

Nepenthes mirabilis variation

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The *mirabilis* complex, this common form of *Nepenthes*, is variable. The different forms often have been given separate identities as species, but eventually were recognized as variations of a single species. Some of the plants in circulation have acquired incorrect names accidentally, or sometimes fraudulently to increase trading value to put as much mileage on them as possible. The problem of old synonyms occurs with plants mostly out of Europe where many *mirabilis* are still labelled *phyl-lamphora*, an abandoned name not used in decades.

The plant in CP trade labeled *kampotiana* is not at all the original plant described by Lecomte. The true species is not believed to be in cultivation at this date. Instead, the bogus "kampot" is thought to be a natural hybrid between *mirabilis* and *thorelii*, and has appeared on newer collectors' lists unofficially labelled \times *lecoufleii*. To add more wood to the fire, there is doubt to the authenticity of "thorelii-long green." Lecomte's paper on *thorelii* is difficult to obtain, if it's still around at all. Many feel "thorelii-long green" is the Thailand *mirabilis*, and the pubescent leaved, squat pitcher "short round" is the true species. If this is so, many hybrids using *thorelii* as a parent are mislabeled and plants like \times *hachiyo* and \times *effulgent koto* would be intergrades, not hybrids.

I've seen very little information on the species *anamensis* described by Macfarlane as a highland variety. The one in cultivation seems also to be a *mirabilis* variant. The light green pitcher, maroon and green wavy leaves are too similar to the other *mirabilis* types of the Indo-China area.

Two other plants have been brought to my attention as being bogus. One which seems to have been renamed in Australia somewhere along the line is *geoffrayi*, another plant of Lecomte. I have not seen the bogus type which is typical *mirabilis*, obviously labelled so as to increase its popularity. The true species *geoffrayi* is not at all similar to *mirabilis*, and there would be no room for confusion in identifying the two.

Smillesii is another example, truly a *mirabilis* with a "new name." The plant has been around for years; rename it and once again the plant sells.

A new monograph is needed for the genus *Nepenthes*. The *mirabilis* complex needs much work itself. Until a standard is achieved, many *Nepenthes* collectors will remain lost. In the next few years many plants not in cultivation will become available. It is very important to be able to properly identify them so others can confidently rest assured what they have labelled is really what they have. Any comments?

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