

AN EDITORIAL STATEMENT ON CONSERVATION AND CPN

The co-editors have always maintained a strong personal attitude of conservation of carnivorous plants. The following comments will apply mainly to U.S. plants since these are closest to us and others who have expressed greatest concern, but these ideas would be as applicable to non-U.S. species in their native settings.

Many of our subscribers and some critical non-subscribers feel that "unreasonable" publicity about CP will do more harm than good, and they point as evidence to several short notes that seem to describe veritable bacchanals of collecting and molestation of native CP stands by perhaps overly enthusiastic neophytes. Further, some exact locations, when they seem pertinent to the article, have been given (but many formal journals and all herbarium entries require exacting location information which is available to all!). Others object to the whole idea of plant rescue as a valid and viable procedure of saving plants in immediate danger from highway, industrial, housing and agricultural development. Finally, some see a paradox in our publishing an annual listing of commercial CP sources-- some of whom are well known to collect from the wild to fill orders as they come in rather than truly propagate their stock.

Our comments on these very real problems may allay much suspicion or simply fan it into more rage. In either event, we would like to put forth our viewpoint. Be forewarned that this viewpoint is made more complex by an intermingling of what we also feel is the right thing to do regarding conservation of CP, and what we owe our readers as editors. Neither of us has ever felt that "hiding the cookie jar" was an effective way to develop a mature, balanced and reasonable conservation attitude. We must continue to have the basic editorial attitude of presenting all reasonable material sent to us for publication in CPN, and readers can then exercise their rights of personal judgment. We do impose limits of reasonable accuracy and general literacy. Personal communications from infrequent correspondents whom we do not know well sometime bear the notation "not for publication in CPN", and we have always and will continue to honor this request.

Concerning the commercial sources list, we have always stated that this is a reader service to do with as the reader wishes, exercising his own personal judgment, but that we do not endorse or support any of the firms listed. We believe this a sufficient disclaimer. That there are unprincipled dealers on the list who collect, or order the collection of, carnivorous plants from native sources by the thousands each year, is sadly well known to us. The notation by some dealers in their catalogues "sent to us by our southern *growing* sources (italics ours)" is one of those cynical statements about which we have no illusions. If the Smithsonian list is finally approved by the Department of the Interior--and it seems very likely that it soon will be--then it will become a federal offense to ship or carry interstate any CP on the list. But not all U.S. CP are on the list, so this solution is only partial. However, beginning with this annual commercial sources list, we will list first and so mark those commercial dealers (only two so far) that have of their own accord written us a letter stating that all CP they sell will have been propagated by them, or obtained from a source which they are sure also propagates them. Such letters have been and will continue to be unsolicited and we will insist on knowing the dealer, proofs and guarantees. Again, the marking of such dealers who state that their material has been propagated does not constitute an endorsement of the dealer or the quality of his goods and service. We hope this new policy will help encourage an appropriate response at both ends of the dealer-customer relationship.

We have always felt, and are supported by several studies to this effect, that habitat destruction and commercial exploitation were the greatest dangers to CP locations. Vandalism by individuals, while deplorable in itself, is not a serious threat except in the cases of rare species and forms, an example being Sarracenia rubra ssp. jonesii. In such cases, we will not publish exact locations. Further, if the co-editors do have exact knowledge of rare plant locations as a result of our voluminous personal correspondence, we will not disclose these to any other of our personal correspondents. Such requests will be referred to the original informant to handle as he wishes.

We believe that in carefully judged situations plant rescue operations by responsible groups are a vital method of saving valuable material. While the Smithsonian report properly expresses the concept that such translocations should only be temporary with the ultimate aim of replacing the rescued plants back into nature in the same or similar site, we feel that in most cases this idea is idealistic rather than realistic and that we must encourage native plant and botanical gardens habitat, a fine example of which is the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill. In addition to native settings and brilliantly contrived, flourishing habitat plantings, this active and enthusiastic organization is also developing "branch locations" by purchasing or accepting donations of good, easily secured (in the protective sense) botanical locations throughout the state. Our readers are encouraged to look into existing or embryonic organizations of similar character where they live and to participate in such realistic conservation efforts themselves.

For the future, we intend to embark on a more active and outgoing commitment to conservation through CPN. We hope this additional editorial activity will meet with reader approval and we encourage your comments.

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