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Victorian Carnivorous PLANT SOCIETY INC.

MARCH 2025

VCPS Newsletter No. 20



Utricularia capilliflora



Victorian Carnivorous PLANT SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter No. 20

March 2025

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MEETING TOPICS & DATES for 2025 VICTORIAN CARNIVOROUS PLANT SOCIETY

This year we have scheduled the following discussion topics, and events:

January	(20 th)	New Year BBQ (Contact for details)
February	(26 th)	<i>Sarracenia</i> , <i>Dionaea</i> (VFT), beginners info
March	(26 th)	<i>Nepenthes</i> & <i>Heliamphora</i> .
April	(5 th)	VCPS 1 day Autumn show at Collectors Corner.
April	(23 rd)	<i>Drosera</i> and information night.
May	(28 th)	Growing conditions, 'Best' and 'Worst' plants, pygmy <i>Drosera</i> gemmae swap and <i>Nepenthes</i> cutting demonstration.
June	(25 th)	AGM, plant give-away , any CPs.
July	(23 rd)	Rosetted tuberous <i>Drosera</i> judging, Propagation – seed growing, division and cuttings. <i>Sarracenia</i> rhizome plant sale.
August	(27 th)	Upright tuberous/Winter growing <i>Drosera</i> , show preparation, displays, and companion planting.
September	(24 th)	<i>Cephalotus</i> , <i>Brocchinia</i> , <i>Catopsis</i> and swap night.
October	(22 nd)	<i>Byblis</i> , pygmy <i>Drosera</i> , <i>Drosera binata</i> , <i>Drosophyllum</i> , <i>Genlisea</i> , <i>Pinguicula</i> , <i>Roridula</i> , <i>Utricularia</i> , any carnivorous plant, show preparation.
November	(TBA)	Triffid Park Open Day.
December	(TBA)	VCPS Annual show at Collectors Corner.

Please note: All meetings, other than those where a specific venue is given, will be on the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the month in the hall of the Pilgrim Uniting Church in Yarraville. Corner Bayview Road and Montague Street, Melway Map Reference 41K7.



Drosera dilatato-petiolearis from around Girraween, N.T. Photo: Stephen Fretwell

VCPS Growers photos

If you'd like to publish a photo that you took of your plant in the VCPS journal. Please email it to Stephen Fretwell the VCPS designer at: stevfretwell24@gmail.com

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Seed Bank

We now have a huge collection of NEW fresh CP seed available, and our seed list has become quite extensive. With over 250 varieties of CP's, we are now providing the list in PDF format on our website, www.vcps.org For inquiries or to order seeds, please contact the VCPS Seedbank Officer.

The articles that are found within are copyright but can be copied freely if the author and source are acknowledged. The views are of the authors and are open to review and debate. Please send all material to the editor for consideration to be included in our quarterly journal.



FRONT COVER:
Utricularia capilliflora,
Girraween, N.T.
Photo: Stephen Fretwell

BACK COVER:
Clockwise from top left:

- *Utricularia hamiltonii*, Girraween, N.T.
 - *Utricularia odorata*, Girraween, N.T.
 - *Utricularia leptoplectra*, Girraween, N.T.
 - *Utricularia simmonsii*, Girraween, N.T.
 - *Drosera aff. petiolearis*, Girraween, N.T.
 - *Drosera brevicornis*, Girraween, N.T.
 - *Utricularia capilliflora*, Girraween, N.T.
 - *Utricularia holtzei*, Girraween, N.T. (centre)
- All Photos: Stephen Fretwell

Design: Stephen Fretwell

VCPS News

New VCPS 1 day only Autumn Show for 2025

After popular demand the VCPS is going to hold another annual show this Autumn on **Saturday, April 5th**. The show is also going to be held at **Collectors Corner, Gardenworld** which is a fantastic venue and an amazing place to come and visit.

The Autumn show is for one day only and is on from **9am-5pm**. Entry is free for all and it's surely going to be another brilliant show full of rare and spectacular species to see and buy.

There's a lot of different carnivorous plants that are looking their best in Autumn and this show will highlight some of these plants.

We want to make this a permanent event on the calendar for the VCPS. So please come along and show your support and either display plants or see the plants as it's a great opportunity for members to meet and greet other collectors, and see and purchase some amazing plants.



