

November 2023



Ahh..., autumn is definitely in the crisp air on this sunny November morning. More plants and trinkets from member gardens were lined up outside hoping to beautify and thrive in a new flower bed.

Inside, a long table has the usual 'sign in' and 'sign up' activities laid out. Today is the last day

to turn in our vouchers for the plant sale. In **Rica's** absence, **Terri Cole** is collecting the money and envelopes.



Harolene and **Betty** are catching up on life events.



Cathy and **Becky** have not seen each other in a long while.



Carolyn and **Bette** share a hug.



Hospitality



The hospitality team, MaryEtta Wood, Eeese Lester-Baier, Barbara Durr and Susan Hull, provided a cornicopa of delicious foods. The fall decoration as well as the fragrant smell of apples, caramel and cinamon added to a happy fall mood.



Members enjoying the treats along with the friendship of the group.





Preparations for the program on Ferns were on the way. All kinds of greenery were spread out on a long table.



President **Harriett** and Secretary **Sheila** open the meeting. The presidents table was also decorated in the fall theme.

Mary led the group in a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance after she procured a jar of REACH honey from Margo.



Prayer For A Heart Of Thankfulness In November

Father, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the abundant blessings you have bestowed upon us. We thank you for the changing seasons, the falling leaves, and the opportunity to gather with loved ones in celebration of Thanksgiving.

Lord, we ask for the grace to maintain a thankful heart not only during this month but every day of our lives. May we cultivate an attitude of gratitude that extends beyond the holiday season, recognizing your daily provisions and your love for us.

Help us remember to be thankful for the simple joys of life, for the warmth of our homes, for the nourishment on our tables, and for the company of family and friends. In the busyness of our daily routines, may we never take these blessings for granted.

We are thankful for the challenges and trials that have shaped us, for they have allowed us to grow and develop resilience. May we see your hand in every situation, understanding that even difficulties serve a purpose in our lives.

We are grateful for the gift of faith, for the hope that sustains us, and for your abiding presence. As we journey through November and beyond, may our hearts overflow with thankfulness for your unwavering love and grace.

Amen



Programs



For today's program Barbara invited **Darla Harris**, owner of '**Fern Plantation Nursery**' to visit with us and tell us all about the wonderfully diverse lives of ferns.



According to Darla, ferns have been around since the early beginnings of this earth and can be found just about anywhere. As proof she brought several fossils That clearly outline fern patterns.



Many varieties of fern are now extinct but nevertheless over 12,000 different ferns still exist worldwide. In East Texas alone, 200 different ferns live in many different environments all around us. Ferns can live in water, bogs, in forests, in tropical as well as alpine conditions, in sand and on rocks.

Ferns are known as Carbon Scrubbers, as they efficiently take carbon from the air to use in photosynthesis. This makes ferns a beneficial house plant.

One of the smallest ferns, **Azolla** is considered to be an invasive species living in wetlands, ditches and lakes. The high nitrogen content also makes this plant an inexpensive fertilizer and is planted in rice fields to provide nutrients to the crop.



If you know where your fern came from, you will know which conditions are required for the plant to thrive.

The **Maidenhair** Fern, for example, naturally grows on forest floors and around creeks. This fern prefers indirect light, humid warm temperatures and well-draining alkaline soil. It goes dormant in the heat of the summer.

The low growing **Autumn** Fern makes a great ground cover. It sprouts bronze colored new fronds that turn dark green as it matures. Some varieties tolerate full sun but most do well in the shade or morning sun. It does not require much water and is relatively frost and heat tolerant.



A rather large fern, with fronds up to 4 feet, the slow spreading **Southern Shield** will bring interest to your garden with its delicate texture and sea-green color. It requires partial to full shade. Easy to grow in moist conditions, this fern is also drought tolerant.



This attractive **Blue Star** fern is a native of South America. It spreads by creeping rhizomes which help it to grow up trees and vines in the forest underbrush. It can get up to three feet tall and wide. A tropical epiphyte, it can handle drier conditions but burns in direct sunlight. It will not do well in a freeze.

One of the showier ferns in Darla's collection were the slow growing **Staghorn** Ferns. As she explains, these ferns have 18 different species and come in many varieties. They have a unique look and can often be seen mounted on wood. They are natives of Asia and Australia and need to be watered occasionally.



The **Sensitive** Fern is a hardy evergreen plant that goes dormant as the days get shorter.



It also doesn't appreciate direct sun light or frosty conditions. It

grows best in boggy woodlands or alongside ponds or streams. Plant it in a moist area of the garden. The apple green fronds add a lovely splash of color.

The **Kangaroo Paw** Fern, native to Australia, is a short and fast-growing plant. It has thick, shiny, dark green leaves. It likes partial shade and moist, well-draining soil. It is easy to care for and makes an attractive houseplant. As with many ferns and plants, decrease watering and fertilizing in the fall and winter when plant goes dormant. Occasional pruning may be necessary to keep its growth in check.





