there's no particular difficulty with high temperatures or wind in the summer, as long as the roots are in a generally moist situation. The ideal is beside a garden pond (it can be planted right at the water's edge, or even in the shallows), and, even better, it will colonise other ground in the vicinity where the moisture level is encouraging enough.

It can be grown in a pot, but it is quite a good-sized fern, and will ultimately need to be in quite a big pot – and, of course, it will need to be kept well-watered through most of the year. Probably the best technique would be to place a big saucer



Osmunda regalis with spore. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

under the pot, and keep it filled with water to act as a well.

A disclaimer re the South African form of *Osmunda regalis*: This form in our experience is not as easy to cultivate. It seems to want to go deciduous in the warm months and enter its growing season in the cool months (ours is nice and green right now), although some years it doesn't really go fully dormant at all. Ours is not a good grower – we've had it for years in the same area as the European form but it's still tiny – in fact it usually goes pretty much unnoticed. Look for the European one if you want the better performer.



Osmunda regalis by pond. Photo: Barry Stagoll.

Barry Stagoll

Ferns currently recorded from Warrawilla and Murrindindi Cascades

Barry White

<i>Botanical name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Warrawilla</i>	<i>Murrindindi Cascades</i>
<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	Mother Spleenwort	X	
<i>Asplenium flabellifolium</i>	Necklace Fern		X
<i>Blechnum cartilagineum</i>	Gristle Fern		X
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>	Lance Water Fern	X	
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i>	Ray Water Fern	X	
<i>Blechnum nudum</i>	Fishbone Water Fern	X	X
<i>Blechnum watsii</i>	Hard Water Fern	X	X
<i>Ctenopteris heterophylla</i>	Gipsy Fern		X
<i>Calochlaena dubia</i>	False Bracken		X
<i>Cyathea australis</i>	Rough Tree Fern	X	X
<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>	Soft Tree Fern	X	X
<i>Gleichenia microphylla</i>	Scrambling Coral Fern		X
<i>Grammitis billardieri</i>	Finger Fern	X	X
<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	Batswing Fern	X	X
<i>Hymenophyllum australe</i>	Austral Filmy Fern	X	X
<i>H. cupressiforme</i>	Common Filmy Fern	X	X
<i>H. flabellatum</i>	Shiny Filmy Fern	X	
<i>Hymenophyllum rarum</i>	Narrow Filmy Fern	X	
<i>Hypolepis rugosula</i>	Ruddy Ground Fern	X	
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>	Kangaroo Fern	X	X
<i>Pellaea falcata</i>	Sickle Fern		X
<i>Polyphlebium venosum</i>	Veined Bristle Fern	X	
<i>Polystichum proliferum</i>	Mother Shield Fern	X	X
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Bracken	X	X
<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>	Leathery Shield Fern	X	
<i>Sticherus lobatus</i>	Spreading Fan Fern	X	
<i>S. tener/urceolatus</i>	Silky Fan Fern	X	X
<i>Tmesipteris obliqua</i>	Long Fork Fern	X	
<i>Todea barbara</i>	Austral King Fern		X

Two more deciduous ferns ... (see Barry Stagoll's article starting page 6)



Athyrium nipponicum 'Pictum'. Photo: Barry Stagoll.



Osmundastrum cinnamomea. Photo: Barry Stagoll.



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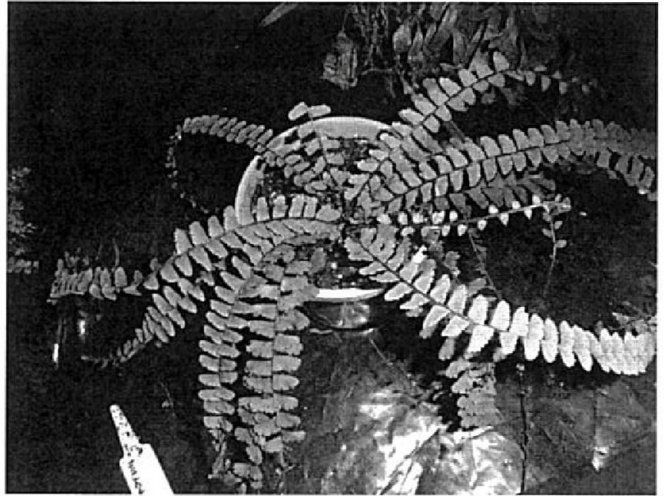
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Placings for the "miniature fern" competition at the July meeting

1. *Pyrrosia rupestris* (NZ form)* - John Hodges
2. *Adiantum caudatum* - Don Fuller
3. *Asplenium* sp. (from Peru) - Don Fuller

*Editors note: I could be wrong, but I suspect "*Pyrrosia rupestris* (NZ form)" = *Pyrrosia eleagnifolia*. Included among the synonyms of *Pyrrosia eleagnifolia* is "*Polypodium rupestre* var. *sinuatum*", and according to the Flora of Australia *Pyrrosia rupestris* does not occur in New Zealand.



