

# A new (well, not that new really) *Sarracenia* hybrid: *Sarracenia* 'Victoria Morley'

## Introduction

"The extreme ease with which *Sarracenia* species and hybrids may be successfully cross-pollinated at random has its disadvantages, for it has led inevitably to the raising and retention of many inferior clones of often unknown or questionable parentage. These hardly further the future of the plant in horticulture..." (quote from Adrian Slack, in his book *Carnivorous Plants*)

I agree wholeheartedly with Adrian, in that only the very best plants resulting from any cross should be selected for cultivar status. Not only should these be the very best plants, but they need to have been grown on and "field tested" over several years and therefore proven themselves to be of good shape, colour, vigour and hardiness. I have created quite a few hybrids over the years, but up till now I have been very loath to put any forward for cultivar status. With some of them, the colour is good, but the pitcher shape is unattractive and the pitchers are floppy. With others, the shape is good, but the colour is dull. I am extremely critical of plants I create, and if it was not for a bit of prodding from Mike King, the undisputed "King" of *Sarracenia* cultivation in the UK, then I probably would not have put this plant forward at all.

## Origins

This plant was a result of a cross between a very good clone of *Sarracenia x mitchelliana* (obtained from *Sarracenia* Nurseries in the mid-1980s) and a plant of *Sarracenia leucophylla* with shortish, small but well coloured pitchers (which I refer to as "#16" as that was the original growers code on the label when I obtained it). The cross was made in about 1986, and I had a few hundred seedlings come up, with a lot of variability as you would expect. Only one plant stood out in terms of both vigour and colour, and this was selected and grown on. It is vigorous, propagates easily by division, and has been distributed amongst several growers.

## Characteristics

Pitchers are upright and superficially similar to *S.leucophylla* in shape, but proportionally broader in the upper parts with an extremely large, wavy lid, and have a large, wide-lipped and pointed mouth, with the front lip of the mouth turned down as much as 90°. The lid can be twice as wide as the pitcher mouth, and is held almost horizontally, although on initial inspection it appears to be more upright due to the extremely frilly, upturned edges to the lid; late-season pitchers can have a more upright lid. Size-wise, pitchers are typically 35-45 cm high on mature plants, with lids up to 8 cm wide, and the pitcher mouth up to 4 cm wide. There is a small, but prominent, wing to each pitcher; the position of this wing can vary depending on whether the pitchers are early or late-season, but generally occupies the "middle third" of the pitcher, fading out and disappearing towards both the mouth and the base of the pitcher. Late-season pitchers tend to be a bit more stocky than early season ones, a trait it shares with its dominant *leucophylla* parentage.

Colour-wise, they are initially similar to *S.leucophylla*, with the lid being virtually white with a network of green and pink between the "windows" when they first open. In full sun, this colour soon intensifies with the lip turning a vibrant red and a bright pink colour suffusing the upper

parts of the pitcher, spreading into the white windows in the upper parts (see Fig. 1). The whole pitcher then gradually darkens to the darkest purple that you would expect from a very dark *S.purpurea*, with a few small pink patches remaining scattered through the uppermost sections of the pitcher tube and the lid (see Fig. 2). Very late-season pitchers often do not colour up as much and can maintain their fresh green, white & pink colour through the winter.

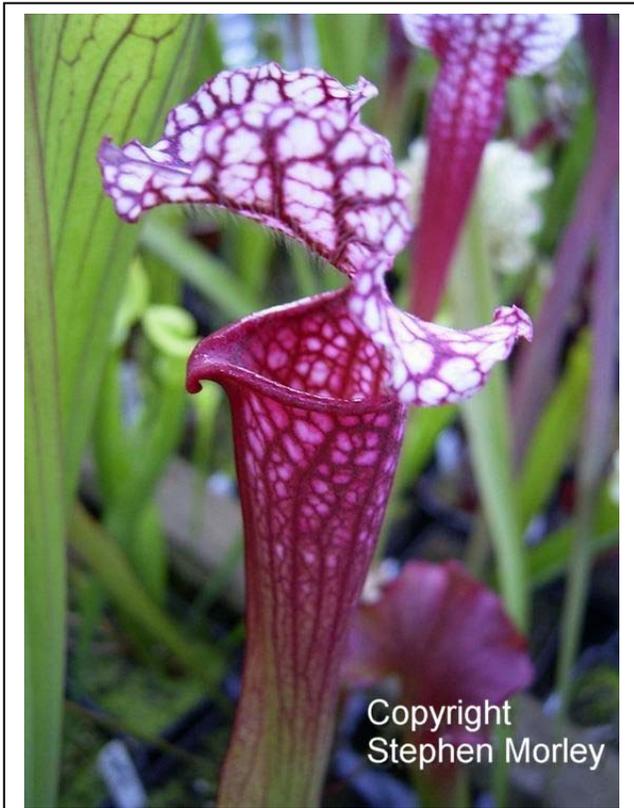


Figure 1



Figure 2

The plant has inherited the spring and autumn pitcher production of its *S.leucophylla* parentage, but with some of the vigour of *S.purpurea*, with the result that pitchers are produced all summer long and last well into the winter. This is one of the best characteristics of this plant, the virtually continuous pitcher production throughout the summer and autumn months. When I got married in November 2000, this plant was one of the 2 plants deemed to be good enough for display purposes and therefore had pride of place on the top table!

Those of you know me well know that, although I admire the flowers of many carnivorous plants, they are not the primary reason for me growing the plants, rather a bonus. This is true of this cultivar, which was not bred for spectacular flowers, and in my opinion the flowers are unremarkable and not one of the plant's most desirable features. As you would expect from a plant which is  $\frac{3}{4}$  *S.leucophylla* and  $\frac{1}{4}$  *S.purpurea* the flowers are small, red, slightly lighter in colour than *S.leucophylla* and sit on long, wiry (somewhat straggly) scapes.

## Synonyms

I originally called this plant *Sarracenia* 'Victoria', named after my wife. However, Victoria is also the generic name of the giant water lily, and under plant naming conventions cannot

therefore be used, I believe, on its own as a cultivar name. I have subsequently expanded the name to include our surname and now propose **Sarracenia 'Victoria Morley'** as the cultivar name.

Stephen Morley  
September 2004

*Note:*

*This cultivar description was originally printed in The Carnivorous Plant Society Journal 2004, Vol 27. My surname was mis-spelt as Morely at the top of the article, although the cultivar name was spelt correctly within the article. The correct spelling is 'Victoria Morley'.*