The Heliamphora and Nepenthes displays.



The champion plants from the 2024 VCPS annual show.

VCPS News

New huge pitched *Nepenthes* discovered

Late last year, a new stunning giant pitched *Nepenthes* that can hold up to 2 litres of liquid from Sabah in northern Borneo was described, called *Nepenthes pongoides*.

This species comes from a low elevation ultramafic range in Sabah and is named after the orangutan (genus Pongo) on account of the plant's abundant indumentum of long, reddish hairs and also in hope to draw a conservation link between both critically endangered species.

This species was first discovered and photographed in 2004, and again in 2018 which revealed that this plant was probably a new species. The researchers including Alastair Robinson (Botanist from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria), planned an expedition to locate the plants but were delayed due to the pandemic and were finally able to relocate it from 2 locations in 2023. Unfortunately after an exhaustive search only 39 individual plants were found making this an extremely vulnerable plant on the verge of extinction and it has now been listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.



Nepenthes pongoides lower pitcher.
Photos: Alastair Robinson/Facebook



The hairy indumentum on *Nepenthes pongoides* petioles.



One of the botanists holding a *Nepenthes pongoides* lower pitcher.

VCPS News

Another *Nepenthes* from Peninsula Malaysia!

A new addition to the recent *Nepenthes* discovered in Peninsular Malaysia, another stunning plant has just been described also from that location.

The plant is called *Nepenthes batik* in reference to the patterned silk screen textiles of Malaysia and Indonesia ('batik'), a link made because of the intricate, batik-like black speckling of the plant's pitchers.

It was described by an international team from Malaysia, France, the UK, Germany, and Australia, including RBGV's Dr Alastair Robinson, following work based on extensive studies of existing herbarium collections along with supporting field observations.

Nepenthes batik is found from the Titiwangsa Range of Peninsular Malaysia, where it inhabits montane forests at c. 1300–1500 m elevation. A putative close relative of *N. ramispina* the species can be distinguished by its more diminutive overall size, and particularly by consistent differences in phyllode ('lamina') morphology, lower pitcher shape, tendril to pitcher length ratio, spur morphology, and lid gland size and distribution. As a secondary but nonetheless helpful characteristic, all known populations of *N. batik* consistently differ from *N. ramispina* in terms of pitcher colouration.



Lower pitchers of *N. batik*.
Photo: François Mey/Facebook

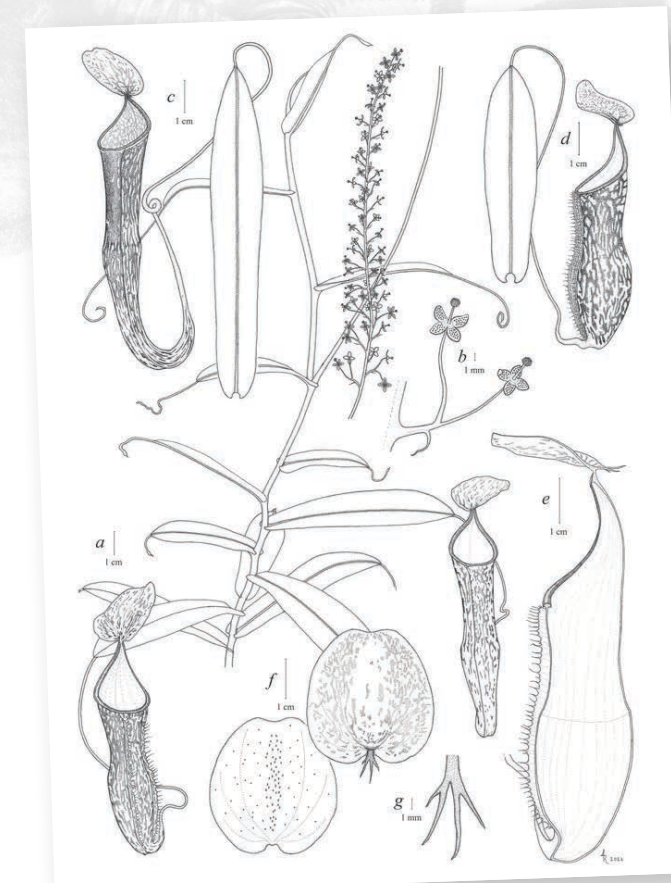


Illustration: Alastair Robinson/Facebook



Upper pitcher of *N. batik*.
Photo: Michael Golos/Facebook



Utricularia leptoplectra.
Photo: Stephen Fretwell



Utricularia odorata and *Utricularia leptoplectra* growing together at a site near Girraween.