Adiantum caudatum grown by Don Fuller. Photo: Barry White.



Pyrrosia eleagnifolia grown by John Hodges. Photo: Barry White.

2011/2012 MEMBERSHIPS NOW DUE

Membership subscriptions for the Fern Society of Victoria for the financial year 2011-2012 are now due.

Prompt payment would be appreciated - not only does this save your society money, but it makes the job of the Committee much easier. Membership costs for different categories of membership are located on the inside cover of this and all issues of the Newsletter, as are contact details for mailing your subscription.

As from July 2011, it is also possible to pay membership online via membership page of the Society's website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/Member.html>. Online payments are possible either by credit card or via PayPal account. When you fill out the form online, don't forget to click "update total" before you start entering payment and address details. Thanks to Barry White for setting up this very convenient facility (I have used it myself this year) - Barry White's email address is on the Membership page in the unlikely event anyone has problems.



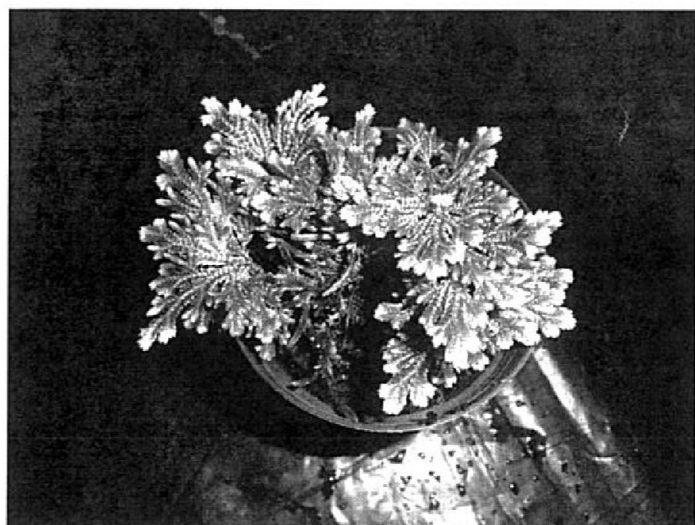
Adiantum reniforme. Photo: Barry White.

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Selaginella martensii 'Variagata'. Photo: Barry White.



Selaginella pallescens. Photo: Barry White.

Calendar of activities — Fern Society of Victoria

7:30 pm, Thursday 15 September 2011

Kevin Heinz Centre

Warren Simpson: Ferns of Tasmania

Fern competition: Tasmanian fern

Sunday 23 October 2011

Excursion: Fern Acres Nursery, Kinglake West; Wirrawilla Walk; Murrindindee

See page 3 of this Newsletter for further details and directions for the Sunday excursion (NB that there will be no Thursday meeting at the Kevin Heinz Centre in October).

7:30 pm, Thursday 19 November 2011

Annual General Meeting and fern sales night

A wide range of ferns will be on sale tonight, an ideal opportunity to shop for your own gardens and containers, and also an ideal source of unique Christmas presents for friends.

Sunday 4 December 2011

Christmas function, at a new venue, Mirini Lang's house.

Location: 25 Kennedy Street, Glen Waverley

Time: 12 noon

Bring: Crockery, cutlery, drink, salad and afternoon tea food to share

Activity: Bring a gift for the Christmas auction. Gifts may be wrapped if you want it to be an extra surprise.

Half the money raised will be donated to the Kevin Heinze Centre.

Please note that in Mirini's house, outdoor shoes are removed inside. Please bring appropriate soft clean footwear for inside, such as socks or slippers.

Fern Society of Victoria Spore Bank

Fern spore is free to members of the Fern Society of Victoria who donate spore. Otherwise the cost is members 50 cents per sample, non-members \$1, plus \$1.00 to cover postage and handling. Available at meetings or by mail from Barry White, 34 Noble Way, Sunbury, Vic. 3429 Australia, Ph. (03) 9740 2724.

There is no charge for spore for overseas members, however to cover postage two International Reply Coupons would be appreciated; or alternatively spore may be exchanged. International Reply Coupons are being phased out in favour of PayPal via the FSV website. Overseas non-members may purchase spore at three packets for each International Reply Coupon, plus two coupons per order to cover postage and handling. There is a limit of 20 packets per order. Some spores are in short supply please include alternatives. Queries can be emailed to: Barry White barry_white1@msn.com.au. The following list is current as of January 2011, but consult the web page at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fernsvic/Sporlist.html> for updates and for details of payment options for spore purchases.

