

Victorian Carnivorous Plant Society Show—The Beginning

by David Bond, Gordon Cheers and Sam Gilmour

SETTING UP

Place: The Herbarium

Time: 3 p.m., on the 8th day of March, 1985.

Tables and chairs began to mysteriously move around the hall, trestles started to appear and deposit themselves in places where someone was bound to fall over them. Plants started to fill the trestles willy-nilly, only to suddenly reappear on the floor as the trestles were covered with black cloth.

Unfortunately, things did not come together so easily without quite a deal of human effort. It took a small group of people approximately six hours to get the hall looking reasonable, ready for the 9 a.m. start on Saturday.

After much discussion (and some dispute), we arranged five long benches filled with plants, terrariums, a peat garden, a slide show area, a demonstration area, a propagation tank and two sale tables.

THE SHOW

The most controversial point of the whole show—the judging—took place early Saturday morning, and took approximately 70 minutes. Trophies were placed next to the prize-winning plants as the public, frothing at the mouth, began to beat down the doors. It was our first show as a society, and was timed for the Saturday and Sunday of the Labor Day long weekend. And what a show it was! With great weather and many other Moomba activities close by, people were out and about. From young children to grandparents, even a busload of university students, all came to our doors, bribed their way in (\$1 for adults, 50 cents for children and members), and proceeded to enjoy themselves.

EVENTS

Slides showing plants in their natural habitats were shown continuously, and lectures and demonstrations were given at regular intervals. And thank God for all the chatterboxes we have in the society—they really made the day. Visitors would not have been half as enthusiastic if our members hadn't been so friendly, cooperative and full of information. As for the visitors themselves, many came prepared with loaded cameras and questions that revealed that maybe they are beginning to know the difference between fact and fantasy regarding our plants.

DISPLAYS

There were some excellent terraria on display, ranging from Sam's precious humidicrib for *Nepenthes* to one specialising in *Drosera* from all over the world, and other natural-looking ones with a mixture of CPs amongst rocks and bogs. One even had its own aquatic section containing *Utricularia*. Yet another enthusiastic grower had planted a range of CPs in a bottle on its side.

The bog garden was one of the main attractions and contained over 100 plants arranged with the smallest in the front and the tallest *Sarracenia* at the back—not very novel, but quite showy. The sphagnum was mostly contained to within the garden area. Many people spent a lot of time contemplating the garden, trying to count the species . . . We had rigged it so that the more one looked, the more one found. Towards the front of the bog was an aquatic *Utricularia australis* in flower, plus many small *Drosera*.

Other interesting displays were bowl arrangements, one, in a shallow tray, look-

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Victorian (Australia) C.P. Society 1985 Show.

Photo by David Bond.

Nepenthes × *dominii* and var. *intermedia*

by Bruce Lee Bednar, 12731 SW 14 St., Miami, FL 33184

Nepenthes × *dominii* was the first man-made *Nepenthes* hybrid crossed by Dominy around the late 1850s, and was first exhibited at the Royal Horticultural Society show at South Kensington in June of 1862. A few years later, a sleek clone was given a variety name of *intermedia* by Court, a close friend of Dominy. The descriptions for print of both plants was written by Veitch and go something like this: Stem purplish, slightly downy, leaves are lanceolate and 16-18" x 3", one nerved, decurrent and petiolate. Pitchers up to 6", lid spotted, high neck peristome, lid faintly flushed above and freely spotted below. Much more green on pitcher than red. The descriptions for both plants are almost identical and Veitch mentions they are a favorite of easy culture.

N. × *dominii* was the beginning of the man-made hybrid area in this field opening the door for future works. Finding out quickly that hybrids were fertile and capable of hybrid crossing, multi-parent stock could be created. This was an instant stimulant to collectors to produce new material as getting specimens from the wild was still very difficult during those times. Many of the early hybrids made proved to be heartier than many of the wild forms.

Since it was still very early in the "Victorian" age of *Nepenthes*, a number of collected plants that were very similar (small, greenish and unattractive) were not noticed and remained in greenhouse collections unnamed or unidentified for years. They were not considered of any use to hybridizers due to their "common" appearance.

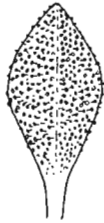


fig. #1



fig. #2

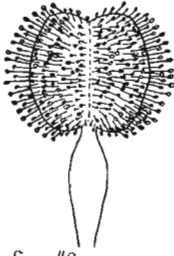


fig. #3

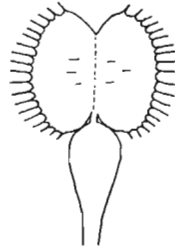


fig. #4

Drawings by Ivan Snyder.

the nectaries within the flower parts. With this desirable genetic accident the plant became able to attract insects. An additional attractant which developed is more pigment in the trap. The trap entices insects by mimicking a flower with bright color and sweet nectar.

Literature Cited

Adrian Sack (1979) *Carnivorous Plants* pp. 18-20.

Ching, T.M. *Metabolism of Germinating Seeds* chap. 2 pp. 103-218. In: *Seed Biology*. T.T. Kozlowski, ed. Vol. 2. New York, Academic Press. 1972.

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ing like a carnivorous bonsai, with small specimens of *Sarracenia*, *Pinguicula*, *Drosera* and *Dionaea*.

THE SALE TABLE

After seeing how easy it was to divide *Nepenthes* and *Sarracenia*, a surprising number of people were prepared to try to grow some species of these. The sale table was simply swamped after each demonstration. This could point to the fact that

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for all the talking and reading about plants, the “hands-on” approach is the one that really gets results.