Photos: Stephen Fretwell

Extraordinary carnivorous plants around Darwin

BY STEPHEN FRETWELL

PART 1

After an early 6am flight I arrived at Brisbane airport and met up with a fellow CP enthusiast, Dave Colbourn the Australian Carnivorous Plant Society President. Neither of us had been to Darwin before and after a brief catch up, we caught our connecting flight to Darwin.

After a lengthy flight, roughly 4 hours later we arrived in Darwin around 3pm, picked up our SUV hire car and headed off to meet our Tassie friends Darren Cullen and Jill. They'd arrived a couple of days earlier and had already managed to do a bit of searching at a few sites and had found quite a at least a dozen species.

Once we picked Darren and Jill up, Darren directed to a site that they'd visited in Girraween that they'd visited the day before. There was a flowing seep along the side of the track where multiple springs came up from the ground. Amazingly as soon as we stepped outside the car, we immediately spotted some beautiful red *Drosera dilatato-petiole* and *D. burmanii*



Drosera burmanii.

plants. While they were awesome to see, we decided to head over to the seep to check out the bright yellow and mauve *Utricularia* flowers on tall scapes that could easily be seen above the surrounding grasses.

Upon closer inspection of the yellow flowers, we identified them as *Utricularia odorata*. This species seemed to prefer growing in very wet and submerged conditions under a shallow amount of water. The flower scapes 30-40cm tall and were



Drosera serpens.



Utricularia odorata.



Drosera dilatato-petiolaris.



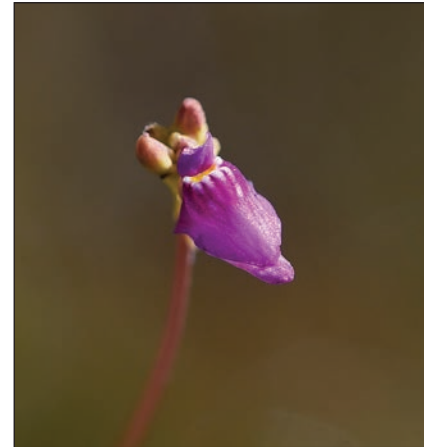
Dave photographing the *Utricularia* at the first site.

seemed to occur in large clumps with each bearing 5-8 open flowers. Also growing amongst the *U. odorata* in shallow water was the mauve boomerang shaped flowers of *U. leptoplectra*, a plant that I'd always wanted to see in the wild and they were even more striking in real life. There wasn't as many flowers to be seen, but due to their colour and lengths of the flower scapes which was 40-60cm, they really stood out.

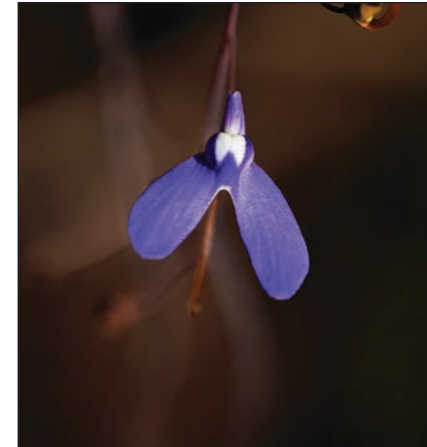
Mixed in along the seep we also managed to find the small pink-mauve flowers of *U. caerulea*, the stunning 3 lobed white flowers of *U. kamienskii* and some long prostrate growing plants of *D. serpens*.

After exploring the area further, we also managed to find another bright yellow flowering *Utricularia*, *U. chrysantha*. This species flowers are generally quite easy to distinguish from *U. odorata* and the other yellow flowering *Utricularia* by the shape of their flowers palette which has 4 small lobes. But in the case of these flowers the palette barely had and lobes. Apparently the flowers of this species are quite variable, so we just put it down to them being a different form. We also managed to locate the tiny white flowers of *U. nivea* which were barely 4mm in size.

