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Correspondence

Please forward all correspondence regarding subscription, change of address, articles for the journal and back issues to:
The Secretary VCPS
P.O. Box 201
SOUTH YARRA 3141.
AUSTRALIA

Journal articles, in MS-Word, ready for publication, may be Emailed to the Editor or Secretary.

Meetings

Most VCPS meetings are held in the hall at the rear of the Pilgrim Uniting Church on the corner of Bayview Road and Montague Street, Yarraville – Melway map reference 41K7. These meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 8 PM.
However, some meetings may be at the home of members during a weekend.
Details of meeting dates and topics are listed in each journal.
If unsure of the location or date of any meeting, please ring a committee person for details.
The VCPS Annual General Meeting, usually held at Yarraville in June, provides substantial benefits for each and every member able to attend.
Contents

The articles that are found within are copyright but can be copied freely if the author and source are acknowledged. The views are of the authors and are open to review and debate. Please send all material to the editor for consideration to be included in our quarterly journal.

Front Cover:
Nepenthes villosa grown by Paul Edwards. Photographed by Stephen Fretwell

Back Cover:
Clockwise from top left:
- Utricularia tridentata, grown and photographed by Greg Bourke.
- Drosera lasiantha x callistos, hybridised grown and photographed by Peter Wolf.
- Dionaea muscipula ‘double traps’ grown and photographed by Peter Wolf.
- Nepenthes ampullaria grown by Aaron Jenkin.
- Pinguicula crystallina ssp hiniflora, grown and photographed by Sean Spence.

Dionaea muscipula ‘Goliath’ A large form of VFT grown by Paul Edwards with massive traps that can grow to 4.5cm.

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Presidents Report

What makes a successful society? What is a ‘society’? My dictionary defines a society as ‘A formal association of people with similar interests’. I think the secret of a ‘successful’ society are the words ‘similar interests’. We’re lucky, here in Victoria. We have what is often described as the friendliest and most successful and dedicated society in Australia. This boils down to the definition – ‘people with similar interests’. When a society becomes more involved with internal politics, and loses sight of the true purpose of a society, unfortunately it seems the society is headed for failure. Whenever a society fails, this is not for the good for the subject the society represents.

The good news is that the VCPS is gaining more and more members, and attendance at meetings grows stronger and stronger! In my view, the general public’s interest in CPs is increasing. Newer members, and their views in perhaps different angles of CPs, has only strengthened the backbone of our society, and built on the foundations for a whole new ‘generation’ of CP growers. And this is so essential for the continual success of the society!

We are currently in the process of becoming affiliated with the Horticultural Society of Australia. For a small outlay, this will provide us with full insurance coverage for all of our events, and also possibly open doors with regards to members of other affiliated societies joining us, and for us to attend plant functions run by the society.

Our June Annual General Meeting is quickly approaching. This is a big night, and includes a free plant give-away! Please try to attend. All committee positions will be declared vacant, and I would encourage all members to give some thought towards nominating for a position on the committee. Being on the committee is a rewarding job, without being too taxing on the free time.

Cheers for now, and happy growing.

Regards
Paul Edwards
Growing Nepenthes – Part 1

PAUL EDWARDS

Considered by some a difficult Genus to grow, if you can get the conditions right, Nepenthes can be an easy and rewarding plant to grow.

Now I don’t profess to be an expert in this field, but I thought I’d share my limited knowledge in an effort to help those who haven’t attempted to grow these lovely plants, or at least to raise a bit of discussion about other people’s methods.

HIGHLAND VS LOWLAND

In Victoria, in an unheated hothouse, highland Nepenthes are the easiest to grow. Thankfully, there are also more varieties of highland than lowland.

Highland Nepenthes require cool nights, and enjoy warm days. Depending on where the plants grow naturally, your plant may require very cool nights (i.e. ‘cold’ nights), or nights that still retain a bit of warmth. It’s hard to judge what will work for you, because there are also so many other factors involved, such as humidity, watering habits, light (intensity and length of daylight hours) etc. They can withstand very high daytime temperatures, provided the humidity is equally very high. The max/min thermometer in my Nepenthes house (my ‘wet’ house) has recorded temperatures as high as 48 degrees C, however in these conditions humidity is kept at almost 100%. The low temperature during winter nights can drop to virtually freezing. The plants don’t seem to suffer any ill-effects from these extremes.

