

THE 13TH ICPS POST-CONFERENCE TOUR TO THE GREATEST BOTANICAL GARDENS OF HYOGO PREF., JAPAN

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Abstract: The 13th ICPS Post-Conference Tour visited the Tegarayama Conservatory Botanical Gardens and the Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center, Japan.

Thanks to the immeasurable effort and leaderships of Naoki Tanabe (Japanese Carnivorous Plant Society (JCPS) president), Koji Kondo (Kansai (K) CPS), Ako Minami (KCPS), and staff from Japanese CPS, Kansai CPS, Tokai CPS, and Hiroshima CPS, the 13th ICPS Conference was a huge success to say the least. After each ICPS conference, it has been a tradition to have a few field trips and was not an exception after this year's conference in Himeji, Japan. The city of Himeji is a historical castle city in Hyogo Prefecture and proudly hosts the magnificent Himeji Castle, one of the World Heritage Sites. But that wasn't the destination for us, the CP bunch! Instead, we absolutely wanted to visit two of the greatest botanical gardens in Hyogo where some of the largest CP collections in the world awaited us. My role here was to be one of the English-Japanese interpreters and help non-Japanese visitors navigate during the tours.

The first place to visit on the first day after the conference was the Himeji City Tegarayama Conservatory Botanical Gardens (Fig. 1). Seventy-four of us got on two full sized charter buses at the JR Himeji station and enjoyed the scenic local roads to the conservatory. At the Tegarayama conservatory, we were welcomed by Takeshi Asai, the vice president of the conservatory, who guided us around the place with his friendly smiles (Fig. 2).

One of the special exhibitions they had was a collection of plants which Tomitaro Makino, the renowned Japanese botanist from the early 1900's, discovered and named. *Aldrovanda vesiculosa* was on display here because Makino discovered the first population in Japan and gave the Japanese name "Mujinamo". "Mujina" is an old Japanese word for an animal called "Tanuki" (*Nyctereutes*



Figure 1: Conservatory domes of the Tegarayama Botanical Garden. Photo by Koji Kondo.



Figure 2: Mr. Asai in one of the backyard greenhouses at the Tegarayama Conservatory Botanical Gardens.

procyonoides) which resembles a racoon. As the Japanese name “Tanukimo” for the aquatic *Utricularia*, *Aldrovanda* got this name because it resembles the bushy tail of “Tanuki”. “Mo” means an aquatic plant. This population was in a pond by the Edo River in the town of Koiwa in Tokyo where I grew up (and I am very proud of this fact!). Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, this population is long gone. There is, however, a nice monument there indicating it as the first *Aldrovanda* site in Japan discovered by Makino. In addition to the *Aldrovanda*, *U. tenuicaulis*, *U. gibba*, and *U. vulgaris* var. *japonica* were also exhibited (Fig. 3).

At Tegarayama, they had two main greenhouse domes, one of which was the Desert plant dome where they displayed a huge array of cacti and succulents. We then walked through a path of rock gardens to the backyard greenhouse area. The backyard greenhouses were the best places in Tegarayama gardens, because they were packed with so many beautiful and interesting Japanese hybrids that we don’t see elsewhere in the world (Fig. 4).

The path from the lower backyard cultivation area to the second greenhouse, the upper tropical dome, was decorated with red, green, yellow, and white, a colorful kaleidoscope of *Sarracenia*. We were all wowed by the unique collections of *Nepenthes* and *Sarracenia* and took pictures

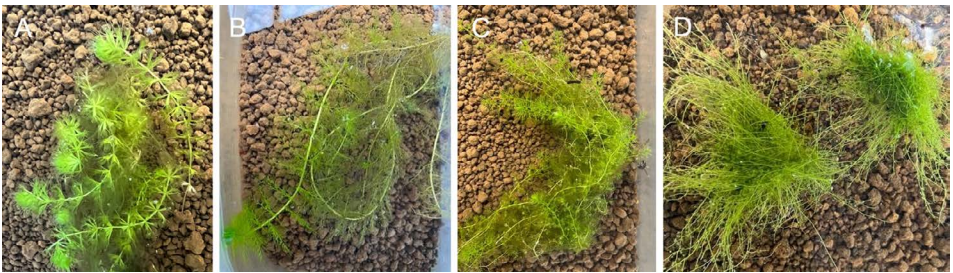


Figure 3: Aquatic carnivorous plants of Japan. (A) *Aldrovanda vesiculosa*, (B) *Utricularia vulgaris* var. *japonica* (*U. tenuicaulis* × *macrorhiza*), (C) *U. tenuicaulis*, and (D) *U. gibba* at the Himeji City Tegarayama Conservatory Botanical Gardens.