Further down the track we managed to find a small



Utricularia caerulea.



Utricularia leptoplectra.



Utricularia kamienskii.



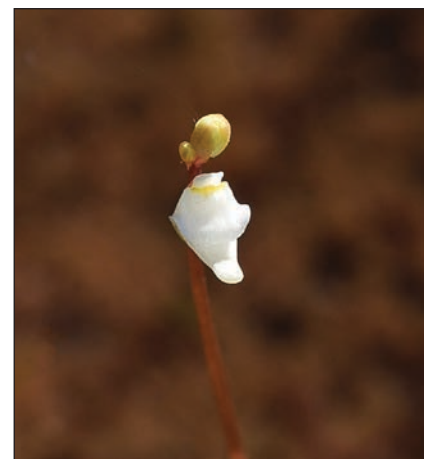
Utricularia gibba.



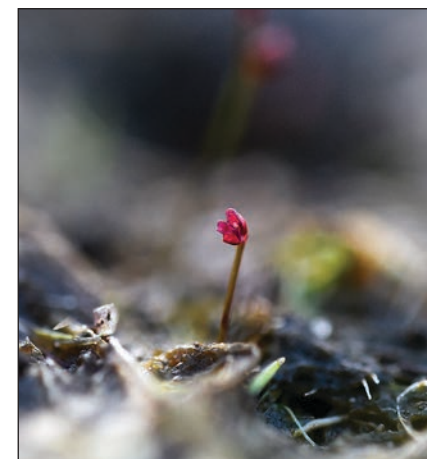
An unusual *U. chrysantha* flower variant from the first location.



A typical flower of *U. chrysantha* from the second location.



Utricularia nivea.



Utricularia simmonsii flower.



The tiny flowers of *U. simmonsii*.

pond which had a lot of the aquatic *Utricularia gibba* growing in it and after a bit of searching we also spotted some its yellow flowers of on one edge of the pond.

After a good hour exploring, we then jumped back into the car and headed onto the next spot which was only about 5 minutes away and deeper into the native bushland at the same site. When we stepped out of the car, the first thing that we noticed was how extremely sandy it was and a lot drier. It didn't take long until we found our first Cp's, a thin petiole form of *D. aff. petiolaris* along with *D. fulva* which seemed to favour these sandy dry conditions. The *D. aff. petiolaris* were stunning dark

red plants and were approximately 8-13 cm in size. While the *D. fulva* plants in contrast were only half the size at 4-6 cm and had bright green petioles with red glandular leaves.

The main reason for visiting this site was to see the tiny flowers of *U. simmonsii*. And tiny they were. Darren had managed to find a few flowers the day before on the edge of a drying pond and had marked them so that they were easy to find again. However, at 2mm in size, it was still a challenge!

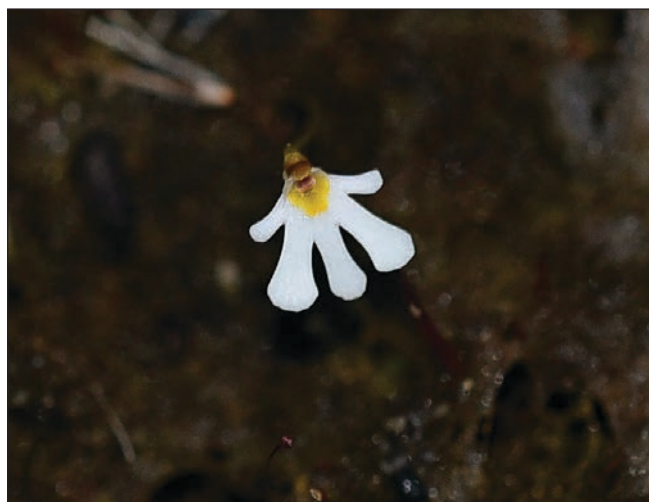
After getting down on our hands and knees, a few minutes we finally managed to find one, then two, then



Drosera aff. petiolaris



Drosera fulva.



Utricularia holtzei.



Utricularia holtzei.

three flowers. The flowers were dark red in colour and on 10-15mm tall scapes. They were so small that it was difficult to tell if the flower was actually fully open or not.