Lowland, on the other hand, are more exacting in their requirements. Being from tropical areas where temperatures don’t fluctuate nearly as widely as our temperate regions, suitable heating should be provided to the hothouse during winter nights. Having a wife and three teenage children who tend to turn on a heater rather than put on an extra jumper, my heating costs of the house are high enough without also heating a hothouse.

My attempts at growing lowland Nepenthes over the years have all failed, so I should leave this area to someone with more expertise (and success) than me.

HUMIDITY

Now, I spoke before about humidity. But just how do you maintain such high humidity levels? The trick seems to be to have high humidity when it’s hot, but much lower humidity when it’s cool. Otherwise you will find that the plant can suffer from fungal attacks or root rot.

The first step is to ensure that you have power into your hothouse. If you haven’t, and want to get it installed, please consult a licensed electrician. Water and electricity don’t mix. You’re not only risking your plants, but potentially your life! Get it done right!

Available from such places as Sage Horticultural is a thermostatically controlled electrical switch. This is a little box that has a power cord (for the supply), and on the face of the box a temperature dial and power socket (to plug the appliance into) and coming out the side a little temperature probe. The idea is that when the temperature rises above the temperature set on the dial, it switched on the appliance. Note, also, that others are available that switch on appliances when the temperature drops below the pre-set – ideal for heaters, etc, but that’s a whole new article!

The next item you need is a water solenoid. When power (normally 12 volts) is supplied to the solenoid, it opens, allowing water to flow. This is attached directly to the tap. The 12 volt transformer is plugged into the thermostat switch. Presto, when
the temperature goes above the preset, on comes the tap which turns on the sprinklers, increasing the humidity.

However, this can use a lot of water, and while water can drop the ambient temperature, on a really hot day it won't drop it enough to turn off the water. The shock you'll get when you get your water usage bill will quickly get you thinking a bit more…

So, in series with the power to the water solenoid, you need to put another switch. This is a balance arm. On one side is a small wire screen that effectively traps a small quantity of water (making it heavier). On the other side, a small magnetic on-off switch. When the wire screen is dry, it's light. Being a balance arm, this turns on the magnetic switch, and providing the temperature is above the preset amount on your thermostat, on come the sprinklers. They'll only come on for less than a minute or so, just until the wire screen gets wet (and heavy), or, of course, unless the temperature drops below the preset.

Therefore, when it’s cold, it’s dry. When it’s hot, it’s wet and humid. This set-up does an excellent job of maintaining health plants.

By the way, I found that magnetic switches are far more reliable than mercury switches. The balance arm has limited movement, and because it's so gradual I found that the mercury could 'stick' to the contacts, leaving the water permanently on (or off, depending on how you set it up).

Next issue, I'll talk about other important topics with regards to growing Nepenthes, including potting mixes, fertilising, light, water purity, repotting and propagating.

WHERE TO GET IT:
Thermostat Switches and Balance Switches – Sage Horticultural, 121 Herald Street, Cheltenham. Vic. Tel (03) 9553 3777
Magnetic Switches – Dick Smith Electronics
Water Solenoid & Transformers – readily available, but I got mine from Elliotts Irrigation, Knowles Rd, Dandenong South. Tel (03) 9799 3333. They also have a wide range of 'foggers' – very fine misting nozzles that are great for producing high humidity.

GEORGE CASPAR

I have been experimenting with different media for growing my CPs in. I started with the tried and true peat sand mix, basically 50:50. I have had good success with this mix for most plants and have varied this mix to suit different species.

Some plants like D. binata I grow in almost straight peat with a small amount of sand. For tuberous Drosera I use a higher sand content, more like 60:40, although with some plants like whittakeri it doesn’t seem to matter if there is a higher peat content. Interestingly I have had the best success with D. adelae being grown in a heavy and water logged peat sand mix and these plants grew faster and larger than those in Sphagnum.

