Beginner's Corner

DROSOPHYLLUM

by L. Song

Drosophylum lusitanicum is native to the coastal areas of Portugal and Morocco, growing in soil that drains well. In attempting to grow this plant in cultivation, this should be kept in mind. The mix that we have used to grow this plant consists of 2 parts by volume 20 mesh silica sand, 2 parts peat moss and 1 part decomposed granite gravel. To a gallon of mix, 1 tablespoon each of dolomite powder and bone meal is added and mixed well.

Drosophyllum seems to grow best during the cooler part of the year, slowing down when summer comes. This is probably due to living where most of the rain comes in the winter months. Most of our plants in Southern California seem to die after flowering during the summer months, especially if the weather has been very warm. Other growers who may have cooler weather the year around may have more success in keeping this plant alive for longer periods. This is indeed the case as reported in an article reprinted from the CP Society of Great Britain found elsewhere in this issue.

Another requirement is good strong light. Lower light levels will result in etiolated plants with weak leaves and color. A plant grown in full sun (for at least half a day) will have red-tipped glands and short internodes. The leaves will trap many insects if they are around. Our plants here at California State University, Fullerton, seem to suffer from the lack of insects, so some foliar feeding is done with a weak fertilizer solution.

The seed is hard-coated and resistant to germination; some treatment, such as scarification, is necessary to get good germination. Seeds will germinate usually durng the fall and will retain their ability to germinate for many years. We have gotten germination for about three years from previously planted flats where the seed was not treated. So far, seed is the only reliable way to propagate this plant.

Several pests and diseases can attack *Drosophyllum.* Mealybug, aphis (plant lice) and caterpillars can be a serious problem, but can easily be controlled by hand picking or a mild insecticide. We have used, with no damage, Metasystox-R with toxaphene (the mention of brand/trade names, to the exclusion of others, is for convenience only and in no way constitutes CPN's endorsement), fumigated with Plantfume 103 (see CPN 4(4):58-59) and for caterpillars, Biotrol, which is a preparation of *Bacillus thurgiensis,* a disease specific for them.

During prolonged periods of cool moist weather, *Bortrytis* or grey mold can be a problem. Treatment with Benomyl or other suitable fungicides as well as keeping all dead leaves cleaned off will alleviate the problem. The seedlings are also quite susceptible to damping off disease. Soil mix should be sterilized and over-watering should be avoided. This is why the soil mix we use has such coarse sand.

Seed is best sown where plants are to grow permanently; however, they can be very carefully transplanted while the plants are still seedlings, if care is taken not to break too many roots. Water well

PAT HANSEN, CPN secretary/treasurer, was barely able to recognize Venus' flytrap when she began working with CPN two and one-half years ago. Considerably more knowledgeable now, she can hold her own in conversation with people who know nothing about CP.

A Russian major in college, Pat's experience with plants extends mainly to vegetables and annuals. In addition to her work with CPN, she types Slavic linguistics manuscripts, volunteers considerable time at the Fullerton Arboretum, and mothers two small children.

Aside from becoming acquainted with "these marvelous plants", Pat appreciates most her contact with CPN'ers, who are friendly, interesting and very cooperative. She is hopeful that the CP bog at the Arboretum will provide a focal point for CP meetings in the not-too-distant future.

WANT ADS

Gordon Hanna, 168 Kilaben Road, Kilaben Bay, 2283, AUSTRALIA. (TS) N. maxima, D. auriculata, D. peltata.

Steve Hawkins, Rt. #4, Forest Hills, Marion, N.C. 28752. (WB) N. ampullaria, N. sanguinea, N. villosa, N. gracillis, N. lowii, Sarracenia oreophila, S. purp. x minor (cuttings, seeds). Heliamphora, Drosera regia, D. burmanni, Sarracenia rubra, N. rafflesiana, N. fusco (plants, seeds, cuttings).

and keep in a cool, well-lit place for a few days until they recover.

The large sulphur-yellow flowers are open for a single day only, but are produced over a period of weeks. They are self-fertile and usually set seed without any manipulation, but to insure seed set, rub two flowers gently together, making sure that pollen is deposited on the stigma, which is visible on top of a dome-like structure in the center of the flower. The black seeds can be harvested when the stem below becomes dry or when the dome (ovary) splits open, exposing the black seeds.

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successfully transplanted to the greenhouse. These test tube plants reach maturity in less time than those grown from seed.

PLANT PRODUCTION

For the commercial grower, large scale production of any plant requires a predictable quality and uniformity of the crop. One thing I try to do is select those plants with the most favorable characteristics and keep them for stock. Another thing is to standardize a soil mix and fertilizer program. Using *Miracid*® and the soil mix described above, healthy carnivorous plants can be produced by growers and hobbyists alike. The result is not only improved quality, but more importantly, increased quantity available so that field collection is no longer necessary. (Fig. 2) (Received 5/12/79)

NOTE: Bill Carroll sent seed to the CPN seed bank so that all requests for seed should be directed to that source. Seed is 50¢ per packet. See page 43.