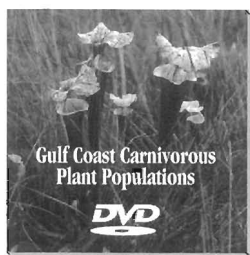


# SPECIAL REVIEW: GULF COAST CARNIVOROUS PLANTS POPULATIONS—DVD

Reviewed by Carl Mazur



A few months ago I noticed a posting on the carnivorous plant list-serv about a DVD project that list member Jim Miller was working on. I lurked for a while, wondering what the project was all about. After reading a few posts, I decided to contact Jim myself for the low down. To my surprise, I learned he was putting together a DVD dedicated to the carnivorous plant populations of the Gulf Coast. The best part, however, was that he was planning on making it available to other carnivorous plant enthusiasts. Great idea! What really caught my attention about the project was that proceeds from the sale of the DVD were going to be donated to The Nature Conservancy and the ICPS to aid in carnivorous plant conservation efforts. I didn't know exactly what I was expecting to see in the final product, however, the wait proved to be worth it.

When I got my copy of the DVD, I eagerly put it in my DVD player. I was greeted with a very professional opening sequence and DVD interface; it was like store bought disk! It even had a scene selection menu... I pressed PLAY.

Now, if you are expecting a scientific rundown on bog habitats, native bog flora, genetic diversity and an explanation of the effect of hybridization and introgression on the biodiversity of pitcher plant populations, you will be disappointed. If you are expecting a detailed breakdown of carnivorous plant species that inhabit the Gulf Coastal regions of the USA, again, you will be disappointed. If you are expecting an answer to the meaning of life... You get the picture. So what is the DVD like?

The best I can offer as a comparison are those relaxing CD's you can buy in nature stores. You know—those soothing sounds of thunderstorms or ambient sounds of the forest or ocean. Those CDs are soft, soothing, tranquil and relaxing. This DVD is like that. When I watched it, I was taken on a tranquil, relaxing journey through the carnivorous plant habitats of the Gulf. If you have never been to Gulf Coast, it certainly gives you a great feel for what the carnivorous plant habitats are like. The quality of the footage is exceptional. The DVD includes large scenic panoramic views of habitats as well as stunning close-ups. The detail and beauty of plants is clearly captured. There is no voicing or narration to distract from the visuals throughout the entire run of the DVD—the audio consists of actual outdoor bog sounds interspersed with mellow cello music; both compliment each other and add to the serenity of the experience.

The DVD focuses primarily on *Sarracenia*, likely because it is the most prominent carnivorous plant genus of the Gulf Coast. There was also a clear bias for *S. leucophylla* and *S. flava*, with the two species and their hybrids taking up a good share of the screen time. However, other *Sarracenia* species of the Gulf Coast enjoyed much time in the lime-light. The least represented *Sarracenia* was *S. purpurea* subsp. *venosa* var. *burkii* (*S. rosea*), with only one shot during the DVD's roughly 90 minute running time. *Sarracenia psittacina* was also poorly represented. *Drosera* and *Utricularia* were also lacking in terms of percentage of time they found themselves on the screen. The *Pinguicula* coverage focused primarily on *P. ionantha*.

As an added bonus, there are a number of still pictures at the end of the DVD, featuring excellent photos of carnivorous plants in habitat taken from Jim's personal photographic collection.

All in all, this DVD is a worthwhile investment, especially considering the proceeds are going to help the very habitats you'll be watching. If you are fan of *Sarracenia* and have not been lucky enough to visit carnivorous plant habitats in the Gulf Coast of the USA, then this DVD is a must as it shows you firsthand how and where these plants grow. There is nothing quite as impressive as standing in field of *S. leucophylla* in the wild; the sight can be overwhelming. Unfortunately, it is getting harder and harder to do this as more and more habitat is falling to development and what many people call progress.

This DVD can be purchased directly from Jim Miller for \$49.95 (US), including shipping. His email address is jim\_miller@mindspring.com. For more information or to like to see clips from the DVD, you can visit the ICPS website ([www.carnivorousplants.org](http://www.carnivorousplants.org)).