Recently I started using perlite in my most of my mixes. Originally it started out as an addition to the standard peat sand mix, but now I have ended up using straight peat/perlite mixes for most genus and species of CP.

I have had good results with VFTs in peat/perlite mixes. Nepenthes I now grow in a peat/perlite/orchid bark mix, but now I have ended up using straight peat/perlite mixes for most genus and species of CP.

Plants that like Sphagnum also grow well in a mix with a lot of perlite, this could be due to the perlite aerating the mix. As a result I now use very little Sphagnum for my plants.

Peat/perlite mixes also hydrate faster, so if a mix is left to dry out it will absorb water a lot quicker than peat/sand. It does however seems to dry out faster, and the perlite draws moisture out of plants and tubers if the soil is to dry, which means perlite may not be suitable for all species of Drosera.

Tuberous Drosera and some South African Drosera are the species I would avoid using perlite with or any species that go dormant for a long period of time and require dry soil while they are dormant, as the perlite will dehydrate the plants. But that is the only bad point I can find. The benefits of perlite though seem to be that it lightens and aerates soil and doesn’t have any impurities in it.

I still have to experiment with perlite and pygmy Drosera, but that is something for next season.
Growing *Roridula gorgonias*

GEORGE CASPARD

I have been growing *Roridula gorgonias* since 2003 when I sowed some seed in August. I sowed seed of *R. gorgonias* as well as the related *R. dentata*.

The seeds were sown onto a peat sand mix of about 50:50 in 100mm pots and were kept standing in water. After a few weeks the first gorgonias started to germinate and within about one month one third of the seeds had germinated. I sowed about 15 seeds between two pots and got five plants. One seedling died leaving me with two plants in each pot. None of the dentata seeds germinated, I still have the pots but as the seeds have been sown for over 1 year I feel it is time to give up on them.

They were kept inside my igloo or greenhouse to keep the temperature and humidity up. The *R. gorgonia* did not grow much for some time, they always looked a bit sickly and took several months to reach not much more than an inch in height.

At this point I moved one pot outside to see if a change of conditions along with brighter conditions would affect their growth. The plants moved outside stopped growing, which surprised me for their natural habitat is part of Africa with a similar climate to Melbourne.

The plants inside continued to grow at a very slow rate, so after about one month both pots ended up inside. At least now both pots were growing, even if very slow. After talking to some people it was mentioned they do not like to sit in water so the plants were removed from their water trays. At this point it was now coming into winter and their growth stopped almost completely. The plants were now about three inches tall.

During winter one pot was attacked by Botritis destroying the growing tip of one plant and defoliating the other. I assumed both plants were lost but once the weather started to warm both plants resumed growth, the one with no growing point simply sprouted from the old stem.

As the weather warmed up their growth resumed to painfully slow, which is much better than not at all so I was happy with this. I continued with the idea of keeping them drier. I would sit the pot in half a cm of water and let the plant use this, but as soon as it started to look like the soil was starting to dry I would place another half cm of water in the tray. I usually ended up doing this about every 3 or 4 days.

With this method the growth improved, unfortunately this was also one pots undoing as over Christmas the dry cycle went on for a bit to long while I was away during some hot days and the plants turned into, well lets not talk about that.

I continued with the idea of keeping them drier. I would sit the pot in half a cm of water and let the plant use this.

I now keep this last pot outside under the protection of my front porch. It receives direct sun in the afternoon and seems to enjoy the weather there. I feel they like Melbourne weather but do not like to be left standing in water.

This last pot seems to be doing quite well, the plants are now a good 20cm high and look healthy. I have noticed the growth rate has increased recently with a dramatic increase in the last few months. I have a feeling that this is a result of a build-up of organic material in the pot providing more nutrients for the plants. This would lead me to believe that the addition of some loam to the potting media would be of benefit, this idea has been supported via discussions with other growers.

They seem to catch quite a few bugs but I do not feel they gain much nutrition from these as they do not digest their prey but rely on assassin bugs to do this for them. The plants catch the insects and the assassin bugs that live on the plants eat the prey and defecate on the plant providing it with readily absorbable nutrients. I have read that for plants to do well they need these assassin bugs to feed them. I am planning on trying to foliar feed the plants and see if this helps with their growth.