<i>Acrostichum speciosum</i> 4/09	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 1/09	<i>Microsorium punctatum</i> 1/09
<i>Aleuritopteris kuhnii</i> 6/10	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i> 'Brentwood' 3/08	<i>Ophioglossum pendulum</i> 7/08
<i>Amphineuron opulentum</i> 4/10	<i>Cyathea felina</i> 10/08	<i>Pellaea cordata</i> 7/09
<i>Anemia phyllitides</i> 6/09	<i>Cyathea howeana</i> 10/10	<i>Pellaea falcata</i> 1/11
<i>Anemia tomentosa</i> 8/08	<i>Cyathea macarthurii</i> 10/10	<i>Pellaea hastata</i> 5/10
<i>Angiopteris evecta</i> 11/09	<i>Cyathea medullaris</i> 11/08	<i>Pellaea viridis</i> 1/08
<i>Arachniodes simplicior</i> 1/09	<i>Cyathea robusta</i> 9/10	<i>Platycterium superbum</i> 4/08
<i>Arachniodes aristata</i> 11/10	<i>Cyathea rebecca</i> (crested) 9/10	<i>Pleisoneuron tuberculatus</i> 12/08
<i>Arachniodes mutica</i> 10/08	<i>Cyrtomium caryotideum</i> 8/10	<i>Pneumatopteris sogerensis</i> 12/08
<i>Arachniodes standishii</i> 6/10	<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	<i>Pneumatopteris costata</i> 12/08
<i>Asplenium milnei</i> 10/10	'Butterfieldii' 3/08	<i>Polystichum aculeatum</i> 7/09
<i>Asplenium nidus</i> 5/08	<i>Cyrtomium fortunei</i> 6/10	<i>Polystichum australiense</i> 5/10
<i>Asplenium nidus cv.</i> 5/08	<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i> 12/10	<i>Polystichum formosum</i> 6/09
<i>Asplenium pellucidum</i> 12/10	<i>Diplazium australe</i> 5/10	<i>Polystichum proliferum</i> 12/10
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> (red stipe) 12/10	<i>Diplazium assimile</i> 6/09	<i>Polystichum retroso-paleacum</i> 10/10
<i>Athyrium niponicum</i> 'Pictum' 5/10	<i>Diplazium dilatatum</i> 12/10	<i>Polystichum whiteleggei</i> 10/10
<i>Athyrium otophorum</i> 12/10	<i>Doodia australis</i> 6/10	<i>Polystichum xiphophyllum</i> 3/08
<i>Blechnum ambiguum</i> 1/08	<i>Dryopteris affinis</i> 'Cristata' /08	<i>Pteris aspericaulis</i> 8/10
<i>Blechnum braziliense</i> 5/10	<i>Dryopteris dilata</i> "Crispa Whiteside" 11/10	<i>Pteris dentata</i> 12/10
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i> 9/10	<i>Dryopteris erythrosora</i> 10/10	<i>Pteris hendersonii</i> 12/10
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> 12/10	<i>Dryopteris guanchica</i> 12/10	<i>Pteris pacifica</i> 6/10
<i>Blechnum sp.</i> (New Caledonia) 6/10	<i>Dryopteris sparsa</i> 8/10	<i>Pteris tremula</i> 11/10
<i>Blechnum patersonii</i> 9/10	<i>Dryopteris wallichiana</i> 1/09	<i>Pteris umbrosa</i> 6/10
<i>Blechnum wattsii</i> 12/08	<i>Hypolepis glandulifera</i> 12/08	<i>Revwattsii fragile</i> 12/10
<i>Chingia australis</i> 6/10	<i>Lastreopsis acuminata</i> 12/10	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i> (Cape form) 2/08
<i>Christella hispidula</i> /09	<i>Lastreopsis decomposita</i> 6/09	<i>Sphaerostephanos heterocarpus</i> 7/08
<i>Christella subpubescens</i> 12/08	<i>Lastreopsis microsora</i> 6/10	<i>Thelypteris patens</i> 9/09
<i>Cyathea australis</i> 9/10	<i>Lastreopsis nephrodioides</i> 10/10	
<i>Cyathea baileyana</i> 12/08	<i>Lygodium japonicum</i> 2/10	
	<i>Macrothelypteris torresiana</i> 6/10	

Thank you to the spore donors who are listed on the web page.

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