

# NEW LIFE FOR A DROSERA

by Brother Roy (Taize Community, 71250 Cluny, France)

It was a sad moment discovering that the *Drosera capensis* which had done so well last year and was to my knowledge safely passing winter in a state of suspended animation, had frozen.

The maxima/minima thermometer close by stated clearly that the temperature at present was  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  and that the depths of  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  had been plummeted!

Uprooting it in order to save the precious mixture of sphagnum, I noticed that a small part of the main root system had a slightly healthier aspect than the rest. Remembering that success had been achieved last year using a rather novel propagating method in order to multiply some Venus Fly Traps, I thought it worth trying again. The method is not my invention and is cited in the book by Donald E. Schnell<sup>1</sup>. All I would like to add is that it works amazingly well.

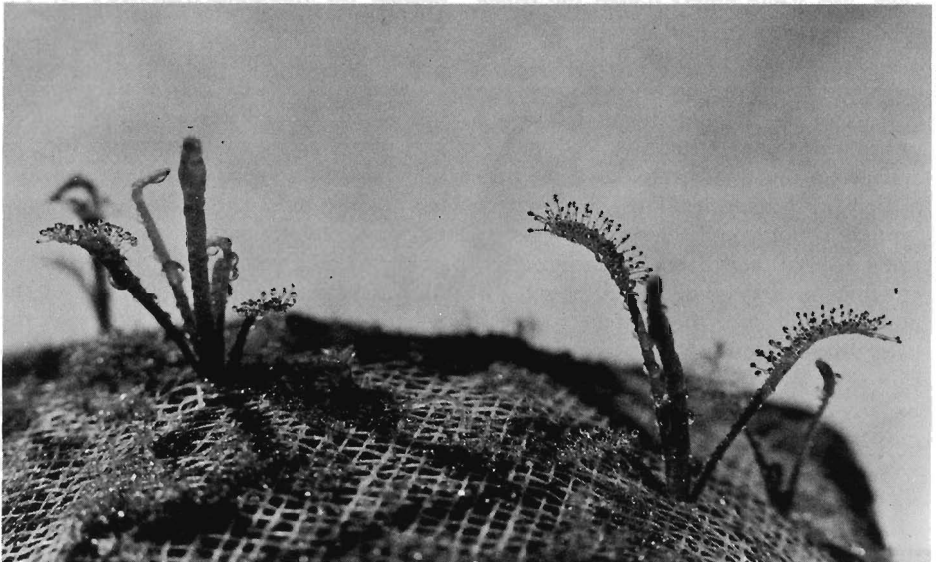
It goes like this: Take a small plastic seed pot and overfill it with live finely chopped sphagnum pressing down gently, allow the moss to mound above the rim. Place a small clean cut piece of root on

top<sup>2</sup> and stretch over a piece of fine mesh cheese cloth or surgical gauze attaching it with an elastic band around the pot. The ideal place to put it is in a propagator as warmth and high humidity are now essential but a plastic bag and a warm corner can be just as good.

Back to *Drosera capensis*: To my astonishment and joy, after barely a fortnight, I saw that two plantlets were growing through the gauze and now a month later they are two centimeters tall with three others boldly sprouting. A striking contrast to the seeds planted a month earlier from the very same plant and which still need the aid of a rather powerful optical instrument to identify them!

<sup>1</sup> Donald E. Schnell, *Carnivorous Plants of North America and Canada*. Published by Blair in the U.S. (see page 105.)

<sup>2</sup> Last year a leaf stalk from *Dionaea muscipula* gave a mass of miniature traps in under four months using the same method.



*Drosera capensis*. Young plantlets growing from root propagation method as outlined in Donald E. Schnell's book. Photo by Brother Roy.