Figure 4: *Nepenthes* Japanese hybrids. (A) *Nepenthes* \times *toyoshimae*, (B) *N.* \times *shamenbana*, and (C) *N.* \times *mastershiana* var. *purpurea* at the Himeji City Tegarayama Conservatory Botanical Gardens.

frantically! The upper tropical dome hosted a massive *N. truncata*, Japanese *Nepenthes* hybrid “Koto” series, some *Pinguicula* spp., *Catopsis berteroniana*, *U. gibba*, and more. At the end of the tour, Mr. Asai surprised us with a little packet of giveaways which contained the Tegarayama tour map, a CP postcard, and several note cards of the white egret flower (*Pecteilis radiata*), the symbolic flower of Himeji city. It was now time to move onto the next destination, the Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center.

The guide waiting for us at the Hyogo Flower Center was Masahiro Doi, the master CP horticulturist of Japan (Fig. 5). He is probably one of the most renowned horticulturists in the world who contributed to the advancement of horticulture of CPs. In his magic hands, the 55.5 cm giant *N. truncata* pitcher made the Guinness record in August 2022. The notoriously difficult to grow, c. 33-year-old female *N. pervillei* (Fig. 6) has made so many novel hybrids which include *N. pervillei* \times *madagascariensis*, *N. pervillei* \times *ventricosa*, *N. pervillei* \times *khasiana*, *N. pervillei* \times *thorelii*, *N. pervillei* \times “Etcetera”, etc. The female *N. clipeata* has produced many pedigree *N. clipeata* offspring, introducing the new genetic variations to the cultivated population of critically endangered *N. clipeata*. He has also made countless breathtakingly beautiful *Sarracenia* hybrids such as *S.* \times “Hinomaru”, *S.* \times “Salad Girl”, *S.* \times “Big White”, *S.* \times “Beni Ageha”, just to name a few. Before the tour, Master Doi led us to a lovely lunch at the café Fleuri located within the Flower Center. We were again welcomed with surprise gifts from the Flower Center which included a map of the Flower Center and a writing board with pictures of CPs. We were served delicious local delicacies, each dish presented like an art piece in a



Figure 5: Master Doi (right) and the author (left) at the Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center.

Japanese classic “Kaiseki” style bowl. After lunch we visited the long-awaited “Carnivorous Plant Room”. There was a pathway to the Carnivorous Plant Room beautifully decorated by gorgeous *Nepenthes* and other CPs and some orchids. We were completely mesmerized by the number, size, and the color of them! We were totally affixed there even before we got to the main Carnivorous Plant exhibition. The Carnivorous Plant Room was one of a kind and a single word could not describe the scale and the beauty of it (Fig. 7).

The entrance to the room was decorated by arches of hanging pitchers of *N. reinwardtiana*, *N. × mastersiana*, *N. khasiana*, *N. × “Etcetera”*. At the base of them was the Guinness record breaking *N. truncata* (Fig. 8). The pitcher which broke the record last year has been preserved and stored away, but new pitchers on the mother plant were growing big enough to break its own record in the near future! Past the giant *N. truncata* was the 33-year-old majestic female *N. pervillei* sitting like a queen on a throne proudly shooting up her inflorescence like a crown (Fig. 6). Under the tender and loving care of Master Doi, female *N. pervillei* has produced the above-mentioned numerous offspring in the past and is ready for more!

The Flower Center has another interesting *Nepenthes*. They originally came from Java years ago. They looked like *N. reinwardtiana* without the “eyes” and came with a green form and a red form, which Master Doi says has not yet been properly identified (the large *Nepenthes* in the center of Fig. 7).

The last but not the least place to see was the backyard. The backyard was like Master Doi’s lab where he propagates numerous *Nepenthes*, *Sarracenia*, *Drosera*, and more and creates



Figure 6: *Nepenthes pervillei*.



Figure 7: The Carnivorous Plant Room, looking from the back end at the Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center.

unique hybrids from them. Two main greenhouses hosted back-up *Nepenthes* which were just as impressive as the ones on exhibition, and Master Doi's countless *Nepenthes* seedlings. In between and at the back of the two greenhouses was a carpet of colorful *Sarracenia* species and hybrids (Fig. 9).

Master Doi carefully inspects every single one of the CPs every single day here at the Flower Center. He often picks up a pot and describes the characteristics of the clone with his lovely "Kansai" (Southwestern Japan) accent, "Emmi chan, this girl (a young *Nepenthes*) is an interesting one. See, the pitcher is red right now, unusual for the species. But when she grows bigger, these pitchers start losing the red, but the back of the lid would stay red. Isn't it fascinating?". He describes it with such affection and passion as if "she" is one of his own daughters. With his ever-lasting curiosity, Master Doi sent us a message at the end of the tour. "I found *N. pervillei* literally "sweat". You often see white deposits over the petioles. I licked them, and they were salty! I hope that someday some of you can find out what it is and why *N. pervillei* do that." Perhaps someone will have the answers for him by the next time we visit him. Thank you, Mr. Asai and the staff at the Tegarayama Conservatory, and Master Doi and the Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center for all the hard work you put into the success of this tour! Take care until we see you again!



Figure 8: Newly forming pitcher of the *Nepenthes truncata* whose pitcher made the Guinness record in height (55.5 cm) last year at the Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center.



Figure 9: *Sarracenia* species and hybrids in the backyard of the Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center.