On the Cultivation of the South American Pitcherplant, *Heliamphora neblinae.*

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In a remote region of southern Venezuela, there is a lofty mountain which is perpetually hidden in the mists. Appropriately named Cerro de la Neblina ("Mountain of the Clouds"), it supports large expanses of carnivorous plant bogs. Here grows the spectacular South American pitcherplant, *Heliamphora neblinae* with robust crimson traps (see front cover; also back cover of CPN *8*(3), 1979).

Various helicopter expeditions have come to this remote mountain to study its unusual flora, which is one of the most intriguing in the world (see Smithsonian Magazine 1985). During one of these trips, a curious researcher, unknown to me, collected some pitcher plants.... perhaps he even grabbed them as he hurriedly returned to the helicopter.... and from this event a chunk of leafless, bare rhizome reached me. I am most grateful to the intermediate friend who relayed this piece of treasure to me.

From this simple beginning, I now have a magnificent and graceful plant (Figure 1), nearly as robust and colorful as those in nature. In mid-November 1987 this plant threw a vigorous spike with 2 splendid flowers (Figure 2). The "petals" are delicate white with a faint rose blush and emit a fine perfume. I suspect they are pollinated by moths at dusk in the bogs.

I now describe how I grow this plant, so that those who obtain their own plants in the future might learn more from my methods.

Greenhouse conditions in Madison, Wisconsin.

I try to simulate natural environmental conditions in the bogs on Cerro de la Neblina based on my knowledge of high tropical mountains. To me, the quintessence is bright sun in drifting mist, spring-like days, and cool nights. In the greenhouse, these conditions are similar to those under which orchid growers raise *Cymbidiums:* 70-75° F during the day and 50° F at night. This plant grows best in late summer with even colder nights (45° F).

I pot this plant in 80% pure peat moss with 20% perlite. I've used pure peat moss with no adverse effects. I water only with distilled water. When the plant flowers, I let the soil dry out so as to reduce the risk of its rotting when not in growth (and therefore not needing so much water).

The plant readily captures a species of Marsh Fly, which is abundant in my growing area. These are quite similar to its natural prey ("Zucudos,"). Each trap fills with the rotting bodies of 80-150 flies. I keep water levels high in traps, so that digestion continues.

Readers who wish to learn more details of how I grow high elevation carnivorous plants might see my article, "On the Cultivation of the Giant Malaysian Pitcher Plant, *Nepenthes rajah* CPN 12(4): (1983). My plant of *H. neblinae* grows in the middle of my *Nepenthes* collection.

For readers who wish to own a plant of this species, I am trying to propagate my single plant, mostly from seed. This is a slow process. At this time, I will only trade stock for equally rare *Heliamphora* and *Nepenthes* species. In several years, as more people grow this plant, it may become more readily available.

Editor's note: Figure 1 is the front cover and Figure 2 is the back cover.

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Front cover: *Heliamphora neblinae* plant with prominent red spoon. Note pitcher of *Nepenthes rajah* in background. See article beginning on page 47.
Rear cover: Flower of *H. neblinae*. Note size of flower as compared to hand! Photos by Thomas C. Gibson.

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