However, if we found finding flowers was difficult, photographing them was even harder and extremely challenging. But after some perseverance I did actually manage to get some pretty good photos by the end.

Growing around the pond and also in the dry sandy area were more *U. leptoplectra*, *D. burmanii* and *U. chrysantha*. In comparison to the last site, these *U. chrysantha* flowers had a palette with the more typical distinct lobes and the underside of the flower was also a pale red colour.

The last site that we visited that afternoon was only

7 minutes drive, and close to the road again which was good. It was quite wet underfoot, and Darren led us straight to the stunning flowers of *U. holtzei*. This species has stunning small, 5 lobed white flowers and they are quite unusual in their shape. The size of the flower was the biggest surprise for me, as it was only about 5-7mm wide, not at least 10mm as I'd expected.

After taking several photos Darren excitedly called me over to see one of the most extraordinary shaped flowers in the *Utricularia* genus. It was the flowers of *U. capilliflora*, which is one of only 4 species that have antennae on the top of their flowers. Again, the flowers were super tiny and roughly only 3mm wide and 12-15mm long with its two, 10-12mm antenna on the top



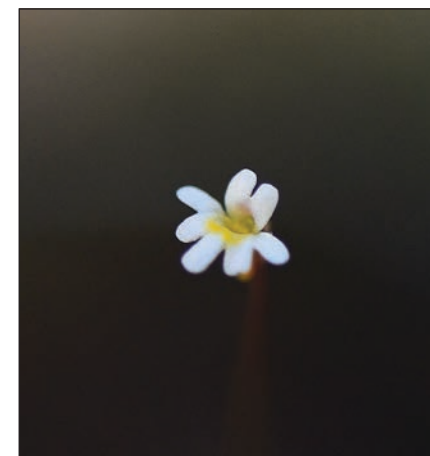
Two very unusual flowers of the very tiny *U. capilliflora* which are incredible difficult to locate in the wild.



Utricularia lasiocaulis.



Utricularia hamiltonii.



Utricularia quinquedentata.

of the flower, which are reminiscent of insect antennae. The flowers were borne on a scape no taller than 6cm and extremely difficult to find and keep in focus amongst the other grasses and twigs on the ground.

I spent quite a bit of time trying to get some decent photos of this unusual flower as it was nothing like I'd ever seen before and it was again extremely difficult to photograph due to its size. But again with some patience I managed to take some great photos of it.

Throughout the area we also managed to find quite a few of the also minute flowers of *U. quinquedentata*. These flowers were no bigger than 3mm in size and had 5 small lobes along the sides and bottom and 2 more lobes on top. The flowers were plain white in colour but had a bright yellow throat to help guide insects to its pollen.

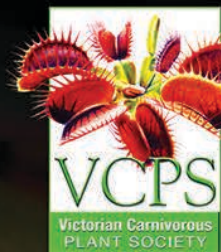
The next flower that we came across at this location was the nice mauve coloured flower of *U. hamiltonii*. These flowers were 8-10mm in size and had a lovely

yellow and almost white section, surrounded by a dark purple and 2 triangular pointy ear-like extrusions on top.

Not far away from the *U. hamiltonii*, growing in similar conditions we came across another stunning *Utricularia* flower that belonged to *U. lasiocaulis*. At first, we just thought that it was a variant of *U. hamiltonii* as it was also mauve in colour and similar shaped at first glance. But upon closer inspection we noticed that it had a fuller rounder palette and no darker purple or white around the flower entrance.

U. leptoplectra flowers could also be easily located throughout the area along with a few bright yellow flowers of *U. chrysantha*. Unfortunately the light was now fading fast so we decided to wrap things up and escape the heat, head back to our accommodation so that we could take a cool shower, freshen up and grab then grab some dinner after a very long but rewarding day.

TO BE CONTINUED



Victorian Carnivorous PLANT SOCIETY

2025 Autumn Show

FREE ENTRY

Saturday April 5th

9AM TO 5PM AT COLLECTORS CORNER,
GARDENWORLD CENTRE, SPRINGVALE ROAD, KEYSBOROUGH

www.vcps.org

Drosophyllum lusitanicum:

Does root disturbance really mean the end of the plant?

