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Exciting conservation news: The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection Project!

It is a sad fact that more and more plant and animal species are becoming increasingly threatened with the risk of extinction. Conservation of carnivorous plants and their habitats is made difficult due to their environmental sensitivity, high rates of endemism, (often) slow reproductivity, high horticultural value, and many other factors. *Nepenthes* are among the carnivorous plants most adversely effected by the activities of human kind, with one species (*N. thorelii*) already seemingly totally extinct (in the wild and in cultivation), and four further species (*N. aristolochioides*, *N. clipeata*, *N. khasiana*, and *N. rigidifolia*) increasingly jeopardized or already near extinct in the wild. The imperiled state of these *Nepenthes* makes the preservation of the genetic diversity in cultivation extremely important for their survival.

For this purpose, Stewart McPherson, well known for his magnificent books on carnivorous plants, has taken the initiative to form the Ark of Life Foundation. This non-profit effort will organize and build collections of rare plant species as an *ex situ* conservation approach to preserve and protect genetic diversity in the hope of supporting future reintroduction efforts. The first collection, or “ark”, has recently been established as “The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection” and focuses on ensuring the continuing existence of *N. aristolochioides*, *N. clipeata*, *N. khasiana*, and *N. rigidifolia*.

The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection will preserve all cultivated lineages of these four species and obtain genetic material not yet in cultivation. Collaboration with local organizations in Indonesia and India is being developed to additionally raise awareness about the specific threats faced by these species and their habitats. The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection will be permanently housed at the Hortus botanicus Leiden, the Botanical garden of Leiden University, The Netherlands, with a formal agreement signed during the 2010 ICPS Conference at Leiden. The ICPS has supported and helped this important conservation effort and partially funded the establishment of The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection.

More information on The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection can be found at www.arkoflife.net. If you would like to help secure a future for these imperiled carnivorous plants, consider donating cuttings, seedlings of plants of the imperiled *Nepenthes* to The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection for permanent conservation so that the collection may grow. Alternatively, you can sponsor a new acquisition plant or donate specifically to help this important nonprofit effort. Please contact The Rare *Nepenthes* Collection at info@arkoflife.net for more information.