SHORT NOTES

DROSERA BINATA

by Stephan Clemesha

This interesting plant is in my experience the most satisfactory Australian Drosera to cultivate. It is the first insectivorous plant that I ever cultivated and my original plants are still growing. I found that three distinct forms of it exist. Two of these are plentiful while the third is a rare plant found in a very specialized habitat.

Curiously, it is the rare form which I have had longest and it was the only form I had for about five years. In that time, it has flowered each spring, set seed, and then its leaves withered and died in the autumn. The original plant was collected quite unintentionally in a square of soil with a delicate ground orchid. The latter plant died soon after collection but the pot was not discarded because of the Drosera. Its distinctive habit is its leaves and petiole which are roughly T-shaped and the lead ends never fork dichotomously into four or more segments as do those of the more common form.

As young plants, the common form produce T-shaped leaves also and even mature plants will occasionally produce the T-shaped leaves and so it took a long time before I realized its distinctiveness. Even plants grown from seed in the U.S.A. proved that it was true to its type, that is, the leaves were always T-shaped even in the flowering plant. At first, I believed the lack of dichotomous leaves to be my growing conditions so I tried all sorts of things to improve them. All failed but fortunately I did not kill the plant.

Finally, I collected a few plants of the common form and these continue to produce dichotomous leaves though still produce an odd T-shaped leaf especially at the beginning and end of the season. I then looked everywhere I knew where D. binata grew in order to try and determine the commonness of the two forms. I saw the dichotomous form in abundance but did not see the T-shaped form again for about two years. I looked in coastal and mountain swamps, in wet rock crevices, in very wet habitats, rather dry ones, in full sun and heavy shade but always found only the dichotomous form. A few times I thought that I found the T-shaped form but I was disappointed when the dichotomous leaves soon followed. In the meantime, plants of the dichotomous form I sent to the U.S.A. were causing excitement as being new and different from the T-shaped form which had become well established in cultivation and was accepted as the common form.

I failed to find another specimen of the T-shaped form in the area where I first found it because it was blocked for a time, but I was able to visit areas only 100 yards or less away. The area is a cliff face (sandstone) with many caves and wet crevices. Climbing down the winding trail, I could see D. binata growing on many wet surfaces and some grew in overhanging caves. However, these all turned out to be the dichotomous form. Finally, when I was able to return to the original cave, I found only a few weak plants in wet mud and sphagnum and with it the orchid. The area is heavily shaded accounting for the weak growth.

I have since found it in another area about 10 miles away. Here it grows in a cave in a rock crevice but receives more light than the other area so the colony is a large one. The presence of small plants of the dichotomous form in a colony makes finding a pure strand of this rare form more difficult. This is the only information I have on this type in Australia.

The third form of D. binata was found in open swamps on Stradbroke Island (20 miles by 8 miles) off Brisbane Queensland. This area is about 600 miles north of my Sidney collecting areas. This form is the only one I observed in the area. It differs from the local dichotomous form in having leaves which fork more and earlier giving this form a curious spider-like appearance. Its petioles and leaves carry much more of a reddish pigment than those of the other two forms. Even the leaf hairs are reddish. When I first saw it, I suspected it was the result of its habitat but cultivated plants have shown no sign of reverting back to the other form. It continued growing right through the winter unlike the other two deciduous forms and possibly is more free flowering than the other forms.

All forms of D. binata are easily cultivated in pots of sphagnum which must never be allowed to dry out and look best when standing in water. All forms can be propagated from root cuttings or leaf cuttings on pots of wet material in shade though I had no success with leaf cuttings of the T-shaped leaf form. More studies in distant areas are desirable to find out the possible ranges of the three forms.

A HISTORY OF THE INSECTIVOROUS PLANT SOCIETY OF JAPAN

by Katsuhiko Kondo

This society was founded in Tokyo on November 20, 1949. The founders were all amateur botanists: Dr. M. Toyoda, Mr. G. Shikata, Mr. T. Saito, Mr. S. Ohotaki, and Mr. S. Komiya. The first meeting was held at the Koishikawa Botanical Garden at Tokyo University on December 25, 1949, and a charter and by-laws were made. The first edition of their bulletin was published on January 30, 1950. Without Mr. T. Saito's help, this edition would not have come out. The first field trip was made on May 3, 1950. On November 26, 1950 the society had its first anniversary and viewed the French film, "Insectivorous Plants" at the National Science Museum at Tokyo. On April 8, 1951 Mr. O. Hirose, who introduced living Sarracenia to Japan and produced numerous hybrids of them as a pioneer of cultivation of insectivorous plants, gave a seminar about cultivation of Sarracenia. On April 27-29, 1951 "The First Carnivorous Plant Show" was held at Mitsukoshi Department Store. Since then, carnivorous plant shows have been one of the society's main attractions. The first president, whose tenure was 15 years, was Dr. M. Toyoda who died in 1964. After his death, from 1964 to the present, Dr. F. Nezu has filled the position as the second president of the society.

Almost from its inception the society felt the need for a permanent headquarters of its own. However, this seemed an impossibility.