

Layering and Repotting

(taken from a talk by Ian Gilbert)

Though many people have varied ideas on repotting, Ian Gilbert was to show us his methods.

He first stressed the need to have a good range of pots and potting mediums on hand. Having mixed his own general potting mix, consisting of two parts peat moss, one part sand, one part chopped sphagnum moss, one part polystyrene (the polystyrene used to open up and lighten the mix) and a little Osmocote, well agitated for a consistent mix, and making sure to break up any lumps of peat moss, as they may later create fungal problems, he proceeded to repot a *Sarracenia*, advising us that there was no need to molly-coddle our plants.

First placing some polystyrene in the bottom of the pot to avoid the roots clogging drainage holes, which may cause problems of the mix staying too wet, souring and a possible problem with *Phytophthora*, he filled the pot to about two-thirds and spreading the roots of the *Sarracenia* across the surface of the mix, he then topped up the pot. After trimming away unwanted pitchers, check for correct name tag and mark the date of last repotting. When potting out seedling *Burmanii* into grow tubes, he just placed a little styrene in the base of the tube and having filled the tube with mix, poked a small hole in the top, placed the new plants on and firmed them down. Again, check tag for name and date of potting.

Be sure to water fairly quickly or the plant will dehydrate in the new dry mix. Also be sure when repotting not to leave the roots exposed to the air for too long. This should ensure a low mortality rate.

The only plants he grows sitting in water are his *Utricularia*; all others are left to get plenty of air to the roots.

The other thing of use to C.P. growers is layering, the two forms being ground and aerial layering.

When ground layering with an arching branch as those of *N. gracilis*, lay the branch across another pot of mix, first having sliced the timber half way through on a slight angle

just below a leaf node, using a sharp blade and holding that slice open with a piece of plastic. Pin down the branch across the mix and wait for new roots to fill the pot, when the new plant can be cut from the parent.

Aerial layering is similar. Having placed plastic in the sliced timber to keep it open, make a small plastic envelope around the slice and fill with sphagnum, close the envelope and wait for the envelope to fill with roots. When this has happened, using a small plastic pot with a hole pre-cut in the bottom and sliced up the side, fit the pot around the branch of the parent plant and fill the pot with mix. Now wait for the pot to fill with roots, when the new plant can be separated from the parent.

Plants may be layered off every node, but, in both cases of layering, a period of three to four months may elapse before the plant has a good root system, and is ready to be separated.



Sarracenia flava
Near Pensacola, Florida