

Reminiscences

by Donald Schnell

With this issue of CPN, we are beginning a new regular feature on a trial basis. We will be looking back over the past thirteen years of CPN and present again certain portions of articles, comments, News and Views and so forth, mainly from an anecdotal and often an ironic point of view. Sometimes we will point out inconsistencies, sometimes proposed projects we never heard from again, and sometimes some apparent key features that seem somewhat of a landmark and which may have gone ignored or which we now take for granted. The feature will also allow those relatively recent subscribers who do not have access to back issues for various reasons to see what has been going on. Subscribers who have been with us longer—perhaps for the whole nine yards—may enjoy re-reading about some things that might have slipped busy minds. I have often looked through my back issues and have been fascinated with the volume of important material that has been printed over the years.

Let us know how you like—or do not like—this new column. And by all means, if an article of yours or an old comment or suggestion is mentioned, write us and let us know what has been going on with your ideas and experience since then. We would all like to know. In some cases we have been left hanging for years after a final line reading “. . . and I will let you know how this turns out.” All too often, we never did find out. If you are still with us, let us know.

For reference purposes, any quotes or summations of old material will be followed in parentheses by an abbreviated CPN bibliographic quote, such as (CPN6:119), which means you can find it in Volume 6 of CPN on page 119. I hope the quotes do not become too distracting, but they really are necessary for folks who might want to check for more details.

So, here we go . . .

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Going WAY back to the beginning, I wonder if Robert Griesbach had any luck in inducing polyploidy in *Drosera* as he was attempting to do (CPN 1:2). Far from being an academic endeavor only, such research would have important implications in light of the most popularly accepted theory of the origin of fertile *Drosera anglica* as a polyploid of the hybrid *D. linearis* × *D. rotundifolia*.

Back when we were small and the subscriber list smaller, we used to list the new subscribers with each issue along with any information they would send along about what they were doing with CP, or planned to do. Back in the very first issue (CPN 1:3) is listed Katsuhiko Kondo who at that time was a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It was mentioned that he was interested in chromosome studies of CP. Time has been kind and true to Katsu: he is now on the Botany staff of the University of Hiroshima, and over the years has published prolifically on his chromosome studies of various CP along with trying to tie it all together on the various possible relationships of CP groups. No year has gone by without several of Katsu's papers reviewed in the CPN Literature Review section.

Several times each year, water problems are mentioned in CPN by various people. There has been much discussion of hard vs. soft water, the value of rain water, and even suggestions that a touch of sodium chloride in water is helpful to the growth of *Cephalotus follicularis*, or does the species just tolerate it? I think we might back up a couple of years and review Warren Stoutamire's early article on how to rather simply monitor total salts content of water (CPN 1:6), using both water from the tap or barrel or bottle or whatever, *and* measuring the total salts content of water draining from our pots to see what is in the soil and is dissolved by watering, or perhaps what is absorbed by various soils or peat. Warren suggested a simple bridge electronic device to measure conductance of the aqueous

solution in uMho, thus giving an estimate of total ionized material present. He gave some figures varying from 2 uMho for double distilled water, to 20-40 for various mixtures in which CP were successfully growing, to Akron City water which weighed in at 250 uMho! There are simple formulas for converting ppm of hardness to uMho and the reverse, and over the years less expensive commercial instruments have become available and are quite handy. I have one here as a matter of fact and use it rather regularly. Of course, as Warren emphasized, the whole business is a kind of estimate since the *kinds* of ionized material present are important as are little things like temperature at time of measurement.

From the “ouch!” department, I notice the first of our valiant attempts to induce the acceptance of the genus name *Chrysamphora* for the California pitcher plant (CPN 1:8) in place of *Darlingtonia*. Well, we were all learning in those days and it took many issues to finally decide and accept that *Darlingtonia* was indeed proper thanks to the political machinations of the ICBN in conserving the name. But in the meantime, *Chrysamphora* surely enjoyed more print than any other time since it was initially proposed! At risk of seeming quixotic, *Chrysamphora* did have a uniquely descriptively ring to it and seemed so appropriate. Oh well.

Our now old friend Steve Clemesha first came to light in our very first volume (CPN 1:17) and we have often heard from him since and will be quoting his articles in future columns. Steve has lived in two rather different areas of Australia over the years and has had phenomenal good luck and skill in growing many US CP from seed or minimum segments of small rhizomes into mature plants in record time, particularly *Sarracenias* which thrive in his hands. Some of his plants are into many generations now, including artificial hybrids. His photos sent us over the years show many beautiful plants.

In the initial flyer announcing the beginning of CPN, Joe Mazrimas and I stated as one of our purposes to increase communication among all CP enthusiasts, some who might live right around the corner from

each other and not know it. Well, the communications aspect took a giant leap when midway through volume one we began receiving large numbers of Japanese subscribers, most of whom were members of the Insectivorous Plant Society of Japan (IPSJ). These gentlemen had been growing and working with CP for many, many years, and as a result of all this, many new friendships and important plant and information exchanges began that have flourished to this day.

As a matter of fact, Isamu Kusakabe mentioned a curiosity, a peculiar attraction of the local neighborhood cats to his plants of *Drosophyllum* rather specifically. They broke into the greenhouse on several occasions and made straight for the *Drosophyllums*, trampling over other potential delectables along the way. Mr. Kusakabe wondered then if anyone had noticed this also—Perhaps not an earthshaking thing in and of itself, but still curious. My wife and I own five cats, but their admission to the greenhouse is and has been strictly forbidden (which makes the cat all the more determined, as those who have cats know about them), so I cannot say. How about anyone else?

Speaking of animal depredation of CP in the field, it is now well known that except for trampling (which may actually help vegetative propagation by breaking up the rhizomes), domestic cattle do not seem to eat *Sarracenias* in the southeastern United States, and indeed a good, damp cow pasture often contains the best stands of *Sarracenia* since the cattle kindly consume the competition. Well, Joe Mazrimas one year noticed several bogs of *Darlingtonia* (CPN 1:39) in which nearly every plant was decapitated—the hoods bitten off and gone. It turned out that this was done by deer who seem to have a taste for the hoods, possibly for their salt content, and the plants are often known locally as “deerlicks”.

Until next time . . .



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