Chris Bright's matter-of-fact style of writing takes a person on an educated journey through the world of bioinvasion - "..... forestry has introduced at least 2,000 exotic woody plant species into various parts of the world. Thus far, at least 135 of them have launched invasions. Yet a successfully established exotic plant may sit for years, for a decade, or for longer than a century before launching an invasion. Those 135 species could well be harbingers of enormous ecological change."

This book offers comprehensive information on the impact of bioinvasion on ecosystem resources. It also covers the origin and success of invaders, which natural communities are vulnerable, evolutionary effects, and the implications of bioinvasion on a borderless world.

*Life Out of Bounds - Bioinvasion in a Borderless World,* by Chris Bright, The Worldwatch Environmental Alert Series.

Linda Starke, Series Editor W. W. Norton & Company New York, London 1998 (ISBN 0-39331-814-1). - Roger L. Hammer

### Fond of Ferns?

The word fern comes from the old English *fearn*, which means feather. All fern fronds are not feathery, or green, or have brown fern spore sacs. They may grow in soil, water, or on trees. There are more then 12,000 species of ferns worldwide. Surprisingly, coal is composed mainly of fossilized ferns, the energy packed remnants of the masses of ferns dominant during the Carboniferous period 350 million years ago.

I just learned all of this in *Ferns of the Tropics* by Wee Yeow Chin who recently retired from the botany department at National University of Singapore. This 1997 book by Timber Press (800-327-5680; www. timberpress.com) contains 190 pages (ISBN 0-88192-458-x). This is a useful book for those

whose interest in ferns is just awakening and a resource for dedicated fern lovers.

The chapters cover fern parts, ferns in folklore & superstition, the economic uses, propagation and cultivation of ferns and their habitats as well as a glossary, bibliography, index and listing of world-wide fern societies. The chapter on fern species uses one-half of the book to provide information in an A-Z listing of 77 species, each illustrated by excellent color photographs with one depicting the entire plant. I only wish this user-friendly book covered a few more of the thousands of fern species. - Stephen G. Pategas

Stephen G. Pategas is an award-winning registered landscape architect and garden photographer. Contact him via e-mail: spategas@ magicnet.net.

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