



November 2021

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<http://www.tgcfersoc.org>

Due to COVID-19 restrictions our meeting this month will be another “virtual” one.

A message from our President:

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is doing well and ready for winter. Let's hope for a mild winter for our plants. Joe and I have been busy putting things away for winter and getting things organized just in case the forecasters are right about another really cold spell this year too.

I would like to thank everyone that attended our Meeting last month on the Ferns of South Africa. I found it to be very interesting, especially learning that the weather was very similar to our weather except for the rain. I cannot imagine no rain for six months. It really shows why ferns are one of the oldest plants on earth. Loved all the tree ferns she and her husband are growing. We need to try some of those varieties here.

This month we will be hearing all about the ferns in Costa Rica and Puerto Rico by Joanne Sharpe. Joanne joined our society a few years ago, but has only attended one meeting in person and that was one of our projects. She lives in Maine but has family in Galveston and our meeting worked with one of her trips there. Since we have been able to have virtual meetings, she has been able to attend almost all of them. Joanne also studies fern ecology and is a co-author of “Fern Ecology” that explores their role in ecosystems and how they diversify in nature. This should be an exciting talk, with both locations having a wide variety of ferns and growing conditions. Please tune in and share this experience with us.

The party is coming up in December. The board met and we discussed and decided that we would have the party this year unless something just really changes. We will be meeting at Patrick and Diane Hudnall's home in the West University area, so it very centrally located. With much discussion and differing views of how to proceed, we went with the majority and will be having a pot luck-style buffet of traditional holiday foods. Please let Larry know what you would like to bring. We will ask anyone that is not feeling well to please not attend. If you want to wear your mask, that will be welcomed, but not mandatory. The home and yard are large so everyone should be able to social distance

and feel reasonably comfortable. We miss seeing everyone and feel it is time to start meeting in person again. We have also changed the date and the time so please make a note of this change: **December 12, 2021 at 1PM.** We will also be having a gift exchange. If you would like to participate, try to keep your gift in a \$15-\$25 range so everyone receives a similar quality gift. A fern or plant related gift is perfect.

I would like to thank the nomination committee for their slate of officers and the membership for voting and passing the new board for next year. Patrick Hudnall will be the new President of the society. Lisa George is the new Vice President, Beth Ayer will continue on as Treasure. Ceil Dow will continue as Secretary. We will have two elected board members at large: Jaquelin Smith and Malcolm McCorquodale. I will also serve on the board at large as the outgoing President.

We will be meeting in person starting in January, and plan to have the virtual option as well. Our January speaker will be a virtual speaker from the Las Angles Fern Society. February's meeting will be a hands-on Kokedama presentation and participation. For our members that meet virtually we will give you a material list so you can participate from home at the same time we are working on it at the meeting location. This will be our first attempt at a virtual presentation from the Judson Robinson Community Center, so it should be an experience! Let's hope it works out well!!

Remember, the meeting is **this Sunday, the 21st!** The invitation numbers are in the email that includes this newsletter.

Take care everyone!
See you at the meeting. Until then stay safe, and happy ferning!!

Darla



Dues! Dues! Dues!

This is to remind everyone that you will owe dues for 2022, due by January 1, 2022. Dues were not collected for 2021 because the Board decided to carry all members in good standing as of December 31, 2020 due to the Covid-19

pandemic. Dues can be sent to me at: 5815 Portal Dr., Houston, TX 77096. If you have any questions you may e-mail me or call me at 713.729.0994.

As an update next year, 2022, Ruby Adams will be handling membership. She may be contacted at: radams13@sbcglobal.net or cell 281.830.4633. Thanks for all the years you have supported me as membership co-chair and I trust you will continue to work with Ruby in the future on membership issues.

Thanks -- Beth Ayer, Co-membership Chair



Background supplied by this month's speaker:

Joanne Sharpe

I have a BA in English from the University of Houston (1966), Masters of Regional Planning from University of Massachusetts (1973) and a PhD from University of Georgia in Botany (1988). I worked in computers most of the time from 1966 until I left my job in New York to go back to school to study tropical fern ecology in 1982. I have been following ferns ever since I really "noticed" a spiny tropical tree fern called *Alsophila microdonta* (now called *Cyathea microdonta*) while on a two-week vacation at an "ecology seminar" at the Asa Wright Center in Trinidad in 1979. That fern species and the 99 others I saw on that two-week trip prompted me to go back to school 3 years later where I spent six years studying and doing research on ferns in Costa Rica. After I finished I was lucky enough to become a Research Associate among a large group of researchers with various specialties at the Luquillo Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) site in Puerto Rico where I have been following ferns for the past 30 years while living in Maine.