I also plan on moving the plants to a larger pot so I can control their moisture more accurately and reduce the chances of another dry out.

* *D. roridula* might be a bit more tricky to grow than most carnivorous plants but it is an interesting and rewarding plant to grow.
Nepenthes pollination

Pollinating a single female Nepenthes flower with multiple pollen sources.

AARON JENKIN

No idea if this has been done before or if there are any other methods that people are using. Either way I thought I’d do a quick little write-up for the journal just in case.

To me it seems almost wasteful, given the size of most female flower scapes, to pollinate all the flowers with the pollen from a single source. However the issue with using multiple sources is keeping the pollen sources from mixing.

The solution is a small, light, plastic collar/s that I used to separate the different sections of the female flower that were pollinated by different pollen sources. I have managed to pollinate one female flower scape with 3 different pollen sources and another flower scape with two.

In the displayed pictures I have a female N. ventricosa. The lower 1/3 is crossed with N. albomarginata x veitchii. The next 1/3 is crossed with N. khasiana. The final 1/3 (top of scape) is crossed back with another N. ventricosa, so effectively from the single female flower I have 2x hybrids and 1x pure Vent.

My other female is crossed with a different form a N. ventricosa and N. alata.

I still have yet another female N. ventricosa in flower. My plans for that are basically just back with several different forms of N. ventricosa (pale, pale squat, red, etc).

When the seed pods are ready I will simple remove those form each section and store/plant them separately.

THIS IS HOW I MAKE THE COLLAR

Materials:
- Thin plastic sheet. I used takeaway Chinese container lids
- Scissors
- Labelling pen/texter

1. Cut a disk out of the plastic sheet that is about 10-20mm larger in diameter than the female flower.

2. Cut a slot from the outer edge to the middle and punch a hole in the middle that is just slightly larger than the stem of the flow spike.

3. The collar is then slipped over the flower stem to dived between areas that have been pollinated by different pollen sources.

Close-up of the plastic collar which separates the different fertilisation crosses.

Photo: Aaron Jenkin

Growing conditions of the flowering Nepenthes.

Photo: Aaron Jenkin
Cultivating *Utricularia tridentata*

**GREG BOURKE**

*Utricularia tridentata* is the smallest of three species in the section Foliosa and possibly for this reason, the least known. This species is found in the southern parts of Brazil south to Argentina. Its natural habitat is Bogs, wet grassland, by pools, streams and waterfalls (Taylor, 1989). For this reason previous to 2004 I had cultivated *Utricularia tridentata* in wet almost waterlogged conditions. The plants grow well in these conditions but flowering was rare and when scapes were produced, most flowers would abort.

After several years I began to lose interest and the pot containing the sparse covering of leaves was pushed to the back of the water tray. It was in this situation that the *Utricularia* pushed its way out of the bottom of the pot and found its way into a pot containing *Stylium debile*. The *Stylium* was kept in the water tray until established then planted into a 250mm squat pot and placed out on an open bench with other *Stylium* species, terrestrial Orchids, and tuberous Drosera. In this situation the *Utricularia* thrived and was soon competing with the *Stylium* for space.

In the winter months the soil was constantly damp while in the warmer months the soil was allowed to dry out to the point where the soil would shrink away from the side of the pot. This drying of the soil occurs naturally in the habitats of many *Styliums* and helps trigger flowering.

In the summer of 2003/2004, the *Utricularia tridentata* produced four flower scapes each with three to five flowers. None of these flowers aborted and some seed was produced. In the summer of 2004/2005, nine flower scapes were produced to 20cm high with three to five flowers. Flowering has been continuous from mid December to the time of writing (beginning of February) with possibly one months worth of flowering to come. The three lobed violet flowers are 1cm across with a white section on the base of the lower lip. A smaller patch of yellow is found right in the base of the lower lip.

Although *Utricularia tridentata* is a beautiful species both in leaf and flower, its size and shyness to flowering has meant that this species has been overlooked by many growers. I hope that my recent success with cultivation of this species may encourage others to give it a go.

