

(Fourth article of series relating to old CPN articles)

(REMINISCENCES — IV)

CPN FIRST — PART 2

by Donald Schnell

We told you we would be back with more CPN firsts, in case you did not see your favorite one in the first article; and there will be more. Here are a few more articles or significant projects that at least partially, if not wholly, in some way seem unique to CPN.

In Vol. 4, p. 51, and with further detail in Vol. 6, p. 7, Lynn Macey began and nearly completed a truly massive and ambitious retrieval system for CP literature. This sort of thing had been done before in certain variations for botany as a whole and a few other plant groups, but not for CP specifically and the system Lynn called KWIC, one of those computer acronyms which are now all around us these days. Lynn's system was to take in all CP printed material like a sponge, and then set it up in his computer so that the material could be retrieved through various descriptors. There was a complete bibliographic listing plus a summary of the paper or book if available. So far we have a storage system. The neat part is that Lynn set up the program in such a way that material could be retrieved by calling up any one of several categories; you could call up one author, a genus, a species, a general topic such as cultivation or ecology (either in overall generality or according to one genus or species or author), or any one of several descriptors.

Lynn started out with all the Literature Review stuff in CPN, then went to bibliographies of various papers and books (such as Lloyd—Here there were often no summaries unless he could gain access to the reference, some of which were quite old and obscure). We all helped with as much time and material as we could provide, and the latest total printout from the program measures close to three inches thick as it sits before me here while I write this. Glancing through, I come

across authors, propagation, pest control, parasites—all sorts of categories which would certainly save a literature searcher a lot of time.

The project reached an advanced stage, and copies of the printouts were available for cost of paper since Lynn was using a borrowed computer. Alas, Lynn was transferred from his computer and also became pressed for time so the project was arrested with the last printout about 1977. Maybe someday it can be resumed, caught up, and again be available to all serious CP enthusiasts. In the meantime, I often refer to my copy when searching the literature on a topic through 1977.

DISPLAY OF CP

In Vol. 5, p. 25 appeared the first listing of public or otherwise accessible botanic gardens that had significant displays of CP. Again, the overall concept was not new, it having been done by other plant societies for their specialties. But it was the first one for our favorites, CP. The list was arranged according to countries, and judging from comments and letters, was well received. Of course, we missed a few initially, and the list was made more complete by mention of additional gardens in later issues. It occurs to me that perhaps we should undertake another complete listing (complete as far as we know and that matches the scope of that first listing) in an upcoming CPN issue. If so, let us know whether you would like to see this. The first step is some indication of interest from YOU. The next step will be for us to place notices in several issues of CPN asking that everyone anywhere who knows of a garden (public, or private ones that the owner is willing to show with rearranged

permission) send in the name, exact address or location of the garden or greenhouse, and of course the country. So it is up to you.

SEED BANK

One of our most pragmatic firsts made its initial appearance in Vol. 6, p. 44, after having been discussed in several previous issues and announced in the prior issue. The CPN Seed Bank has been one of the most active and valued projects of CPN. At the risk of repeating myself, I realize still again that many plant societies have seed banks, as do many botanical gardens that are available to selected people. But, by golly, this was the first one dedicated to CP and it is still going strong today.

Patrick Dwyer offered to handle the seed bank for us, and I am not sure he knew exactly what he was getting into at first in terms of time and work. It turns out that Patrick is the perfect choice. He has been taking care of the project since its inception, in spite of a very busy schedule with his work, coaching and playing on volleyball teams that often traveled all over the country, and working on his other hobbies and service projects. Patrick has been consistent, dedicated, enthusiastic and hard working, and I cannot say enough in appreciation for and to him for all of us. The bank is run on the principle of seed donations by us all, these being meticulously divided up into packets and stored dry under refrigeration. To defray his cost for materials and postage, there is a modest service charge, and there is an arrangement whereby seed donors are given credits so they may obtain seed later on at no cost. This is all explained in clearer detail in each March issue of CPN.

As is the case with all volunteer activities of this sort, the "balance" of the seed bank has been quite variable over the years, this depending on willingness to make seed donations. This is a good time to put in a strong plug for all you potential donors to get pollinating and seed collecting, sending your material to Patrick care of his address found in any CPN issue. The seed should be fully mature, clean, and sent carefully and clearly labeled in one container or bottle depending

on seed type and size. Send only freshly collected seed as soon as possible after collection. Avoid putting miniscule seed (e.g. Droseras, Utricularias) in plastic bags since static causes them to adhere to the plastic and they are impossible to retrieve without wastage. After receiving the seed and dividing it up into packets for storage, Patrick will send you a note letting you know how many packets your donation amounted to and what your credits are. Neat, huh? So collect and donate, but be ACCURATE! Patrick can only duplicate what you label the seed on each packet.

PINGUICULA IDENTIFICATION

Now here is a first that I think is truly a "first first." In Vol. 7, p.43F, Jurg Steiger described a unique method of recording the characteristics of *Pinguicula* flowers in a standardized fashion. You might at first comment, "So what?," especially if you have not been into *Pinguiculas* much or checked out herbarium sheets of the species, or looked at the herbarium sheet photos in Caspar's monograph.

The problem, you see, is that in so many *Pinguiculas* the vegetative portions of the plants look exactly alike, or so similar that the artifacts of pressing for herbarium storage blurs the subtle differences. Therefore, we are very often dependent on the appearance of the flower for good identification. You guessed it—The pressing process for herbarium storage often makes the flower nearly worthless for identification processes. Enter modern photography techniques and Jurg's creative imagination. He conceived the minimum number of angles from which a *Pinguicula* flower could be photographed to show all important gross identification features, then described how the three views could be placed in one photo frame by using three flowers from the same species or variety or whatever, set up the best background, and then a card catalogue system for each photo that gave valuable location, ecologic, horticultural and other ancillary data. His article was illustrated with 27 photos and summaries of material from his record cards.

The importance of the paper lies in an effort to imaginatively overcome limitations of traditional herbarium pressed plant technique by supplementing the material with *standardized* photographs and ancillary information. Jurg also mentioned that this could be applied, with proper modifications, to other CP groups. I can think of another Lentibulariaceae genus as a likely candidate right off—*Utricularia*.

SLIDE SETS

This important article led to our first effort in providing slide sets to CPN readers. The editors had been approached about this for several years. Such a project sounds not too difficult at first—Until you do it! The problem of how many sets to reproduce, cost of initial inventory to get the best price on multiple orders of sets from processors, and the logistics of mailing, storage and handling waivers turned out to be quite a problem. So I tried it anyway, investing my own funds in an initial duplication of ten sets of 63 slides, generously donated by Jurg for the project.

The cost was my cost plus postage, and that was all. Enthusiasm sometimes runs head on into reality and after having announced these slide sets that so many people seemed to want in the June, 1979 issue of CPN, I finally got rid of the last one just last year! Needless to say, we have been somewhat gunshy about doing this again, but there has been demand for various sets from newer subscribers who may have not been aware of the mixed history of this first effort, and I suppose that possibly with some sort of system of prepaid guaranteed purchases, we might try it again. We'll see.

We have now come to the point in this series, REMINISCENCES, where we would like to hear from you about it. Do you want to keep it or drop it? Is it of any value to you? Let us know, and do not be afraid to be frank. You won't hurt our feelings in the least. We conceived the series as of possible interest on a regular basis and decided to try it. So it is just a trial, and we look at it pragmatically if you do not want it.



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