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/>



2021 Officers and Committees:

President: Darla Harris
Vice President: Patrick Hudnall

Secretary: Ceil Dow
Treasurer: Beth Ayer
Board Members-at-Large: Cherie Lee (Past Pres),
Outgoing Board Members at Large:
Jere Noerager
Ken Warren
Education Chair: Darla Harris
Hospitality Chair: Larry Rucker
Library: Ruth McDonald
Membership Co-chairs: Beth Ayer and
Marcia Livingston
Newsletter: Paul Geiger
Spore Exchange: Patrick Hudnall
Ways and Means: Larry Rucker
Raffle, Store, etc. Biruta Claunch
Web Master: Malcolm McCorquodale
Welcoming at Door: Faye Stansberry



Minutes of "virtual" meeting via "GoToMeeting"

October 19, 2021

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society

A virtual meeting was held due to COVID-19.

Darla Harris called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

Approximately 24 members present.

Positions for the officers of the Gulf Coast Fern Society were announced:

President: Patrick Hudnall

Vice President: Lisa George

Treasurer: Beth Ayers

Secretary: Ceil Dow

Members at Large: Jacqueline Smith & Malcolm McCorquodale

Nominating Committee: Alicia Baker, Beth Ayers, & Lisa George

Ceil Dow motioned to accept the list of candidates (listed above) as officers of 2022 year. Fred Robinson seconded the motion. Motion was passed.

Patrick Hudnall will accept an invitation to attend Mercer Botanic Gardens' meet & greet event in April 2022. This event will feature the various plant societies in the Houston area and also include plant sales open to the public. The Mercer Society would not sell plants. TGCFS will set up a booth to show various ferns growing in the Houston area as well as talk to the public about TGCFS learning opportunities.

Presentation: "Ferns of South Africa"
by Jolanda Nel, Editor, South Africa Pteridological Society

South Africa has a surface area of 471, 445 square miles. It is three times the size of California. There are about 45 species of ferns endemic to the area and 36 of those species only occur in the Western and Southern Cape. The Western and Southern Cape areas have a Mediterranean climate. The Durban area has a more tropical climate.

South Africa's highest mountain range is the Drakensberg Mountains at 11,320'. It contains seasonal dry river beds. Many ferns are located in this region.

Psilotum nudum is a primitive fern found here. Its name, *Psilotum nudum*, means "bare naked" in Latin because it lacks most of the organs of typical vascular plants.

Cyathea dregei – is a tree fern that must have water. There is usually a stream nearby where they grow. They are extremely slow growing and when mature, can easily grow taller than full grown man.

Cyathea capensis – grows in the forests of the Southern Cape. Grows a “wig” around its crown and is associated with wet areas like streams.

Marattia fraxinea - is a large fern with rounded growth habit and large, spreading fronds. The erect stem grows to 3' tall.

Osmunda regalis – Grows next to streams. It is deciduous during dry winter months.

Todea barbara – grows next to streams.

Huperzia gnidioides – grows in the mist belt under full sun. (Mist belts are several areas in the eastern foothills of the Drakensberg Mountains, lying mainly between 1100 and 1500 meters above sea level, in which mist and high humidity are so common that they have a notable effect on vegetation and agriculture.)

Huperzia ophioglossoides - rare fern that grows in the deep forest on mossy rocks.

Huperzia verticillata & *Huperzia dacrydioides* - Mid to high level epiphyte grown in shade in evergreen mist forest and sometimes on mossy boulders.

Lycopodiella cernua – grows in mossy areas.

Selaginella dregei – grows in full sun. Grows like a thick carpet on rocks. Goes dormant during the dry winter months.

Selaginella kraussiana – grows as a ground cover next to streams and in shade.

Selaginella mittenii – grows on mossy banks in the forest.

Selaginella coffrorum var. *caffrorum* – grows in shady moist areas.

Selaginella nubigena – species endemic to the mountains' mist belt. Its name means “dark loving”.

Ophioglossum vulgatum & *Ophioglossum reticulatum* – filmy ferns that grow in wet, wet forests. (Filmy ferns are small ferns of damp shady places, with wiry creeping stems and delicate forked fronds which are only one cell thick. They occur chiefly in tropical and subtropical regions.)

Hymenophyllum tunbrigense – This is a filmy-fern which forms large dense colonies of overlapping leaves from creeping rhizomes

Crepidomanes melanotrichum - this species has distinctive black rhizome hairs. Grows on mossy boulders along streams or epiphytic on lower parts of trees in a shaded evergreen forest.

Hymenophyllum capillare – Grows in the Mist Belt and forms large curtains of foliage.

Sticherus umbraculiferus – appears along road side cuts.

Schizaea pectinata – grows to one foot tall. Found in the Mist Belt in grasslands or rocky hillsides.

Actiniopteris dimorpha & *Actiniopteris radiata* –

Commonly called Eyelash Ferns. *A. dimorpha* has large fertile fronds. *A. radiata* grows in rock crevices.

Pityrogramma argentea – delicate fern having fronds with white silver undersides. Also appears as a yellow form.

Doryopteris concolor – fronds curl up during the dry season but reappears in the wet season.

Adiantum capillus-veneris – naturalizes easily. Appears around waterfalls and streams.

Adiantum incisum – Forms large colonies amongst rocks.

Adiantum poiretii – Displays pretty scalloped foliage. The rhizome is short- to long-creeping.

