

# CP GROWING IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

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My interest in plants started some ten years ago when a *Philodendron* was left in my care. Gradually a small collection of houseplants was formed by visiting local nurseries and department stores and it was in one such store I saw my first CP, a small *Dionaea*. Having a taste for the exotic and a general curiosity about this odd plant I had seen only in pictures, I took one home. Although the plant thrived for a while, it gradually began to sicken and finally died. This prompted a little research into the culture of the Fly-Trap and as a by-product uncovered many other species of CP as well.

Being somewhat discouraged with growing *Dionaea* I ordered several of the smaller *Sarracenia* from a biological supply co. and planted them in a small terrarium. Most of the plants lived only a few months, but two *S. purpurea* soon filled in the bare spots by covering the planter. They grew well for over two years, with one plant producing a side shoot, but eventually they died from not having the dormancy period they require. At the time I did not realize that simply placing them outside during our winter months would have kept them growing year after year, and after losing these plants for no obvious reason, I was about ready to give up. [Can't place them outside abruptly without accomodation, or freeze will kill them.]

Then during a trip to Sarasota, FL., I stopped for a visit at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, where I saw my first *Nepenthes*, *N. sanguinea*, growing out of a lava-rock wall in company with orchids and other epiphytes. After two more visits, one of the workers asked the owner of the plant if I might have a cutting, to which he agreed. Upon reaching home, the cutting was potted in a mixture of coarse peat and sand and placed pot and all in a clear plastic bag. After four weeks the bottom of the cutting began to rot, so it was cut above the diseased area and repotted in

fresh soil. Finally after three months a new leaf appeared and the plant was on its way. *N. sanguinea* was supposed to be somewhat of a difficult plant to grow, and since it was still doing well after several months, it was time to look for other members of the genus.

On a trip to Oahu, a visit to Foster Gardens turned up several more species of *Nepenthes*, but they were not in the best shape, the Garden's prime concern being their fine collection of palms. While they could not sell any of the plants, they did recommend a nursery I might try, where I found a specimen of *N. mirabilis*. It had no pitchers, and no one seemed to know what they would look like, but it was a large plant so I took a chance. In order to be carried back to the Mainland all of the soil [and most of the roots] had to be removed. Due to shock, it was several months before the plant recovered and began producing its long green pitchers. (See Figs. 1 & 2, p. 93)

Gradually, through mail order and subsequent trips, several more species were turned up, among them; *N. alata*, *N. kampo-tiana*, *N. rafflesiana*, *N. x 'Superba'*, and even two small *N. villosa*, plus several tropical *Drosera* spp. There was now no turning back. I have even tried my hand at *Sarracenia* again [they have finally stopped dying and are doing well] and have found well populations of *S. minor* and *Drosera capillaris* in the west part of our county. (See Figs. 3 & 4, p. 93)

Growing CP in central Fla. does have its unique compensations. There is usually plenty of rain-water available for those species that prefer it, and the humidity during the warm months runs 85-99%. All my *Nepenthes*, *Cephalotus*, and the tropical *Drosera* are kept in a greenhouse that doubles as a shade house in summer [several side panels lifting to provide ventilation and let out excess heat]. In winter where night-time temperatures may fall into the

(Please see **FLORIDA** p. 97)



FIG. 1 *N. sanguinea* and *N. alata* (latter being held)



FIG. 2 *N. mirabilis*

CP growing in central Florida  
Photos by C. Dodd II



FIG. 3 *N. alata* -Green form



FIG. 4 *S. minor* in flower

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mid 20's on occasion, two electric and two kerosene space heaters keep the temperature in the mid 50's. The *Sarracenia* and native *Drosera* do fine outside the year round.

Most of my propagation is done indoors using a covered 100 gal. aquarium fitted with two four foot plant lights. *Nepenthes* cuttings have half of their lower leaves removed, with two or three terminal leaves being left intact. The ends of the cuttings are dipped in Rootone F [with fungicide] and inserted into a handful of moist sphagnum, which is wired in place. The moss ball is then set atop a thin layer of vermiculite in a seed flat, placed in the aquarium, and misted frequently. When roots show through the moss [which may take three months or longer] the plants are potted up using a mixture of sphagnum, peat, and vermiculite. *Nepenthes* seed has yielded various results from good to poor, but is very slow and I would recommend cuttings to anyone wishing to try propagation.

All the mature CP are watered daily during warm sunny weather and less during winter or periods of cloudy weather. I have had good results fertilizing *Nepenthes* once a month alternating Peters 20-20-20 Orchid Special with fish emulsion, both cut to half strength recommended for *Cattleya* orchids which would become 1 tablespoon per gallon. *Cephalotus* responds well to dilute bi-

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tures are during the active growing season, the more light the plants seem to take in and subsequently traps assume the healthy-looking "natural" colors.

I am currently growing, and having success with the following species: *Drosera aliciae*, *D. hamiltonii*, *D. spathulata*, *D. prolifera*, *D. capensis*, *D. binata* [all forms], *D. adela*, *D. schizandra*, *Cephalotus*, *Darlingtonia*, *Pinguicula caudata*, *P. x kewensis*, *P. gypsicola*, *P. ionantha* and *P. planifolia*.

I maintain an eight to nine hour light cycle during the winter months and increase to sixteen hours during the summer.

monthly feedings of Miracid®, [¼ teaspoon per gal], as do *Sarracenia* and several *Drosera* spp. However Miracid® has stunted growth and inhibited pitcher formation in *Nepenthes*.

Pests and problems have been few and for the most part easily handled. The worst problem was heater failure on a very cold night which burned the leaves off the lowland *Nepenthes* and cut the *Droseras* back to the soil. Pests have included thrips [which were easily controlled with a rose dust], caterpillars, and wasps which bite off developing pitchers. Much worse are the Maidenhair Ferns [*Adiantum* spp.] that pop up now and then. Their very vigorous root system is capable of choking out a weaker plant. I found this out by letting some grow in a pot with an *Anthurium*. They should be destroyed as they appear.

Lastly I would like to thank Dr. Kiat Tan of Marie Selby Gardens, Patrick Nutt of Longwood, Joe Mazrimas and CPN, anonymous friend, and all the others who have spurred my interest in one of God's most unique creations, the Carnivorous Plants.

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## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

NEW WALL CHART AVAILABLE. Keith West, one of the foremost botanical artists of the world, is completing a series of 16 24"x31" full color wall charts depicting composite scenes from major US botanical regions, somewhat similar to the British Museum's series for Britain. The first four are completed, and one is on Southern Pinelands, included in the paintings, four species of *Sarracenia*, two *Droseras*, one *Pinguicula* and two *Utricularias*. Included in the scene are various pinelands orchids and other associated plants familiar to those who have botanized the eastern coastal plain. This chart is No. 306C, costs \$8.00 (plus \$1.50 postage) and is available from the New York Botanical Garden Shop, Bronx, NY 10458. The plants are all very well done as is the printing.