Experiences With Propagation of *Sarracenia flava* (Sarraceniaceae) Through Division With Only One Growing Spot

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Vegetative propagation of *Sarracenia* is performed by rhizome division (see, for example, D'Amato (1998), page 100, or Slack (2000), page 199). However, usually only plants with more than one growing spot are divided, yielding as many plants as there were original growth tips. In this article I describe how I successfully divided a *Sarracenia flava* plant with only one growing spot into two separate plants.

I had bought my specimen of *Sarracenia flava* as a young plant at my local gardening center, and grew it in a tray in a south-facing windowsill. I used a potting medium of peat and perlite. Over the following years it grew larger and developed sturdy, 50 cm (20 in) green pitchers with red necks. It flowered once, and also once required repotting.

Last spring, the rhizome had become about 12 cm (5 in) long and again required a new pot—the rhizome was already pushing at both sides of the plastic pot, deforming it into an oval shape. Instead of repotting the plant in a larger pot, I decided to cut off a part of the rhizome so that the plant would fit into the pot. Unfortunately, the plant had only one growing spot (I later learned of techniques to induce the growth of other growing spots by cutting small notches into its top but did not know of this at the time).

I used a sharp knife to carefully cut the rhizome into two 6 cm (2.5 in) segments. I had to delicately separate the intertwined roots of the two rhizome parts, which was not easy. One rhizome segment had a growing tip, but the other only had roots. Although fungicides, charcoal, or B-1 solutions are usually recommended in this situation (for example Carow & Fürst (1993), page 14), I did not have any.

I repotted the rhizome segments into two separate pots. Even though one segment had no growth tip, it was strong and healthy looking so I decided to give it a try. I waited to see what would happen. Since the one segment had no leaves, I put it in a place in my back yard where it did not get light, but would get some rain once in a while. During the first weeks, I looked after it regularly. Nothing happened. Then, the times without attention got longer. However, I still looked at it once in a while to test whether the rhizome was rotten or still nice and strong. It stayed strong and did not decay, without change, for days, for weeks, even for months. At some point in time when the weather outside got colder I moved the pot inside to be next to its mother plant. The mother plant spent the summer making a few nice pitchers, although they were considerably smaller than they used to (about 30 cm; 12 in), probably due to the shock from division (see Figure 1).

Finally in October, a tiny red leaflet appeared in the daughter pot, which started to grow and turn into a small leaf. But that was not all! After the first new growing spot two more appeared and started to grow small leaves. By November, the largest leaf from the first spot was about 12 cm (5 in) long and showed the well-known shape of a *Sarracenia flava* pitcher (see Figure 2). By this time, the mother plant was producing winter phyllodia. This February, the mother plant produced a nice flower which was even bigger than the one it had made before. Hopefully, within a few years, it will again produce the big pitchers that it used to grow.

I hope this experience will help other growers who cultivate *Sarracenia* plants of which the rhizomes have become too long but which have only one growing spot. Just go and try cutting the rhizome apart and by that propagate the plant!

References
Carow, T. and Fürst, R. 1993, Fleischfressende Pflanzen, Verlag Thomas Carow, Nuedlingen, Germany, 4th edition.
D'Amato, P. 1998, The Savage Garden: Cultivating Carnivorous Plants. Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, California.
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Figure 1: The mother plant with the original growing spot, flowering in February.

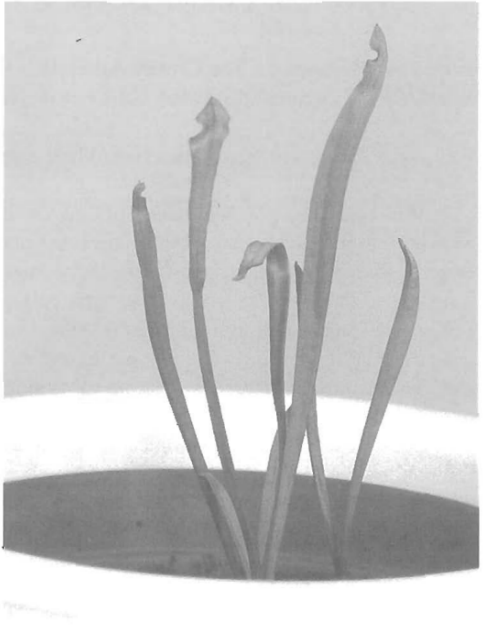

Figure 2: The new plant with the two growing spots.

News and Views

Jonathan Svend McQuay (Peterborough, NH 03458, USA) writes: I read a small article in the July/August 2002 issue of National Geographic World about some scientists from Iowa State University. They discovered that catnip repels mosquitoes ten times better than most other repellants would.

Recently I have had mosquitoes laying eggs in my carnivorous plant trays. Because of this I had to move my prized carnivorous plants and pour out the water. Then I saw some catnip at a fair and decided to see if it would help. I put a 1/2 teaspoon of dried catnip (fresh would probably work better as it is the oil that repels) per quart in and no more mosquitoes!

Although this technique is cheap and wonderfully effective, it could cost cat owners dearly!

Barry Rice (barry@carnivorousplants.org) writes: During a recent business trip to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, I found, much to my delight, both *Utricularia gibba* and *U. foliosa* growing well in urban ponds. The latter was fruiting; in fact the ponds were dotted with armadas of fruit that had popped off the inflorescences and were bobbing on the water surface. I dissected these fruit (quite large, at about 1 cm diameter) and observed that each contained several of the large, disc-shaped seeds so well illustrated by Taylor in his *Utricularia* monograph. I collected about twenty of the fruit for study. I found that when kept in water, the fruit stayed fresh and, in about four days, expelled their coats and released the seed. In my less than ideal cultivation conditions, only one of the seeds germinated.

Even though the germination rate was so low in my small experiment, I am struck by this dispersal mechanism which is relatively uncommon in carnivorous plants. I wonder if there is even more to this story—perhaps waterfowl may eat the fruit and pass viable seeds.