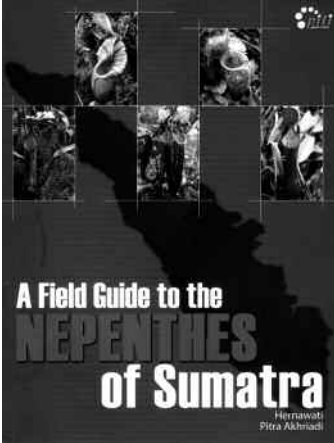


## BOOK REVIEW



Hernawati, and Akhriadi, Pitra. 2006. A field guide to the *Nepenthes* of Sumatra. PILI-NGO Movement, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. ISBN 979-3143-18-5. xiv+94 pp. 15 cm × 20 cm. Price to be announced.

Reviewed by Charles Clarke

A field Guide to the *Nepenthes* of Sumatra by Hernawati and Pitra Akhriadi is exactly as the name suggests—a short book presenting basic information on thirty-one Sumatran taxa, the majority of which were surveyed in the wild by the authors over a period of several years, as part of a research program funded by British Petroleum (BP). The upshot of that work was a report on the conservation status of Sumatran *Nepenthes* species, based on the authors' field observations. As part of their work, the authors felt that it would be good to increase the public profile of *Nepenthes*

in Sumatra by publishing a guide of this type; this is the result. The guide is a soft cover production printed on very thin paper with colour photographs throughout, along with several line drawings. The opening sections introduce the reader to the island of Sumatra and the morphology of *Nepenthes*. The main part of the book provides a brief description and photos of each species, as well as providing several spot characters and information on the typical habitat, IUCN conservation status, geographical and altitudinal range, etc. The final section deals with the conservation status of Sumatran *Nepenthes*. Much of this information is available in other publications, but the key difference here is that it was collected by local Indonesian workers, who have direct access to many of these species on a regular basis.

It's hard to strike a balance reviewing books of this type—on one hand, it is important to be critical and impartial in appraising the work, but when you've known the authors for years and were involved in various stages of their applications for funding, field work and report writing, as I have, there has to be some element of bias and I admit to that freely. Readers who speak English as their first language will find many minor grammatical errors in the text, but I have no issue with this, as I could not achieve a result of similar quality if I had to write in Indonesian, and their efforts in producing a document that is generally very readable is to be commended. The authors are acutely aware of the problems associated with the illegal collection of *Nepenthes* from the wild, and have been careful not to give away any important locations. The correct identification of species throughout is refreshing, but to be expected as the authors know the local taxa well and have read all the major works on the genus published in recent years.

Where possible, the authors have provided their own photographs, but have also used (with our permission) photos by myself and Ch'ien Lee and we are very grateful for their acknowledgement of this (many books published in SE Asia "borrow" images from photographers without obtaining permission, a blatant infringement of copyright). The quality of the paper, printing and images is perhaps a little low, but given the very meagre funds available to produce this book, this is understandable. In summary, this book will be of interest to anyone who collects publications on *Nepenthes*, or those who are interested in the conservation status of *Nepenthes* or carnivorous plants in general. I like it a lot and commend the authors for their efforts.

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## Looking Back: CPN 25 years ago

The September 1982 issue was dominated by three articles on *Nepenthes* in Malaysia, Singapore, and cultivation. Interest in the genus has only increased in the intervening 25 years, as a conference and exhibition on *Nepenthes* was just held at Sarawak, Malaysia. Let's hope interest (and wild populations of *Nepenthes*) persist for another twenty-five years!