

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

"CARNIVOROUS PLANT NEWSLETTER IS BECOMING TOO TECHNICAL!"

BARRY MEYERS-RICE

It has happened to me more than a dozen times in the last few months. There I am, at a meeting of carnivorous plant enthusiasts, when someone complains to me,

"Carnivorous Plant Newsletter is getting too technical!"

Is it? Curious, I spent an evening analyzing how the newsletter's content has changed over the last twenty years. I classified every article that had appeared using the broad categories of Editorials, News & Views and social events, Cultivation, Field trips and conservation (I grouped these two topics because so many field trips contain discussions of conservation issues), Densely scientific papers, Literature reviews, and Other topics (articles about stamps, history, poetry, etc.). I opened every issue. I classified each article, counted pages, and tabulated my results. It took all night.

A few interesting results stood out from my census. The average ratio of scientific to horticultural articles has been surprisingly steady, at about 1.2:1. But last year the ratio was 2.6:1. So those subscribers talking to me at meetings were not imagining a change in the newsletter's composition.

I discussed this result with many members, and some suggested I conduct a reader survey to help guide me in my editorial duties. I do not want to do this, because surveys will not help change the content of Carnivorous Plant Newsletter. There is one and only one way to change the newsletter's content—readers must contribute! It is that simple! Jan and I cannot wave magic wands over each issue—we need your articles!

Another interesting result from my study of back issues is that the amount of News & Views material has been diminishing. Apparently the readership is getting lazy. This will not do. If smaller submissions such as News & Views or horticultural pieces stop arriving at my mailbox, the large scientific contributions to the newsletter will dominate. This will result in the tone of the newsletter changing, and much of its charm may be lost. Submit your horticultural hints, field trip experiences (surely people are visiting places other than *Nepenthes* country!), and news about carnivorous plants in your life.

And what about the name, "Carnivorous Plant Newsletter"? Many people have asked us to change it to something more grand like "Carnivorous Plant Journal." We are hesitant to make this change because the name Carnivorous Plant Newsletter is well known and respected in the world of publications. But we have changed our cover by using a new title font and adding the parallel title, "Journal of the International Carnivorous Plant Society." This seems like a good compromise. Do you like it? But remember, this is just the wrapping on the newsletter's exterior—its content is far more important.

Did you notice that regardless of the different topics in this editorial we keep returning to content? And the only way to mold the newsletter's content is to write pieces for it. So get to work! Write!