BY DAVID PETCH

In a recent article for the VCPS journal on growing *Drosophyllum lusitanicum* outdoors in Melbourne I repeated the commonly held view that any root disturbance will result the death of the plant. *Drosophyllum* have a tendency to just die at any stages of their life though this seems to be more prevalent when they are younger plants without the woody stem that comes once they are established. I have certainly had my fair share of failures with this species, and in many of these cases I could reasonably attribute the cause of the plant's demise to root disturbance.

I have had a recent experience which indicates that this is not always the case. Last year I sowed some *Drosophyllum* seeds using a range of difference stratification techniques. I sowed about 80 seeds collected from plants I had grown myself. I planted the seeds directly into peat pots so that if germination was successful they could be Slack-potted into a larger pot, thus avoiding any root disturbance. I treated groups of 20 seeds with boiling water, soaking for 24 hours in water, sandpaper roughening of the testa, and not treatment at all just planting. The germination success rate was low at about 10% and no difference between treatments was found. The seed was two years old so that may have been a confounding factor to the low success rate.

There was however one seed at least that didn't enter the experiment. Several months after sowing my *Drosophyllum* seeds I found that a stray seed must have fallen to the floor of the greenhouse and germinated in the gravel base resulting in a small seedling (Figure 1). I tried to carefully remove the seedling by digging up a fair chunk of the surrounding soil as well. I had a terracotta pot with the mixture I use for *Drosophyllum* that had been used for a previous plant that had died ready to receive the seedling. However, all the soil fell away and all the roots were exposed. Root disturbance on a grand scale.

I put the plant into the pot, backfilled around the plant and hoped for the best. I was surprised to find that the plant survived and grew. After a few weeks in the greenhouse, I gradually hardened my successful seedlings outside, increasing their exposure to lower humidities and more variable temperatures over a couple of weeks. Soon they were all enjoying the outside environment until one morning I discovered that a cat or some other nocturnal visitor had knocked over the pot containing the *Drosophyllum* from the greenhouse floor. Again, more severe root disturbance.



Figure 1: *Drosophyllum lusitanicum* seedling growing in the floor of the greenhouse. Photos: David Petch



The specimen of *Drosophyllum lusitanicum* from Figure 1 now growing successfully outside, six months on from the first image.

But again the plant survived and now, six months on from being rescued from the greenhouse floor, it is growing well. The plant has flowered and has two main growing points (Figure 2). All looks good for the future, but it is still *Drosophyllum* and could expire at any time without warning.

February 28th VCPS meeting

SARRACENIA, DIONAEA MUSCIPULA

The topic plants for the February meeting were Venus flytraps and *Sarracenia*, two popular genera both beginner and experienced growers.

While *Dionaea* is a monotypic genus, originating from a very restricted range in the Carolinas, a huge variety of plants of different shape, size and colour have been produced by breeding and selecting mutations in tissue culture and there were a lot of examples on the display from VFTs with giant traps like 'DCXL' and 'B52', to red forms like 'Akai Ryu', to oddities like 'Freaky Star', 'Chinese Dumppling' and 'Shell' with bizarrely shaped traps.

Ron's VFT 'Waves' was voted VFT of the night. The edges of its traps were rippled with good red colouration inside the traps. 2nd place went to Ron's VFT 'Spider', with very long, thin petioles. Ron's VFT 'Crocodile' came in 3rd place. This is another unusual mutant with the edges of the petioles fusing directly to the trap, instead than narrowing to a thin stalk between the petiole the trap like most flytraps.

Sarracenia consist of between 8-11 species depending on taxonomic opinions and grow naturally from Texas through the eastern states of the US and into Canada, with several introduced populations growing in Western USA and Europe. The wide array of pitcher sizes and shapes produced by the different species has led to hybrids that range from elegant to grotesque.

Jason's *S. purpurea* ssp. *venosa* var. *montana* was won *Sarracenia* of the night. This is one of the showier purps seen in collections with the plants producing compact clumps of often heavily veined pitchers. We had



Dionaea muscipula and *Sarracenia* plants brought to the February meeting VCPS meeting.

two equal runners Steve's *S. purpurea* ssp. *venosa*, (Relic plant from Sheely Pond, North Carolina) and Jason's *S. flava* f. *Red Tube* x *alata* f. *Cut Throat*, which produces tall upright pitchers with very good red colouration.

