



Book Review by Margaret Hodgson

Fern Grower's Manual (Revised and Expanded Edition)

by Barbara Joe Hoshizaki & Robbin C. Moran

Timber Press, Inc. Portland, Oregon, 2001.
604 pages, approx. 433 black and white pages of detailed illustrations and 25 pages of colour photos, Appendix I – Measuring Light, Appendix II – Fern Societies, Appendix III – Importing Ferns, Appendix IV – Names of Pest and Disease Control Substances, Appendix V – Classification of Fern Genera in Text, Glossary, Bibliography, Subject Index, Name Index Hardbound, \$81.95
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Barbara Joe Hoshizaki is president of the American Fern Society. She was professor of botany at Los Angeles City College and research associate at the University of California, Los Angeles, and president of the Southern California Horticultural Institute and the Los Angeles International Fern Society, and the South Florida Fern Society. She has travelled widely, introduced many species into cultivation, and written numerous articles, mainly on ferns in cultivation.

Robbin C. Moran is associate curator at the New York Botanical Garden. He worked for years at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis as the main author, editor, and organizer for the fern volume of *Flora Mesoamericana*, which is the largest fern flora ever written, treating nearly 1400 species of ferns that occur from southern Mexico to Panama. He has also taught pteridology courses in Costa Rica, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, and travelled widely in Latin America, Thailand, and Taiwan. In addition to his research, he serves as associate editor for the *American Fern Journal* and *Brittonia*.

Fern Grower's Manual brings a wealth of information about plants which have graced the planet for millions of years. With over 12,000 named species of ferns worldwide, the variety of ferns is staggering and the combined efforts of Hoshizaki and Moran offer the reader detailed useful advice on cultivation and landscaping with ferns. These experts indicate cultural needs and potential problems, from planting to propagating, and include guidance on cultivation in the garden or in pots or baskets.

The second chapter in the book gives very clear detailed diagrams of the structure of ferns, covering all parts of the fern, and showing the different frond structures from simple to bifurcate, pinnatifid. Other chapters include useful information on required soils and fertilizers. The bulk of the book moves into encyclopedic treatment of some 700 species from 124 genera, all described in detail, including physical descriptions, cultural requirements, hardiness, common names, synonyms, special uses, geographical range, and notable cultivars or related species. Each species is accompanied by an illustration to allow easy identification and provide a useful means of comparing species. The colour plates are more limited, but the black and white descriptions and illustrations are so extensive that the book is an extremely useful tool for those readers interested in growing ferns in the garden.

The appendices in the book are particularly useful as they include such topics as names of pests and disease control substances for ferns, and also the family classification of fern genera in the text. The glossary is excellent as is the subject and plant name indices.