

BOGS IN SWITZERLAND AND THE U.S.A.

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I have always had the good fortune to live or spend vacations in areas where carnivorous plants are found. I lived with my family in Switzerland until July 1985 and then moved to Atlanta. Before we moved I had found two bogs in our neighborhood. Both bogs were found by accident.

One day in the summer of 1984 I went for a walk and passed a strange looking field near our home in Steinhausen, Zug. The grass was not dark green but sort of brownish looking. I was curious and went into the field and stepped on something soft and spongy which turned out to be sphagnum. I remembered from an article I had read that where there was sphagnum there would also be *Drosera rotundifolia*. As I walked I looked down at the ground to see if there were any plants and it was there that I saw my first *Drosera* in nature.

In April of 1985 I found another bog near Steinhausen. It was a different kind of bog than the one I had found before and was the locale of many beautiful flowers and butterflies. I walked further and saw the largest *Pinguicula vulgaris* I had ever seen. It measured 5½ inches in diameter! Walking still further I saw large patches of ground covered with *Drosera intermedia* and *Pinguicula vulgaris* which surprised me because they are reported to be very rare.

Those were the only two bogs I encountered in Switzerland and then in July 1985 we moved to Atlanta and I was out of reach of any bogs.

My sister and I were invited to spend a couple of weeks in Covington, Louisiana, in June of 1986 which excited me very much because I knew that *Sarracenia* could be found in its natural habitat there. On June 12, after driving for 5 hours, I saw patches of *Sarracenia leucophylla* just northeast of Mobil, Alabama, growing along the highway. In southern Mississippi I saw a lot of patches of *Sarracenia alata*.

During my second week in Covington my friend and I drove around the area and saw what appeared to be a field where *Sarracenia alata* should be found. After spending a couple of hours and not having found what we wanted we then decided to go back home. On the way back we stopped at a drugstore to get a few things, looked across the road, and from a distance saw some pitchers of *Sarracenia alata*.

Two or three days later we returned to the same field and saw our first wild *Sarracenia* close up. The mouth of one *Sarracenia alata* was 2 inches wide! The plant appeared to be healthy; no pitchers were infested with larva of the Exyra moth and there was a lot of young pitcher growth. We went on and found a drainage ditch and saw submerged in the water *Drosera capillaris*. Further in the field we noticed there were fewer *Sarracenia*, and a lot of the few pitchers we saw were collapsed because of the Exyra moth larva. There was not much young pitcher growth. I took some photographs, and then decided to return to the car because the heat became unbearable and the mosquitos were having a feast—and we had become the main course.

A few days later we went to another field which also contained patches of *Sarracenia alata*. We went into the field and had the refreshing experience that water covered most of the ground and came up to our ankles. As we came to the patches we noticed right away that these plants were much healthier and more robust than the plants we had seen a few days earlier.

While we were examining the plants, crawfish were crawling all over our feet. After seeing what we wanted, we went back to the field we had seen earlier in the week. We were looking for *Drosera brevifolia*, *Pinguicula* and *Drosera capillaris*.

We walked further than the last time and found a spot where there were hundreds of little *Drosera*. At first we could not identify them because they were so small. I then realized that the size of the plants had caused the confusion between *Drosera capillaris* and *Drosera brevifolia*. They were hardly an inch in diameter. We went further to look for some



(Above) *Sarracenia alata* in natural habitat near Covington, Louisiana

(Below) *Drosera rotundifolia* in sphagnum bog in Steinhausen, Kanton Zug in Switzerland
Photos by Christoph A. Belanger



Pinguicula pumila and *Drosera brevifolia*. Unfortunately, we did not find any, nor did we find any other carnivorous plants, probably because it was so dry in the part of the field we visited last. We went back to the car disappointed and thought - maybe another time.

A few days later my sister and I went back to Atlanta, and, once again, I enjoyed the sight of *Sarracenia alata* and *Sarracenia leucophylla* along the highways in southern Mississippi and Alabama.

Note about the author: Christoph is one of CPN's younger enthusiasts. He is 15 years old and has been interested in carnivorous plants since he was 13.

FIELD TRIP TO GASQUET, CALIFORNIA

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After six months of talking about it, I was off on a six day camping trip to Del Norte County, CP capital of California. Joining me was my friend Charmaine Rable, landscaper and horticulturalist of the resort where I work. On previous vacations I had briefly stopped along Hwy. 199 while on my way to other destinations, just long enough to find one good stand of *Darlingtonia* and *Drosera rotundifolia*. This time, with four days to spend in one location, I hoped to see *Pinguicula macroceras nortensis* and the rumored red-leaved variety, as well as *D. anglica*, a plant I have never seen. Charmaine was familiar with my small, but varied collection of CP, and found it hard to believe such plants actually "grew in the wild." We were in for a frantic holiday, with both disappointments and a totally unexpected surprise.

Del Norte County, in the extreme northwest of California, is the wettest part of the state, receiving as much as 70 to 100 inches of rain from October to May. The summer is generally dry, with warm days and cool, foggy nights. Winter may see some freezing, especially at higher altitudes. CP can survive the dry summers mostly by growing along the many cold water springs, seeps and creeks that are common in the mountainous terrain.

Before even hunting out a campground, we decided to make a quick stop at the one *Darlingtonia* stand I knew of, near the east limit of Gasquet, a town of 400. The highway parallels the Smith River, a turquoise ribbon that winds through the rugged serpentine mountains which are covered with pines and firs. In April the river is rather wild and noisy, a great contrast to the serene wilderness. Rhododendron and azalae brightened the woods with color, and many unusual wildflowers were in bloom. Any *Darlingtonia* stand is impressive to look at; this one was especially so, as the plants were flowering and the early morning light glowed in the puffed hoods as though they were lanterns. The cobras grew densely in an area no more than 200 feet across, where a bubbling cold creek breaks off into streams and seeps. The ground is a base of crushed gravel, with the *Darlingtonia* rooted in a dense, but porous, peat made not of sphagnum, but other decaying mosses and plants. At first sight, most of the peat mounds are crusty dry and sun-warmed, but pushing your finger into it reveals cold wetness a bare inch below the surface. Glittering *D. rotundifolia* carpet the ground, so different from east coast bogs I have seen where this sundew only grows in sphagnum. Here, the bright red plants are barely 1½" across, growing on the "dry" peat, in the wet gravel, on rotting wood, moss covered rocks, and greasy clay overgrown with grasses. Only April, and flower stalks were already pushing above the rosettes. Here *rotundifolia* is dormant only