

A Remembrance of Don Lubin – New England Fern Expert



Many of you may have learned a great deal about ferns from Don Lubin. We are sad to report that Don passed away on January 13, 2025, due to complications from cancer. A memorial service is planned for September 2025. Newton Conservators is grateful for his work as a volunteer walk leader and for serving on our Advisory Board for many years.

Don's knowledge of and love for ferns was remarkable, and his enthusiasm for showing them to others truly infectious, as those of you who had been on any of his field trips know. He led trips and workshops not only for the Newton Conservators but for many other groups, including the NE Wildflower Society. Don had grown ferns since 1980, done field identification since 1991, and led field trips since 1991. He had over 50 species of ferns planted in his own yard and contributed dozens of samples of uncommon New England ferns to herbaria, including the Asa Gray Herbarium at Harvard, worked on biodiversity surveys throughout eastern Massachusetts, and hosted a website on New England ferns. If you submitted a fern observation to iNaturalist in recent years, there is a good chance that Don Lubin would have helped verify it.

Don's 2020 webinar, "Ferns: More Important Than You Might Think and How to Know the Common Ones" (https://youtu.be/OvAR_KXzMk), is a wonderful lesson on New England ferns based on his website. His short video essay, "The Importance of Ferns" (<https://youtu.be/b4LHg9vNfio>), reveals the critical role ferns played in the development of life on Earth over millions of years.

Don was twice a recipient of our Charles Johnson Maynard Award. In 2019, Don was honored for his efforts to discover and identify ferns in conservation areas throughout New England, his strong commitment to promoting biodiversity, and for the decades he has spent sharing his knowledge of ferns with all of us. In 2007, Don was an integral part of the Survey Team of the Land Management Committee of Newton Conservators, which was honored for their detailed study and documentation of the plants and animals that inhabit Newton's conservation lands. Don was also one of the co-authors of the popular *Newton Conservators Almanac*, a colorful compendium of Newton's flora and fauna throughout the seasons.

Don Lubin was born in New Jersey in 1943, attended high school in Illinois, and obtained a BS in Physics from Brandeis University in 1965. Don resided in Allston and was a man of many talents, active in the Boston Food Co-op, an avid gardener, adept at bicycle repair, a competitive volleyball player, and once won a case before the Supreme Court. Don's knowledge of ferns will be sorely missed.

✿ Ted Kuklinski