Vittaria isoetifolia – grows to 20” long. Only find it growing in moist conditions.

Pyrrhosia schimperiana – is cluster-forming, with creeping rhizomes, 2 mm in diameter.

Pleopeltis polypodioides subsp. *ecklonii* – this used to be listed as a polypodium. It is a resurrection fern. Forms large colonies on branches in forest areas.

Elaphoglossum acrostichoides - grows in the Mist Belt.

Elaphoglossum spathulatum – this is a delicate little fern growing at high altitudes. Quite hairy.

Elaphoglossum drakensbergense – endemic to the Drakensberg Mts. Black leaves are really the fertile fronds. *Cheilanthes viridis* – grows in shady and sunny areas. It is extremely variable.

Pellaea dura – it grows where copper is present in the soil.

Cheilanthes involuta – stem is long and grooved which looks like it is rolled inwards.

Pellaea pteroides - The genus name is derived from the Greek word (pellos), meaning "dark," and refers to the bluish-gray stems. Members of the genus are commonly known as cliffbrakes.

Cheilanthes ecklonianan – it is covered in dense layers of hairs.

Dryopteris athamantica – grows at base of boulders in sun. Deciduous.

Dryopteris dracomontana – grows only in alpine areas above 6500'.

Asplenium trichomanes subsp. *quadrivalens* – grows in rock crevices.

Asplenium sandersonii – this is a tropical fern which forms large colonies in moist areas in a tropical forest.

Asplenium boltonii – low level epiphyte. Fronds are tufted and glossy green. Grows in moist areas.

Asplenium friesiorum – grows large arching fronds in the mist belt among moss on rock surfaces.

Asplenium aethiopicum – grows in forested areas and also in sunny areas.

Asplenium rutifolium – forms rosettes. It is an epiphytic that grows on tree trunks.

Asplenium theciferum – grows in the mist belt.

Blechnum capense – grows in the forests of the Southern Cape. Fronds resemble crinkled paper.

Blechnum tabulare – grows in the Table Mts. at the base of boulders in full sun.

Blechnum inflexum – fertile fronds are considerably smaller than the sterile fronds.

Blechnum attenuatum – grows near water by streams and waterfalls. New fronds are a pretty red.

Ms. Nel grows many ferns in pots, mounted on boards, hanging from trees, and planted directly in her garden. She receives approximately 25” of rain a year. She is at an elevation of 4987’. She has a lot 10,753 square ft. Her garden is atypical because they have a lot of trees. Most gardens do not have trees. She has grown many species of ferns from spores even tree ferns. She has a gorgeous specimens of *Platycerum bifurcatum* growing directly on trees in the garden. There are many varieties of *Platycerum* mounted on boards by her front door.

Her home is situated where the living and bedrooms surround a large sunny atrium. She houses many varieties of *Blechnum* here. This room is where she puts her rare ferns in the winter months. Temperatures range from 23 degrees F in winter and 104 degrees F as a high.

Questions and Answers

Q - Darla asked if she covered plants in the winter.

A – Yes, she uses frost cloth. The hanging *Platycerums* are covered with multiple layers of frost cloth but she doesn’t top it off with a plastic layer.

Q – Darla asked how dry are the winters?

A – Winters months are typically very dry. Winter is from May through August. Last rain is usually late April and the next rain is in late September. She takes the ferns outside once a month to water them. Once they dry off then she puts them back into the protected atrium.

Q – Ceil Dow asked, “What is the soil like there?”

A – The normal garden soil is low in humus because there aren’t many trees there to lay out forest floor organic matter. She works in a lot of compost and also gathers neighbor’s leaves to compost.

Q – Darla asked about the conditions to grow Eyelash ferns.

A – They are difficult to grow but she has been growing *Actiniopteris dimorpha* in a dry terrarium.

Q – Do you have drought restrictions there?

A – Yes. She has rain barrels. There is no watering between 6am until 6pm with fines if someone uses too much water.

Q – How much time does it take to grow from spores?

A – She grows them inside. Some spores take a very long time to grow. Some spores can take up to 10 years to grow into a full size plant.

Q – How do your tree ferns grow? Which are more cold hardy?

A - *Cyathea capensis* – is grown in the hot house with the orchids. *Cyathea cooperi* are short lived and live maybe 10 years.

Q – Darla asked if there were any problems with monkeys in her area.

A – She doesn’t have any problems with monkeys in her area but in some areas the monkeys invade homes. Monkeys are like possums and raccoons here.

Q – JoAnn Sharpe asked if they had any invasive ferns.

A – They do not. They are a problem in the more tropical climate. Sometimes *Diplazium* can be bit invasive.

After the lecture ended, Darla noted the J. Robinson Jr. Community Center notified her that it has opened for the winter 2022 year. Starting in January 2022, TGCFS will have meetings in person but still have online meetings. It will be a “blended” meeting so people who cannot attend in person can attend meetings.

Respectfully submitted, Ceil Dow.



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4. Type Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society into the search and the click select.
5. Start shopping! You can add a bookmark for smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

