

The tuberous *drosera* we were hoping to find occurs at about 1800 m altitude in a remote part of the park 10 km from the nearest road. We set out early the second morning of our visit and after a brisk two hour walk which included escalating two mountains, we finally reached our destination. After exploring for about 15-20 minutes, we eventually found the plant we had been looking for. Much to our surprise, it occurred in very boggy ground and in shallow, wet sphagnum beds (Tuberous *droseras* usually grow in relatively dry soil). The plants were in flower and looked like small *D. peltata*. They were bright red in colour, each had a basal rosette about 2 cm in diameter and an erect stem (rarely two) up to 20 cm tall. Leaves were shield shaped and borne singly and alternately along the stem. The sepals were dark green and pubescent and this petals were white. Due to the overcast conditions the flowers were not open. Most tubers were within 3 cm of the soil surface and were up to .25 cm in diameter. An interesting feature of this plant is the presence of what appears to be adventitious roots arising from the vertical stolon. A few specimens were collected for taxonomic study.

After two days of fruitful exploration, we headed back to Melbourne with a few questions to ponder: Would this alpine tuberous *drosera* revert to a summer dormancy/winter growth pattern in the Melbourne climate? Would refrigeration of tubers of other *droseras* during dormancy be a viable way to protect them from complete desiccation, rot and/or disease? And finally, would not some tuberous *droseras* grow better in summer in the colder climates of Canada and northern Europe?

"New" Potting Medium

Alexander Mrkvicka (Hopfnergasse 6/16/1/4 1230 Vienna) sent in the following information about a "new" potting medium that he has been using for CP. "New" is in quotes because the material has been used by European orchid growers for some years. It is called **rockwool** and is manufactured from volcanic rock. Instead of being "puffed" like perlite, it is melted and spun into a material much like glasswool as used for insulation.

The advantages he has found in the medium are several. The material is stable and open and plants may be kept in it for years, resulting in less root disturbance from frequent repotting as required in some other media. The medium is chemically inert and nutrient-free, and the horticultural variety has a pH of 5.5 Salt accumulations are easily removed with a pure water rinse. Water is held to Rockwool in large amounts, but there are ample humid air spaces for healthy roots. The material does not support pests (crawling or moss), and does not compete with the potted plant as live sphagnum can. Due to the white surface and porous spaces, soil temps can be kept low (e.g. for *Darlingtonia*).

A few disadvantages are present. One must specify horticultural grade as mentioned above. The medium requires more fertilizer applications where these are used since it drains so well. The color (light grey to white) does not look like soil.

He has been growing *Sarracenia* spp., *Darlingtonia*, European *Pinguicula*, *Nepenthes*, some "easy" *droseras* and terrestrial utricularias with good success. *Pinguiculas* and *nepenthes* benefit especially from fewer repottings and foot disturbance. Seedlings and mature plants sensitive to salts accumulation are easily managed by the relatively fewer rinses of pure water required to clear the medium. He feels that the marl fen plants he grows such as *Drosera linearis* and *Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *purpurea* do especially well with fewer phenotypic changes than when grown in peat or sphagnum.

He cautions that one be careful when handling dry rockwool since the dust is irritating and the fibers can penetrate skin—use gloves when handling.

(Editorial Note: The following does not constitute an endorsement or implication that it is the only source, but in the United States we have found that OFE International Inc., P.O. Box 164402, Miami, FL 33116, a dealer in orchid growing supplies, does supply horticultural rockwool. They have a water absorbent and a water repellent form, the latter for particularly fast drainage. They also supply mixes of these two forms in various proportions. We assume that Alex was discussing the absorbent form).

See other references to the use of rockwool on page 75 (Nepenthes & Rockwool by Freddy De Coninck.

Sarracenia purpurea ssp. *venosa* growing in rockwool (left). Photo by A. Mrkvicka.



Drosera sp. "Hammersley" Another New Drosera Species from Western Australia

By Phill Mann, 16 Osborne Rd., Mt. Barker 6324, West Australia

The search for new Carnivorous plants from little known territory of our vast state is always quite exciting because the possibility of locating another new species is quite possible.

Such was one trip in July 1989 to the south coastal region where while checking a damp creek bed I located what looked at first to be a *Drosera macrophylla* type, but this species occurs some 360 miles (600 kilometres) farther to the northwest.

Closer inspection revealed that this plant had finished flowering and did not fully compare with any of the other known species. The plant had almost completed its winter growth so another would be necessary earlier in the season of the next year.

In May 1990 I revisited the area with Alan Lowrie. We were greeted by one of the most exciting sights I have seen. The area where I had located this plant last year was of semi-thick bush type with *Eucalyptus*, *Dryandra*, *Banksia* and *Hakea*. This growth had made it impossible to see more than a few meters into the area. Now it was bare except for the few remaining trees after having suffered a very severe bushfire that had burned everything on ground level but a small amount of leaf litter.

Scattered everywhere were clumps of bright white flowers and the more I looked the more plants I saw. *D. sp* "Hammersley" was flowering in the thousands.

Drosera sp "Hammersley" roughly resembles a cross of *Drosera bulbosa* and *Drosera macrophylla*, but unlike *D. bulbosa* this plant is multi-flowered. One (photo 1) had 108 flowers and buds. Mass flowering in such proportions would be attributed to the bushfire the previous summer and typical of tuberous drosera in this situation.