

Nepenthes × *hybrida* and *Nepenthes* × *sedinii*

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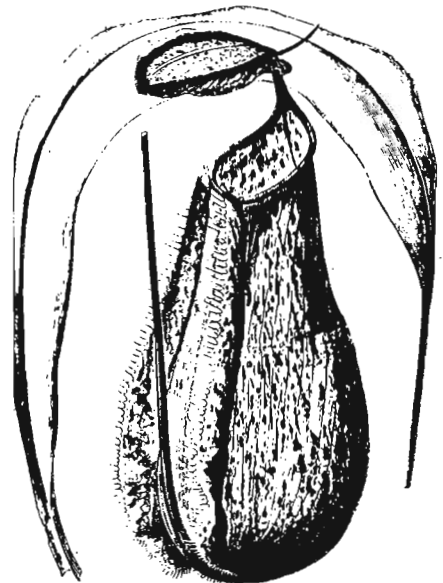
Nepenthes × *hybrida* and *N.* × *sedinii* are the same cross of doubtful parentage, and used in the making of many complex hybrids during the late 1800s. Back in the early days of *Nepenthes* horticulture, the main problem that occurred was positive identification of separate valid species was not always made. Some species of *Nepenthes* went under an array of names, or (were) not named at all due to the fact that many were so similar looking. Much confusion occurred between *N. mirabilis* (which has petiolate leaf to stem arrangement), *N. khasiana* (slightly petiolate to decurrent), *N. distillatoria* (decurrent), *N. gracilis* (decurrent) and *N. hirsuta* (amplexicaul).

Dominy and Sedin, it is speculated, contributed to make these hybrids. Being friends, one probably had the female plant and the other supplied the pollen in an early joint effort to create new material. Seed germinated and was divided between the two growers and two hybrids were named, one by each of the men. Sedin named his hybrid after himself, *N.* × *sedinii*, and Dominy chose *N.* × *hybrida*. These crosses were made prior to 1865 and Masters did the descriptive work to be published. The original paper suggests the cross was "*khasiana* × *gracilis*?" At that time *N. phyllamphora*, *N. distillatoria* and *N. khasiana* were all names to describe *N. mirabilis*. I feel the *N. khasiana* they refer to is indeed *N. mirabilis* because the description for *N.* × *hybrida* reads that the leaves were decurrent (like in *gracilis*) and semi-petiolate (like in *mirabilis*), elongated and slightly lanceolate (as in *gracilis*). If they had *N. khasiana* properly labeled at that time, which I doubt, then it too would fit into this descriptive category. I must point out that *N. distillatoria* has decurrent leaves and could easily have been the *N. gracilis* they mention. *N. hirsuta* is out being the

only one of the above with amplexicaul leaf to stem and the fact that *N. hirsuta* is very hairy and that carries over into offspring hybrids at a reduced rate, yet no printed material mentions *N.* × *hybrida* or *N.* × *sedinii* having such a texture. *N. mirabilis* has petiolate leaves and evidence leans toward both hybrids being a *N. mirabilis* hybrid. *N. mirabilis* not only fits the descriptions; a more positive fact is that in living material today, plants that were crossed with either hybrid bear lacinate leaf edge margins on pitcherless leaves. This is a genetic trait handed down to all *N. mirabilis* hybrids; none other of the above plants has this obvious characteristic.

So we have crosses of doubtful parentage most likely being *N. gracilis* × *N. mirabilis* as we can be certain that *N. mirabilis* is one of the true parents. If *N.* × *hybrida* and *N.* × *sedinii* is not a *N. (gracilis*

N. × *hybrida*



× *mirabilis*) cross, it would be a *N. (distillatoria* × *mirabilis*) cross and certainly not a *N. (khasiana* × *gracilis*) cross. Although *N. distillatoria* is still a possibility instead of *N. gracilis*, nothing written or living can confirm it. Unfortunately, all we have left today are hybrids that were crossed with *N. × hybrida* and *N. × sedinii*. Both are now extinct. The familiar so-called "*N. × hybrida*" is simply a mislabeled *N. alata*

green form, crowned a hybrid accidentally two decades ago.

REFERENCES

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H.J. Veitch, Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, 1897.

200 MILES WITH MELLICHAMP

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It was August 4, 1985, when Dr. Mellichamp and Steve Broyles arrived in Mobile and called me from the motel that they were ready to see great fields of CP. Within an hour, we were on our way to the nearest CP stand.

It was like a football game with numbers being called out rapidly and recorded just as rapidly. When I finally regained my equanimity, I realized that measurements were being taken which sounded just like a good old football game. Each day we travelled fast and far so that each minute was utilized in the field. We travelled as far west as Gulfport, Mississippi, northward about 100 miles, and finally eastward to the Crestview-Defuniak Springs, Florida area. It was a seemingly endless zig-zag pattern. Although almost every location had been previously mapped, one or two we had to skip because of lack of time. By taking shortcuts when possible, we found several totally unrecorded areas.

Temperatures soared well above 100°F for several days and we were blessed with a cooling shower almost every afternoon. Humidity in the field exceeded the temperature until it rained. In the evening when we crossed the Mobile River, the steaming fog held to the tops of the forest like clouds in a South American forest, a haunting reminder that we were in the very limits of the tropical-temperate zone.

We obtained specimens for propagation, hybridization and herbarium use.

Almost every field boasted at least two species and numerous hybrids in various stages of interbreeding. Often, there were more hybrids than pure species. Fortunately, we got a fleeting glance at a snake and evidently it was late to a meeting and did not so much as tip his hat as he hastened away. We were constantly plagued by red-bugs and ticks but only once did we encounter a group of carnivorous mosquitoes. They were starving when we stopped and overweight when we left. Every repellent we used was a wasted investment, and only a sauce for the mosquitoes.

On an interesting rest stop at the Perdido Vineyards in Alabama, we watched a 15-minute filmstrip and tasted the fine wines made from the native muscadines, one of which is the Rose Cou Rouge.

We met Ms. Beverly Bottoms in southern Baldwin Co., a new and very enthusiastic ICPS member who lives in Mobile. On one of our excursions, I was so tired that I waited in the van while Beverly, Larry and Steve dove into a cane-break fifteen to 20 feet tall. We had been sniffing out *S. leucophylla* × *S. flava* for quite some time. Suddenly, my hair stood straight up as I heard a lot of loud yelling and screeching. I grabbed the "judge" (a 44 magnum pistol) and forgetting my troubles, I plunged through the cane and briar to the rescue. I could envision my friends up a tree and a 300-pound black bear daring them down. To my relief, I