

= FernGully : The Last Rainforest =

FernGully : The Last Rainforest is a 1992 Australian @-@ American animated musical fantasy film , directed by Bill Kroyer . It was produced by Peter Faiman and Wayne Young , with the screenplay written by Jim Cox , adapted from a book of the same name written 15 years prior by Diana Young . Alan Silvestri composed the film 's score .

The film features the voices of Jonathan Ward , Samantha Mathis , Tim Curry , Christian Slater and Robin Williams . FernGully is set in a fictitious Australian rainforest inhabited by fairies including Crysta , who accidentally shrinks a young logger named Zak to the size of a fairy . Together they rally the fairies and the animals of the rainforest to protect their home from the loggers and a malevolent pollution entity , Hexxus .

The film was released to mainly positive reviews , and was also generally considered a moderate financial success at both the box office and in home video sales . In 1998 it was followed by a direct @-@ to @-@ video sequel FernGully 2 : The Magical Rescue , though none of the original voice cast reprised their roles .

= = Plot = =

Crysta is a fairy with a curious nature living in FernGully , a pristine rainforest free from human intervention . The fairies of FernGully once lived in harmony with humans , but , believe them to have gone extinct after being driven away by a malevolent spirit named Hexxus . Crysta is the apprentice of Magi , a motherly @-@ figure fairy who imprisoned Hexxus in a tree . One day Crysta explores a new part of the forest and meets Batty , a bat who claims to have been experimented on by humans , giving him an unstable personality . She refuses to believe him until she encounters lumberjacks cutting down trees . She sees Zak , a young human whom Crysta accidentally shrinks when she tries to save him from being crushed by a falling tree , though does not know how to restore him to normal size .

The tree that Hexxus is imprisoned in is cut down by Tony and Ralph , Zak 's superiors . Hexxus quickly begins to regain his powers by feeding on pollution . He manipulates the humans to drive to FernGully . In FernGully , Zak meets Pips , a fairy male who is envious of Zak 's relationship with Crysta . Zak begins to fall in love with Crysta , but hides the true reason that the humans had returned . When the signs of Hexxus 's resurrection begin to manifest themselves in poisoned trees and rivers , he finally admits that humans are destroying the forest . The fairies mount an attempt to defend their homes , but knowing their fight is hopeless , Zak convinces Batty to aid him in stopping the machine before it destroys them . When Zak makes his presence known to his bosses , Hexxus takes over the machine and begins to wildly destroy the forest .

Magi sacrifices herself to give the fairies a chance , and she tells Crysta to remember everything she 's learned . Zak manages to stop the machine , seemingly killing Hexxus by stopping his power at the source , but he manifests himself within the oil in the machine and begins to ignite the forest ablaze . Crysta seemingly sacrifices herself by allowing herself to be devoured by Hexxus and all seems lost , until he begins to sprout limbs and leaves like a tree . Pips and the rest of the fairies rally to the powers they have been given , which causes the seed that Crysta fed him to start growing wildly . Hexxus is made dormant and turned into a twisted tree at the very border of FernGully . Crysta appears after the fight , having survived her ordeal and successfully succeeded Magi as a magical fairy . She gives Zak a seed , begging him to remember everything that has transpired and she sadly restores him to his human size . Remembering the seed in his hand , Zak promises to remember his adventure , and buries the seed in the soil before telling his superiors that things " gotta change " before leaving the forest with them . The seed sprouts new growth for Ferngully , as Crysta follows Pips with Batty behind her .

= = Cast = =

= = Themes = =

In the book *Disney, Pixar, and the Hidden Messages of Children's Films*, M. Keith Booker states that *FernGully* "focuses on the theme of the destruction of the earth's rainforests". In this case the rainforest is located near Mount Warning, on the eastern coast of Australia, but the theme is global and the specific location is not particularly emphasized". Despite the environmental theme Booker stated the film was "somewhat vague in its explanation of the dire consequences of rainforest destruction and it addresses the economic impetus behind this destruction hardly at all"; the fact that the rainforest was saved at the end of the film "diminishes the urgency of its environmentalist message" and that the character of Hexxus "displaces the real blame for environmental destruction from its real perpetrators onto nonexistent supernatural perpetrators, further diluting the political message". The character of Batty was said to introduce "the secondary theme of animal experimentation, though with a light touch that presents this potentially horrifying motif as essentially humorous."

In the book *Eco @-@ Impacts and the Greening of Postmodernity*, Tom Jagtenberg and David McKie comment that radical views of ecology flourished in the film, perhaps because it was "aimed at a younger generation ... and belong [s] to relatively discredited genres". As Zak is shrunk to fairy size and integrated into the fairy world, more similarities rather than differences are implied with the nonhuman characters. Crysta is said to defeat the evil Hexxus "in the manner of classic western genre heroes", though with the key difference that her weapon is a seed rather than a revolver, allowing the produce of nature to share the heroic role with her.

= = Production = =

Producer Wayne Young said his passion for the environment was his motivation for making the film, saying the film was "blatantly environmental, although we have gone to a lot of trouble to avoid preaching. We also want it to be viewed as entertainment." The inspiration for *FernGully* came from stories written by his former wife, Diana Young. Diana first wrote the story of *FernGully* 15 years prior to the film's release. Wayne said the couple planned a film adaptation for five years, then spent "seven years of dreaming and hustling, followed by another three years of production". Wayne stated their dream was not possible until the success of the 1989 film *The Little Mermaid*, which brought popularity back to animation. Hand drawn scenes in the film were complimented by computer animation, which was used to create elements such as flocks of birds that would have taken much longer to animate traditionally. Kroyer states 40 @,@ 000 frames of computer animation were used in the film, and that the use of such animation halved the production time. Most of the film's \$ 24 million budget was spent on the animation and the soundtrack.

