

SHORT NOTESFIELD OBSERVATIONS ON SARRACENIA

by Allan D. Marmelstein

The following represents casual relationships observed during two days of intensive collecting in contiguous areas of southern Mississippi and Alabama. No originality is claimed as it is quite likely that others have seen, and probably published, the obvious features of Sarracenia populations in this region. Specifically, the area covered lies along the Gulf Coast from Ocean Springs, Mississippi to Mobile Bay, and inland to just beyond Interstate 10. The discussion will begin with species and conclude with hybrids.

Sarracenia alata

In the area specified, this appears to be the most abundant species. This spring has been dry for the Gulf Coast, but that fact notwithstanding, S. alata seems to occur in dryer habitats than the other species observed. It is extremely plastic in vegetative expression. One notable population is apparently centered near Ocean Springs. In addition to the red venation characteristic of the species, plants from this population, found intermixed but not intergrading with the "usual" S. alata, have the underside of the lid and the inside of the neck completely suffused with red. The effect of the red interior and the bright yellow exterior is most striking, making these plants stand out from their habitat associates even when observing along a highway from a car going 70 m.p.h. The plant rivals S. leucophylla for beauty, especially on first observation in the field. S. alata was found growing variously with S. psittacina, S. leucophylla and S. purpurea.

S. leucophylla

This species in the area described grows almost entirely in Alabama. Along U.S. 90, it occurs in roadside meadows beginning just west of the Alabama-Mississippi state line, then sporadically eastward. It occurs in several places in large stands of several acres or more - an incredible sight when new leaves are just opening in coincidence with flowering. Two distinct varieties were observed, although intergrades were equally frequent. One variety has a great deal of white on the upper tube, and the lid is entirely white, although both areas have few narrow red veins. From a distance, this plant appears solid white. The other type has less white, more red veins, and the latter color frequently suffuses into the hood. From a distance this type has a reddish appearance and is easily distinguished from the other. S. leucophylla was found growing variously with S. alata, S. psittacina and S. purpurea. It occurred most frequently with the first two and was never observed growing alone, as was S. alata.

S. psittacina

This species is quite common in the wetter fields and meadows, but is the most difficult to find due to its growth habit. Occurrence of flowers considerably shortens the search. Due to its low growth habit it appears most vulnerable to fire exclusion and most populations

located appeared in danger of extirpation due to competing overgrowth.

S. purpurea

This species appeared to be the least common in the area described. All located populations were in disturbed areas such as roadside ditches or along dirt tracks through wet meadows. It was generally found growing alone in small populations, near but not mixed with S. alata or S. leucophylla. Surprisingly, it was not found with S. psittacina, although both showed a preference for the wettest habitats.

Hybrids

All five of the natural hybrids reported for the area were located. Where they occurred together S. alata and S. leucophylla invariably crossed so that S. alata x S. leucophylla was very easy to find. Complex back crosses were also evident, though less frequent. Perhaps the most striking single plant observed was a four foot high cross which is probably (S. alata x S. leucophylla) x S. leucophylla. It had the broadened tube of S. alata and a similar hood, but the coloration was S. leucophylla. Further, the hood was scalloped as is S. leucophylla. Hybrids of S. purpurea x S. alata and S. leucophylla were also fairly common, although most frequent in populations of the tubular parent. They were rarely found with S. purpurea. Indeed, both hybrids were usually found in amongst the tubular parent in localities where S. purpurea was considerably removed or not apparent. In at least two cases, an intense search for S. purpurea was made, to no avail.

Crosses of the tubular species with S. psittacina were least common of those observed, although S. psittacina could usually be found with either S. alata or S. leucophylla.

All of the S. psittacina x S. alata and S. psittacina x S. leucophylla were found in disturbed areas growing with S. psittacina. None were found with the tubular parent. S. psittacina hybrids are among the most unusual and beautiful of the genus.

Specimens of all plants mentioned were obtained and may be observed in the collections of J. A. Mazrimas as well as the author. All hybrid identifications are tentative and based on a best guess according to available parents. In the case of S. alata x S. purpurea and S. alata x S. psittacina, identification is probably absolute, as S. alata was the only tubular plant growing in the area or observed for many miles in any direction.

VISITING BOGS IN THE EAST AND WEST

by Richard Sivertsen

In the spring of 1970, I was stationed at Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi. I noticed that as I drove inland on Highway 90 and approached the woods and meadow country, I saw many plants with bright, tall yellow flowers everywhere, looking like giant dandelions. They practically lit up the entire way, from Ocean Springs to inland about twenty miles.

Later, I became acquainted with the base agronomist, Mr. Wilson, who