

On Growing *Drosera regia*

by Phillip Jacobs

As to *Drosera regia*, I use clear plastic Take-away food containers with clear lids. These containers are roughly 10 x 7 x 5cm deep and I make drainage holes before putting in a shallow drainage layer of gravel and then filling up to within $\frac{1}{2}$ of the top with a mixture of 50/50 sharp sand and sphagnum peat. After sowing, I put on the lid[s] and leave it slightly open at one end for air, and place in a greenhouse with a temperature of about 18 to 27° C. and in a semi-shaded position. I keep the seed very moist without being sodden continually. Germination takes place within 3-4 weeks with fresh seed. I use these plastic containers for all or most of my CP seed sowing as I find that with the initial good soaking of water before sowing, no further watering is needed for a long time which helps to cut down on attention and labor. They are also useful for placing in a refrigerator with seeds which require low temperature treatment to germinate, as again, little, or no attention to watering is required, and they take up very little space and can even be packed on top of each other in the fridge, if space is limited.

I find that *D. regia* needs **extra good drainage** with regular watering to keep the compost very moist—similar to growing the Mexican pinguiculas such as *P. caudata* where I stand the pots in shallow trays, water the plants from the top, and then allow surplus water in the trays to disappear, and the compost to become just moist before adding more water again—I use rain water. The compost which I use for my *D. regia* is as follows:

- 3 parts sphagnum peat
- 1 part Sedge peat [Michigan peat, I believe you call it in the USA]
- 2 parts sharp sand
- 1 part gravel
- Plus, some charcoal nodules.

With good light, the tentacles of *D. regia* become almost black-red in color and this is a good indication of enough light. I give

25-30% shade in this climate here where the sun is very strong due to both latitude and elevation [6,000 ft.]. In nature, *D. regia* grows in a mountain region of the S.E. Cape Province but although the winter temperatures in the locality where they grow can become quite low, in winter the temperatures range from about 40° F. at night up to 65-70°F. during the day. In summer the temperatures can go up to 85°F. or more. I find that the plants go semi-dormant during the cooler winter season with most of the leaves dying down but not completely. I grow my plants with a winter minimum temperature of about 45°F. and this seems to suit them. I find that leaf cuttings are useless for propagation as they rot off rapidly despite any care given them. With root cutting, propagation is easy, but from my experience, there is only a limited time for optimum results and that is when the plants start to grow away vigorously in spring. The roots are thick and black and I find that you can remove $\frac{2}{3}$ of roots present without harming the adult plant, provided it is immediately repotted in fresh medium and covered with a clear plastic bag [with holes for ventilation] and stood in a semi-shaded spot until recovered from the shock. I cut the thick roots up in 2-3 cm lengths with a razor blade, and lay them on the surface of a 50/50 sphagnum peat/sand mix and push them into the surface until only the upper face of the root surface is exposed [laid horizontally]. Temperature is kept at 18-25°C. and the medium very moist. After about 6-10 weeks buds develop and often more than one but to a root piece.

Special Request

CPN would like to know if anyone else has successfully grown *Drosera regia*. Please send information for possible publication to J.A. Mazrimas: 329 Helen Way, Livermore, CA 94550.