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THE DROSERA BINATA COMPLEX

by J. A. Mazrimas

We get frequent requests to differentiate between the variants of the Drosera binata complex which all grow in Australia along the eastern seaboard. It is interesting that the variants are self-sterile but interfertility is good when variants are crossed with one another. A description follows on how to differentiate between the various types.

The "T" form is the simple one with the petiole dividing into two leaves which grow in this way for years. I've never seen its leaves divide any further. Its petiole is of uniform width throughout.

The var. dichotoma is more complex in that the leaf portion divides either one or two more times to produce a maximum of eight points. The leaf is somewhat wider than the petiole (about three times) and frequently the width is non-uniform at the base of the branch point; that is, the leaf branches unequally so that one portion of the leaf is noticeably wider than the other.

Finally, we come to the var. multifida whose leaves exhibit many branchings up to 27 points as described in CPN 4,48,1975. The leaves divide evenly so that they have a uniform width throughout. The tentacles seem to exhibit more red color than var. dichotoma in the strongest light. The leaves have nearly the same width as the petiole which supports the branched structure.

The flower color is usually white on all three variants. However, a rare pink flower form is known to occur with var. dichotoma and var. multifida.

All three variants make very good basket plants since the petioles grow long and seem to flop over the pot. I hang my pots of these plants by wire to a pipe attached to the roof of the greenhouse. The plants relish the extra light and the beautiful leaves grow thickly over the pot showing off their dewy tentacles in the morning light. I use an inexpensive plastic pail to pot the plants and fill the bottom half with pure perlite and fill the rest with sphagnum moss and perlite mix. I water to fill pail up to the level of the perlite layer.