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*Contact him for his latest list of stock available.*
In early October, 2004 I managed to go on some short trips to see some plants at the Grampians and also at my brother-in-laws place at Heathcote. There is nothing more exciting than finding plants where they grow naturally and to see the conditions you need to provide to get them grow like that at your place.

Firstly I went to Heathcote and not wanting to sit inside and talk, talk and talk, I manage to go exploring around the Almond trees and see what was up. The previous years had been quite dry and the amount of plants reflected this, but this year with improved rains I hoped to see more plants. I wasn’t disappointed. On the sides of the slopes that ran down towards the dam there were many Drosera whittakeri and Drosera peltata. The thing that always amazes me is the colour variation in the D. whittakeri. From and orange/yellow to a bright crimson. All within the same cluster of 50 or more plants.

The grasses had been mown around the trees a few weeks before so they were quite easy to find and photograph. Some still had flowers out but most had finished. The peltatas’ were still at their basal rosette form or just beginning to throw up their taller growth, but were a fair size. These being up to about nearly a 20 cent piece size. Their yellow/green colour made them very easy to see and in the late morning sun glistened beautifully.

The next trip was a few days in our family’s favourite place, The Grampians. We stayed in Halls Gap and out the back of our cabin grew lots of D. whittakeri and many of them were flowering. These were in clumps about 1 x 3 metre square with again a range of colour forms. There were a few peltatas’ but these were found more in the open areas near the pathways.

We also saw many of whittakeris’ at Reeds Lookout on the trail to the Jaws of Death. The highlight though was in an large rocky open area on this trail where they had put an edge and drain under the path, many Utricularia dichotoma were growing in the shallow water. Most of these had flowers up and in a week or so would be a fantastic show.

The best part about visiting this area is the ease at seeing plants. They are in areas that are so accessible so even non walkers can get to see the plants. We saw plants in other areas too and compared to when we were in this area nearly 2 years ago when it was so dry, the area had obviously received a fair amount of rain this year and once again the C.P.'s had responded well.

DAVID BOND
A new Nepenthes book

PITCHER PLANTS OF SARAWAK

At our recent show, Gus from Pitcher Plant Fever, had a new book for sale. It is called Pitcher Plants of Sarawak.

This is an 80 page pocket guide to the region by Charles Clarke and Ch’ien Lee. Of course Charles is well known for his books on Nepenthes and is a past ‘Grand Champion’ of our VCPS.

This is a wonderful introduction to the species that grow in this area and is in full colour. With an introduction to Nepenthes, the 25 species plus an environmental examination it whets your appetite to want to visit this area or at least grow the plants.

This book has page after page of magnificent photos of plants in their natural habitat that make you realise why they are in such high demand to growers around the world. Many of the plants Gus has for sale, and when you see such plants as N. platychila and N. campanulata you’ll become a Nepenthes convert!

At around only $25, this book is a must for all C.P. enthusiasts.

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You are most welcome to visit Triffid Park but please organise this with us first, as inspection is by appointment ONLY.

NEWS

MAKE SURE YOU DON’T MISS THIS YEARS OPEN DAY
ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 23RD, 2005 FROM 12PM

We would like to welcome Donna's husband Jason to Triffid Park. As of Monday 31st January 2005 he joined us a full time employee, helping and learning to grow the carnivorous plants, including potting, weeding, deflasking tissue cultures, packing orders, spraying, fertilising etc. As well as working in the water plants, wire works, horse agistment and all the other jobs that are associated with the running of Triffid Park.

Donna is pregnant and expecting her second child in early May 2005. She will continue to work as long as she can up to her due date, but please bear with us around this time if your emails, faxes and orders are not attended to straight away.

We will attend to them as soon as we can.


Posted within Australia $AUS 50 (+gst) – overseas $AUS 60

This is a great book to use as a reference for anyone interested in carnivorous plants who is traveling to South Australia, or of course anyone who just wants a great reference book for their library. Once again, with all of Colin’s books, years of hard work, research, photos and field trips have been put into it. It is written in English text, paperback, spiral bound, 66 pages of text, color photos, maps and drawings. It describes and tells, in detail, where to find the Carnivorous Plants of South Australia along with cultural notes.

