

# SCOTT BENNETT'S CARNIVOROUS PLANT PRINTS

Reviewed by Carl Mazur

Prints of botanical artwork have become quite chic. Over the years I have collected a small collection of hand-painted carnivorous plant prints from the 1800s. This can be a very expensive hobby; depending upon the age and size of the prints, they cost about 150 USD or more, even for prints only 13 × 18 cm (5 × 7 inches) in size! Even though I love these antiques, I am reluctant to display them for fear of UV damage or other mishaps. While they can be framed so they are protected from damage, doing this can be quite costly—even more so than the actual artwork! I have tried cost effective alternatives such as digitizing them and printing them out on photo paper. Unfortunately, within six months they began fading. Little did I know that a cost effective alternative was going to present itself from an old connection I made many years earlier.

In the early 1990s, I was invited to an informal carnivorous plant get-together in a small town in upstate New York. It was there that I had the privilege of meeting Scott Bennett. He had brought paintings of *Pinguicula gypsicola* and *Cephalotus follicularis*. Scott works in watercolor and gouache on hot press watercolor paper. While I do not remember much of Scott during this meeting, other than a quick handshake and a casual “hello, nice to meet you,” the images of those paintings have been ingrained in my mind ever since. I was amazed at the level of detail in his paintings. Every detail was painstakingly reproduced with incredible accuracy. They were truly amazing paintings. On my drive home I kept thinking to myself, “Man, I would love to own one of those.” Then reality would set in; like most other original works of art, they were way out of my financial reach. So being the practical sort that I am, I filed the dream of owning one of these masterpieces away for another day—or at least, for a less financially challenged day.

That was over ten years ago, and like most dreams, they had faded with time. But my interest in Scott's illustrations and paintings was rekindled when many of his works were used in Peter D'Amato's book. I contacted Scott to see if he had prints available, and to my surprise he informed me that he was working the bugs out of a new print process to make his prints easily affordable.

Scott is marrying the traditional world of watercolor painting techniques with the new world of digital imaging technologies. He uses ultrahigh-resolution scanners to digitize his original artwork, then carefully removes any imperfections and color corrects them. After he adds a background color and supporting text, the layout is complete. Scott also runs a series of test prints so he can make any final image adjustments to each image before choosing the final production print.

Using this method, the prints can be created on demand—when a particular print is requested, Scott simply prints it out onto 100% mould-made cotton fiber acid-free lignin paper that is chlorine-free and pH buffered with calcium carbonate. The results from this eight-color ink jet technology will not fade when displayed under glass and exposed to average indoor light levels, and have archival qualities for up to 100 years. Before being shipped, Scott inspects each print, signs and dates it, and embosses it with his chop mark indicating his inspection of the print, which adds final authority to the origin of the print.

Needless to say, after talking to Scott about his prints I was very curious about the quality. I remembered the *Pinguicula* and *Cephalotus* paintings I saw all those year earlier. I was interested to see how the prints would compare. Scott was kind enough to send me a number of prints to inspect, and one of them was the *Pinguicula* I remembered so well. The largest was printed on 69 × 43 cm (27×17 inches) paper, with an image size of 60 × 29 cm (23.75 × 11.30 inches). I was most curious about the quality of the large prints because any image degradation would be most visible on these: the images were tack sharp and vibrant. I am not an expert on paper, but it is clearly a solid, high quality material. I was convinced of the high quality of the prints.

The last thing to consider was the price. Scott's prints are very affordable (certainly more so than my antique prints!). The largest print size that Scott offers (described above) is only 90 USD. His smallest print, 32 × 21 cm (12.5 × 8.25 inches) is only 35 USD. And since these prints are not completely irreplaceable antiques, you should have no problem hanging them up!

Scott's method of producing prints is a win-win for both artist and consumer. It gives Scott the ability to increase the number and variety of prints that he can make available and gives the consumer a high quality piece of artwork at an affordable price. If you are interested in buying a print, you can visit his website ([www.scottbennettart.com](http://www.scottbennettart.com)). You can also find information about the latest release of Scott Bennett's prints on the ICPS website at [www.carnivorousplants.org/latestnews/bennett/printrelease.htm](http://www.carnivorousplants.org/latestnews/bennett/printrelease.htm).

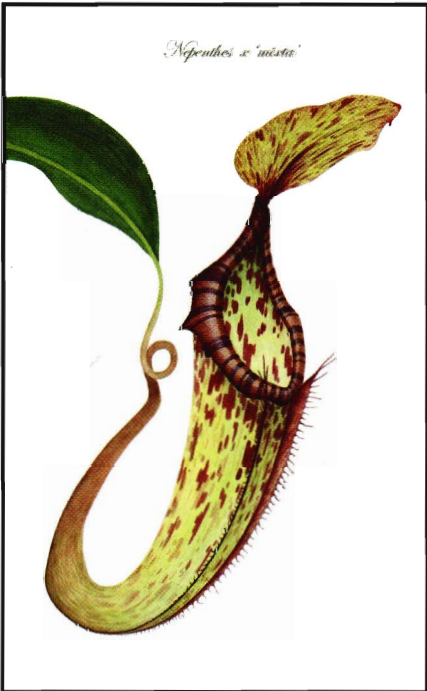
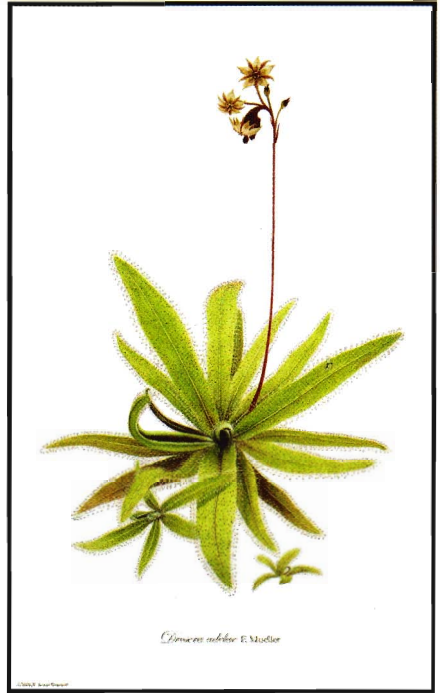


Figure 1: Four of Bennett's illustrations. These images have been cropped slightly to fit Carnivorous Plant Newsletter's page dimensions; the black borders were added to help separate the images.