The species benched at the February meeting included:

- Heliamphora minor*
- Sarracenia alabamensis* x *flava* f. *Red*.
- Sarracenia alata*
- Sarracenia flava* f. *Red Tube* x *alata* f. *Cut Throat*
- Sarracenia jonesii*
- Sarracenia leucophylla*
- Sarracenia minor*
- Sarracenia popei*
- Sarracenia psittacina*
- Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *purpurea* var. *heterophylla*
- Sarracenia purpurea* var. *montana*
- Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *purpurea*
- Sarracenia purpurea* ssp. *venosa* (North Carolina)
- VFT 'Akai Ryu'
- VFT 'AR Werewolf'
- VFT 'Big Teeth, Red Giant'
- VFT 'B52'
- VFT 'Bimbo'
- VFT 'Bloody Nurse'
- VFT 'Carboni Adente'
- VFT 'Creeping Death' x self
- VFT 'Chinese Dumppling'
- VFT 'Coquillage'

- VFT 'Coquillage' x self
- VFT 'Crocodile'
- VFT 'Cupped Traps'
- VFT 'DCXL'
- VFT 'Fake Dracula'
- VFT 'Fang'
- VFT 'Freaky Star'
- VFT 'Fused Tooth'
- VFT 'G16' x 'G14'
- VFT ('G16' x 'G14') x 'Big Tomato'
- VFT 'Low Giant': produces prostrate traps.
- VFT 'Microdent' x self
- VFT 'Paradisla'
- VFT 'Peroscope'
- VFT 'Patches'
- VFT 'Slacks Giant' x self
- VFT 'Spider'
- VFT 'Shell'
- VFT 'Tall'
- VFT 'T-Rex'
- VFT 'Wine Mouth'
- VFT 'V38'
- VFT 'Waves'

February Plant of the Night: Best *Dionaea muscipula*



DIONAEA PLANT OF THE NIGHT: 1st place: VFT "Waves"



DIONAEA PLANT OF THE NIGHT: 2nd place: VFT 'Spider'



DIONAEA PLANT OF THE NIGHT: 3rd place: VFT 'Crocodile'

February Plant of the Night: Best *Sarracenia*



SARRACENIA PLANT OF THE NIGHT: 1st place: *Sarracenia purpurea* var. *montana*



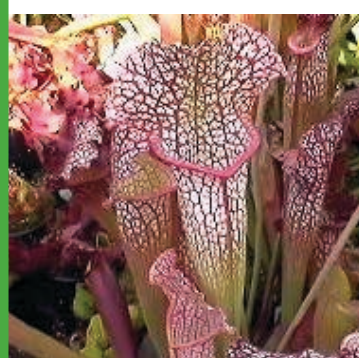
SARRACENIA PLANT OF THE NIGHT: 2nd place: *S. purpurea* ssp. *venosa* (Sheely Pond, North Carolina)



SARRACENIA PLANT OF THE NIGHT: 3rd place: *S. Sarracenia flava* f. *Red Tube* x *alata* f. *Cut Throat*



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Australian mail & electronic membership	\$30.00
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Electronic membership	\$18.00

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Correspondence

Please forward all correspondence regarding subscription, change of address, articles for the journal and back issues to:

The Secretary VCPS
1 Pollard Place,
Sunbury, Victoria 3429.
AUSTRALIA

Journal articles, in MS-Word, ready for publication, may be Emailed to the Editor or Secretary.

Meetings

Most VCPS meetings are held in the hall at the rear of the Pilgrim Uniting Church on the corner of Bayview Road and Montague Street, Yarraville – Melway map reference 41K7. These meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 8 PM.

However, some meetings may be at the home of members during a weekend. Details of meeting dates and topics are listed in each journal.

If unsure of the location or date of any meeting, please ring a committee person for details.

The VCPS Annual General Meeting, usually held at Yarraville in June, provides substantial benefits for each and every member able to attend.



Utricularia hamiltonii



Utricularia odorata



Utricularia leptoplectra



Utricularia capilliflora



Utricularia holtzei



Utricularia simmonsii



Drosera fulva



Drosera aff. petiolaris