Southern Carnivores

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P.O.Box 193 Harvey, W.A. 6220
Contact Phil for a wide range of exotic and rare Nepenthes species and hybrids.
Drosera, Pinguicula and Cephalotus also available.
MEETING TOPICS & DATES for 2005
VICTORIAN CARNIVOROUS PLANT SOCIETY

This year we have scheduled the following discussion topics, and events:

January (22nd)  Darlingtonia, Dionaea, Pinguicula
(Saturday at Yarragon).
February (23rd)  Sarracenia species and hybrids, beginners night.
March (23rd)    Nepenthes, Heliamphora, and Brocchinia.
April (27th)    Drosera, video and information night.
May (25th)     Growing conditions, pygmy Drosera, 'best' and 'worst' plants, gemmae collection.
June (22nd)    AGM, plant give-away, any CPs.
July (27th)    Seed growing and tissue culture, potting demonstration, any CPs.
August (24th)  Tuberous Drosera, show preparation, displays, and companion planting.
September (28th) Cephalotus, pygmy Drosera judging, swap night.
October (23rd) Field trip to Triffid Park (Sunday afternoon, commencing with barbecue lunch).
November (23rd) Byblis, Drosophyllum, Genlisea, Utricularia.
December (TBA)  Annual show at Collectors Corner.

Please note: All meetings, other than those where a specific venue is given, will be on the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the month in the hall of the Pilgrim Uniting Church in Yarraville – corner Bayview Road and Montague Street, Melway Map Reference 41K7.

SEEDBANK LIST  MARCH 2005
VICTORIAN CARNIVOROUS PLANT SOCIETY

Darlingtonia
• california

Dionaea
• muscipula

Drosera
• siciace
• arcturi - Lake mountain, VIC
• arcturi - Falls Creek, VIC
• auriculata
• auriculata - Coryong, NSW
• auriculata - Christmas Hills, VIC
• auriculata - Langwarrin, VIC
• auriculata - Panton Hills, VIC
• auriculata - Waterworks, Hobart, TAS
• auriculata - Yarra Glen, VIC
• biflora
• binata - Tamboon Inlet, VIC
• binata var. dicotoma
• binata var. multifida
• binata var. multifida, (cross of 2 clones)
• burkiana
• burkiana - 'pale flower'
• burmanii
• calistos
• capensis
• capensis - var. albino (alba)
• capensis - 'broad leaf, pink flower'
• capensis - 'narrow leaf'
• capensis - 'pink flowers'
• capensis - 'small red'
• coccicula = ( venusta)
• dielsiana
• dielsiana - 'robust form'
• ericksonae
• filiformis ssp. filiformis
• filiformis ssp. filiformis - 'all red'
• foliosa - Fountain Gate, Vic
• intermedia
• macrantha ssp. macrantha - Carbarup, WA 'white flower'
• macrantha ssp. planchonii - Anglesea, VIC
• macrantha ssp. planchonii - Langwarrin, VIC
• macrantha ssp. planchonii - Melbourne, VIC
• nidiformis
• nitidula ssp. omissa
• nitidula ssp. leucostigma
• peltata - Riddles Creek, VIC
• peltata - Anglesea, VIC
• pygmaea - New Zealand 'green'
• rotundifolia - Zary, Poland
• rotundifolia var. furcata
• spatulata - Ahipara Gumfields, NZ
• spatulata - Cranbourne, VIC 'White Flower'
• sp. Vim da Serra de Roraema
• sp. aff. peltata (foliosa?) - Jamieson, VIC
• sp. B borneo

Sarracenia
• alata
• alata x leucophylla
• flava
• leucophylla
• oreophylla
• rubra
• psitacina - 'mixed clones'
• purpurea ssp. purpurea var. heterophylla
• purpurea ssp. venosa

Utricularia
• bisquamata
• dichotoma - Beenak, VIC
• dichotoma - Enfield, VIC
• dichotoma - Cranbourne, VIC
• dichotoma - Jamieson, VIC
• lateriflora
• lateriflora - Cranbourne, VIC
• lateriflora - small dark flowers

All seeds cost $1.00 per packet
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