The **Japanese Painted Fern**, is a highly sought-after plant because of its unique and striking foliage. This fern is native to Japan, Korea, and China, and is commonly referred to as the painted lady fern or the Japanese painted lady fern. Its foliage features a blend of silver, green, and purple hues, making it a stunning addition to any garden or landscape. Unfortunately, it does not do well in our area. This beauty has specific requirements to thrive: about 4-6 hours of indirect light, just the right amount of watering, temperatures between 60-75 F with humidity of 50-60%. In addition, it is susceptible to pests and diseases.

The grassy green fronds of the **East Indian Holly** fern are accented by a distinctive gold stripe down the midrib of each lance-shaped leaflet. An excellent fern for woodland colonies and subtropical compositions. Spreads gently by creeping rhizomes to form a clump. This evergreen requires full to partial shade and grows well in moist to wet soil. It will survive a moderate winter.



Some ferns are better grown as house plants where growing conditions can be controlled.



The **Hurricane Bird's Nest** Fern is such a sought-after houseplant. It is a native of tropical regions where it grows on trees. Its distinct circular frond pattern, reminiscent of a bird's nest, is unique among ferns. Although it is not a fussy plant, it requires 6-8 hours of indirect light, moderate temperatures and humidity, well drained, slightly acid soil.

Similar to the Bird's Nest fern, the '**Crissie**' Fern is a tropical fern. It has large, shiny, leathery, strap-like leaves with forked tips. Provide uniform moisture in pots. Ferns thrive in neutral to acidic, loose, richly organic soil which is moist but not waterlogged. This variety of Bird's Nest fern prefers bright, filtered sunlight and is excellent as a houseplant or in a seasonal container. Must be protected from freezing temperatures!



The leaves of the **Heart Fern** are quite large, reaching up to 10 inches in length. Their surface is leathery, shiny, and glossy with a rich dark green color. The underside of the leaves is covered with fine hairs. The leaves can be shaped like fingered-lobes or resemble an arrowhead or heart. Growing conditions are similar to the Birds Nest fern, with moderate moisture and humidity and light exposure from a north facing window.



So many ferns – so little time!

Darla overwhelmed us with her expertise. If you want more information or purchase her ferns, give her a call. Her nursery is open by appointment only.



Additional information was obtained from the references below:

<https://www.thespruce.com/types-of-fern-6665832>

<https://www.pottedplants.org/plant-care/hurricane-birds-nest-fern-care-guide/>

<https://www.pottedplants.org/plant-care/crissie-fern-care-guide/>

<https://www.pottedplants.org/plant-care/japanese-painted-fern-care-guide/>



The business meeting continued with **Margo**, in Pat's absence, again reminding us to donate to Wreaths Across America. The wreath laying ceremony at the Veterans Memorial will commence on December 16. Members are encouraged to take part and car pool when possible. A ride will not be organized by the club.

Julie, in Jean's absence, announced the birthdays of the month.



Donna has arranged for a bus ride to see the Christmas lights in River Oaks. This was a fun trip last year and many members were signing up for this year's trip as well.

The Christmas luncheon committee, **Fran, Eleese, Julie, Bette, and MaryEtta**, have finalized the reservations for our Christmas feast. We will dine at Clementine's Restaurant on Friday, December 1st.



Horticulture

On a recent trip to Louisiana, Cathy Rogers was introduced to a rather unusual plant-like object.

As she tells it: She was sitting on the porch of her holiday cabin in the early morning, enjoying a hot cup of coffee. However, her solitude was disturbed by an occasional loud banging or hitting noise coming from the nearby woods. Intrigued, she set out to investigate and stumbled upon large objects that had fallen from the trees with a disturbing loud bang.

As she found out in her research, these rather ugly things that fell of the tree are called **Boise D'Arc** or horse apples. Its Latin name is *Maclura pomifera*, also known as Osage orange. It is a small deciduous tree or large shrub, native to the south-central

United States. It will typically grow to a height of 30–50 ft.



The distinctive spherical, bumpy fruit is about 3-6 inches in diameter and turns bright yellow-green in the fall. Despite the name, it is not a citrus fruit but belongs to the mulberry family. The fruit secretes a sticky white latex when cut or damaged. Due to its latex secretions and woody pulp, the fruit is typically not eaten by humans and rarely by foraging animals. American Indians used the latex to weather proof their tents and clothes.

Early American pioneers grew the plant as a strong thorny hedge to fence in livestock and protect vegetable gardens. French settlers observed that the wood was used by Native Americans for war clubs and bow-making.

Osage orange wood is strong and more rot-resistant than most, making good fence posts. When dried, the wood has the highest heating value of any commonly available North American wood, and burns long and hot.



Thanks, Cathy! This was fun and informative.