The film marked Robin Williams' first animation role, with the character Batty Koda being created specifically for him. Williams provided 14 hours worth of improvised lines for the part which was originally only supposed to be an 8 @-@ minute role. Director Bill Kroyer was so impressed with the voice work he ended up tripling the screen time given to the character. Williams went on to provide the critically applauded voice of the Genie in Disney's *Aladdin* later the same year. Williams accepted the role in *FernGully* because he agreed with the film's message, as did the rest of the voice cast, who all worked for scale wages. The film marked the first time that both members of Cheech & Chong had worked together in six years, with the two voicing beetle brothers Stump and Root. Cheech Marin said "It was just like old times, but we only worked for two or three hours, had a pizza and split."

= = Soundtracks = =

The soundtrack album was released by MCA Records. Peter Fawthrop from Allmusic gave the album three out of five stars, commenting that the songs were "lighter and more pop @-@ driven than Disney soundtracks from the '90s, but they are not childish." The score of *FernGully*, which was composed by Alan Silvestri, was also released for sale. It consisted of 14 tracks and ran just

under 44 minutes in length .

= = Release = =

FernGully was released in the United States on April 10 , 1992 and in Australia on September 17 . The film was shown at the United Nations General Assembly on Earth Day , April 22 , 1992 .

= = = Box office = = =

FernGully grossed US \$ 32 @, @ 710 @, @ 894 worldwide , including \$ 24 @, @ 650 @, @ 296 from the United States , and A \$ 3 @. @ 4 million in Australia . The box office performance was described as a moderate success though it was considered to have done less well than expected , possibly due to its ecological message . Joseph Gelmis from Newsday , however , described FernGully 's box office performance as " dismal " , though noted it was the most successful recent non @-@ Disney animated film . Co @-@ executive producer Jaime Willett and Josh Baran who worked on the film 's marketing both spoke of the difficulties of getting attention to an animated film that was not produced by Disney , with Willett stating box office revenue would have at least doubled by simply having the headline " Walt Disney presents " on the film . An article in USA Today noted that the combined box office gross of FernGully and the five other non @-@ Disney animated films released in 1992 did not even equal a third of the gross for Disney 's 1991 film Beauty and the Beast .

= = = Critical response = = =

FernGully received generally positive reviews . The film holds an approval rating of 71 % at Rotten Tomatoes based on 14 reviews (10 positive , 4 negative) . Film critic Roger Ebert gave it three out of four stars , saying the film was visually " very pleasing , " told a " useful lesson " , " and although the movie is not a masterpiece it 's pleasant to watch for its humor and sweetness . " Hollis Chacona from The Austin Chronicle added that the film was " funny , pretty , touching , scary , magical stuff . " Janet Maslin of The New York Times had an unfavourable impression of the film , describing it as " [a] n uncertain blend of sanctimonious principles and Saturday @-@ morning cartoon aesthetics " . According to Wayne Young , Jeffrey Katzenberg , then CEO of Walt Disney , called the producers of FernGully just to tell them that he loved the film .

= = = Legacy = = =

Wayne Young stated that portions of the film 's gross would be donated to Greenpeace , the Rainforest Foundation Fund , and the Sierra Club , as well as a special fund benefiting environmental projects worldwide that was administered by the Smithsonian Institution , though he did not disclose exact figures .

In 1998 the film was followed by a direct @-@ to @-@ video sequel , FernGully 2 : The Magical Rescue . None of the original voice cast reprised their roles , and the film was less critically successful than the original . Mike Boon from the Calgary Herald gave a negative review , lamenting the loss of Robin Williams and the originality of the first film . Some reviewers have commented that the 2009 James Cameron film Avatar plagiarised thematic and plot elements from FernGully , though others have been more sceptical of the comparison .

= = Home media = =

Four months after the theatrical release , 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment released FernGully on VHS and Laserdisc on August 26 , 1992 . Sales were strong , with approximately five million units sold by 1998 , including 125 @, @ 000 in Australia .

Fox re @-@ released the film on DVD in 2001 . Christopher Simons from DVD Talk gave the 2001

DVD three and a half stars out of five for both audio and video , though only one star for special features , noting that the only extras included were trailers for other films . A " Family Fun Edition " DVD was released in 2005 . Special features included commentary with director Bill Kroyer , art director Ralph Eggleston , and co @-@ ordinating art director Susan Kroyer , several featurettes including the original featurette from 1992 , the music video for If I 'm Gonna Eat Somebody (It Might As Well Be You) by Tone L?c , as well as trailers and TV spots . Scott Weinberg from DVD Talk gave this version four stars out of five for both audio and video , and also four stars for special features .

FernGully was released on Blu @-@ ray Disc on March 6 , 2012 , containing the same special features as the " Family Fun Edition " . Aaron peck from High Def Digest gave it three out of five stars for video quality , four stars for audio and three and a half stars for extras . Brian Orndorf from Blu @-@ ray.com gave the release three out of five stars for video quality , three and a half stars for audio and four stars for special features .