A REWARDING HOBBY

by

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I have been studying and cultivating CP for a few years, collecting as many species as I have room for in my 55, 30 and 10 gallon terrariums, and a couple of goldfish bowls for the aquatic Utricularia. In addition, I have a half dozen mini-terrariums for the enchanting pygmy sundews. It is a most rewarding hobby and a topic of conversation with anyone, especially children who love to see the Venus’-fly-traps do their thing!

Although I am an amateur grower of CP, I hope that some of the things I have observed may benefit other growers. For those who grow aquatic Utricularia or Aldrovanda, you may find that putting water into a fishbowl or aquarium a difficult task especially with a 2 inch layer of soft peat moss sitting on the bottom. I float a sponge in one corner and pour the water gently in a steady stream over the sponge which fills the tank without disturbing the peat moss layer.

Last winter, I used Drosera rotundifolia hibernaculum ‘leaf buds’ for propagation of this plant. The tiny buds or leaves act like pygmy gemmae. The grew very fast when placed under live sphagnum moss. The resulting plants were healthy and vigorous, forming hibernaculum the following fall. The parent plant suffered no harm by the removal of a row of leaf buds.

The tiny pygmy sundews are incredibly pretty and fascinating. I grow mine under lights about 5" from the plants for 16 hours in summer and 8 or less hours during the winter. Plants which are 18" or more from the lights will not develop their sweet traps. An easy pygmy to grow is ‘Lake Badgerup’. One day last summer, I fed my plant a minute crumb of a Tubifex worm and if I winked, I would have missed the action for the speedy tentacle movement was astounding, perhaps even surpassing the speed of D. burmanii. In order to observe this, use a magnifying lens of about 20x and give the plant about 16 hours of light.

D. spathulata seems to lose its appetite when given only 8 hours of artificial light per day. There is no noticeable leaf movement when digesting its meal.

Another tip for the D. adelae and D. indica lover is that a large surface area is needed for D. adelae since this plant propagates itself naturally from roots. Old crowns are constantly being replaced with new ones which are always growing up to the surface. The roaming D. indica, a difficult species, would also benefit from a wide container for whenever the plant falls to the moss it roots, enabling it to trail along as if growing outside.

I agree with Michael Homick who gave advice on cooling seeds in the refrigerator. This treatment seems to enhance germination among tropical Drosera such as D. indica and D. glandulosa.

I licked the fungus blues! Instead of risking poisoning myself and my plants, I simply spray the surface of my moss with rainwater, soaking the surface twice weekly but being careful not to wet the Drosera or Pinguicula. It works! All the white fungal growth disappears the next day. Perhaps the fungus cannot cope with the soaking. One problem is fungus on the surface of large seed, such as Byblis gigantea, which needs to be rotated once a day to keep fungus off.

I have read in Adrian Slack’s book, Carnivorous Plants, about the problem with keeping Pinguicula caerulea alive for more than a year. I am growing mine since the spring of 1981. They grow under two lamp grow-lights with an 8-hour cycle in winter and 16 hours during the summer and are kept warm under ambient room temperature all year long. I trim back the leaves with a clean razor blade.

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when they start to die and rot during the winter. They are cut back very gently
down to a tight ball. This is done when
the plant stops growing. After a month or
so, new leaves and flowers emerge from
the sides of the ball. All of my Petasites
have multiple crowns and are flourishing.

Dracaena capensis is one of the most
charming and beautiful of the Dracenas.
They are a hardy lot and adapt easily to
different conditions. Since my plants all
live together, tropicals with the temperate
species, they all receive the same amount
of humidity during the winter.

There are many bogs in my area full of
CP. I have explored some of them, finding
the pearl-like bladders of Utricularia
macrorhiza shimmering in the sunlight.
Last spring I discovered a clear, cool
spring nearby in the woods which
streamed out into a clearing. I dammed
up the area with logs and mud, digging
out a lot of earth and grass to form a
pond. I placed some U. purpurea and U.
gibba in the water and they grew like
weeds. By summer’s end, large clumps
could be seen growing in every direction.
Also, leopard frogs, too, found a home
there. I will plant some S. purpurea and
various Drosera around the pond when
the moss takes over. The water is neutral
in pH.

I like to end this note with a beautiful
picture of S. purpurea which I saw in an
exotic flower book which was mistakenly
labelled as S. flavum. There was a nice
ground covering of U. pubescens. The book
described briefly what gorgeous flowers
the plant had. The supposed flowers were
merely the deadly crimson pitchers of the
pitcher plant.

WANT ADS

When submitting Want Ads, please be
sure to print clearly for best results and
to eliminate mistakes. Please circle the
correct letter before each item (Want,
Trade, Sell or Buy). Want ads are limited
to carnivorous plants, terrariums, green-
houses and moss. There is a charge of
ten cents per item, with no limit to the
number of items you may submit per
issue.

Send coin or check to:
Arboretum, Want Ads
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634

Carnivorous Supplies, P.O. Box 179, Albion
Park, N.S.W. 2527 AUSTRALIA (TS) Drosera,
Utricularia, Sarracenia, Pinguicula. Also CP seeds.
Please send 2 international postal coupons for
list. (W) Unusual species (seed only) Please send
list of available seeds.

Michael Hallett (25 Grayson Rd., Epping, 2121,
N.S.W., AUSTRALIA) (S) D. adelae, D. arcturi,
D. ‘Bannister’, D. regia, U. lateriflora, U. wighinosa,
plus many other native Aust. CP. (WB) Any
Heliamphora, Aldrovandia, Pinguicula.

Joachim Nerz (Arndtstr. 2, 7030 Boblingen,
WEST GERMANY). (WTB) Drosera fulgens I’ve
Heliamphora minor or other species to exchange
for it), N. ciliata, Bioraria.

Bruce Pierson P.O. Box 179, Albion Park, N.S.W.
2527 AUSTRALIA, Has plants and seeds for sale
and swap. Interested in rare or unusual plants
and seeds. (W) Seeds of Heliamphora, Genesia,
Bioraria denia, or anything rare or unusual.

Jeff Williams (4407 Peridot, Friendswood, TX
77546) (TS) 21 varieties of Sarracenia (S) D. spath-
ulata Kansai, D. bulbammi, D. catus, D. intermedius,
U. fibrosa, and U. longifolia; (TB) Nepenthes cuttings
(B) Cephalotus, Byblis.

Note: All individuals or organizations selling,
trading or buying CP are advised to be cognizant
of certain restrictions under the U.S. ESA and
international CITISe for certain species (see ed-
torial, CPN 12, 3, 1983).

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