CARNIVOROPHYTES ON STAMPS AND COINS

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"Specialize, young man, specialize!" (With apologies to Mr. Greeley.)

It is not likely that anyone can claim to have a living collection of all the plants in the world. Most serious growers specialize in a particular group, and for readers of CPN that group is obviously carnivorophyts. Stamp and coin collecting is much the same; a particular country or topic will be chosen. Being one such collector, I specialize in botanical stamps and coins, and among those in my collection are the ones which picture carnivorophytes. Such extreme particularity is not too difficult since these stamps are relatively inexpensive, the earliest having been issued in 1962. Collecting the coins is even easier, as only one political entity has ever offered carnivorophytes.

Sarracenia purpurea is the floral emblem of Newfoundland. It was pictured on pennies—"small cents" in the coin trade—issued between 1938 and 1947 by Newfoundland, which at that time was a dominion entitled to its own currency. (In 1949, Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation and became a province thereof.) Seven issues of pennies were minted, the only difference being the date. A complete set can be had for about $15 at the time of this writing. The number of pennies minted ranges from 300,000 (1940 and 1947) to 2,000,000 (1942) and quite a few are still available. Contact your local coin dealer for further details and prices. (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1 One cent Newfoundland coin with *S. purpurea*. Photos by author.

There are about a dozen stamps showing carnivorophytes. In slogging through stamp catalogs, one quickly realizes that most philatelists are not botanists, as pitcher plants are commonly listed as orchids, and *Aldrovanda* was placed under the heading "Marine Flora"!

Starting with *S. purpurea* again, it is pictured on a 1966 five-cent Canadian stamp, part of a series depicting provincial floral emblems. This is, of course, the one dedicated to Newfoundland. There are "broken petal" varieties of this stamp, in which defective printing resulted in variation of the flowers. They sell for a premium over the normal stamp. (The difference between judging a plant and a stamp is that the

Fig. 2. Five cent 1966 coin with Newfoundland provincial emblem and *S. purpurea*.

former must be in excellent condition to win any prizes, while the latter is more likely to bring home accolades if it is defective!) (Fig. 2)

The Canadian floral emblem series was repeated on postal stationary starting in 1973. Two sets of twelve envelopes were produced, one at the eight-cent domestic rate (Domestogramme), the other at the fifteen-cent rate (Aerogramme). (Figs. 3 and 4) The artwork was completely different than the stamps, *S. purpurea* being shown in habitat rather than as a single plant. The artwork consisted of an imprinted stamp, with the design enlarged and repeated on the back of the envelope. The envelopes first came with a typographical error, which was corrected in the second printing. The inscription on the imprinted stamp read "postage/poste" rather than "postage/postes."

In 1962, the French overseas territory of St. Pierre and Miquelon issued a 100 franc airpost stamp. (Fig. 5) These islands are near the southern coast of Newfoundland and there are no prizes for guessing that the carnivorophyte shown was *S. purpurea*.

Fig. 3. Close up of inset on 8 cent Aerogramme.

Fig. 5. St. Pierre and Miquelon air mail stamp.

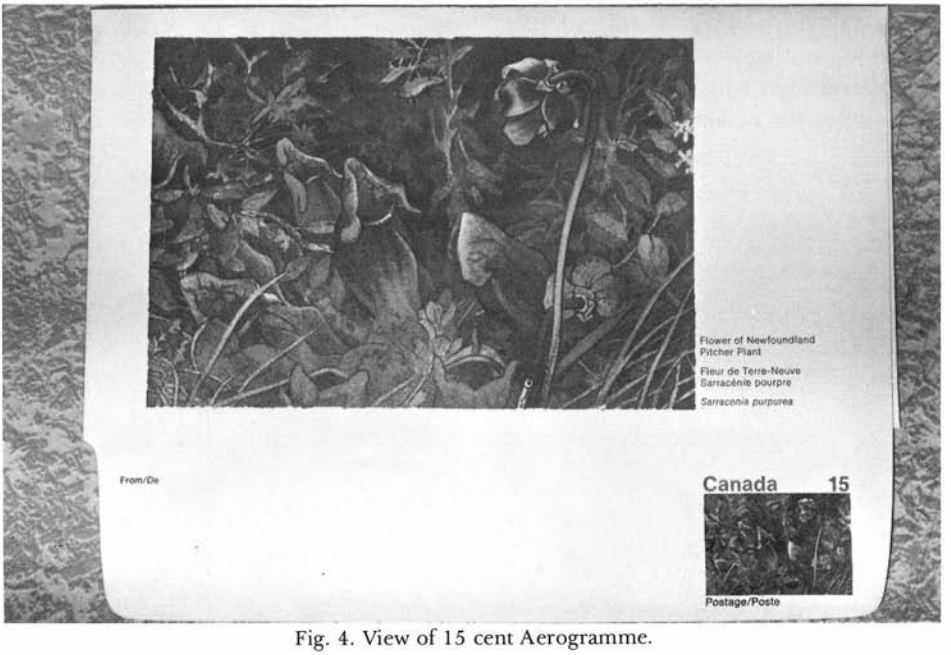

Fig. 4. View of 15 cent Aerogramme.

Pitcher plants, as a generalized group, are the most honored of carnivorophytes in the stamp world. *Nepenthes* species are shown on a number of issues put out be tropical countries. First off the mark was Seychelles, an island republic in the Indian Ocean near Madagascar. In 1970, *N. pervillei* appeared on their 20 cent stamp. (Fig. 6) This species is named after the French botanist Auguste Perville and is endmic to Seychelles. It is a vining plant and almost always associates itself with the tree *Randia sericaea*.

Fig. 6. *N. pervillei* on Seychelles stamp.

Another Seychelles stamp honoring *Nepenthes* appeared in 1978, being a 15 rupee value. Nearby Madagascar (Malagasy) put out two stamps in 1973, also depicting *N. pervillei* (25 and 40 franc values). (Fig. 7) Laos produced (I'm running out of synonyms for "issued"!) a 500 kip arimail stamp in 1974. (Fig. 8) The pitcher plant shown is *N. phyllamphora*, spelled *N. phillamphora* on the stamp.

Around the other side of the globe in South America is Guyana, home of *Heliamphora*. Their 1972 one cent stamp depicts a flowering specimen of *H. nutans*, with

Fig. 7. *N. pervellei* on Malagasy stamp.

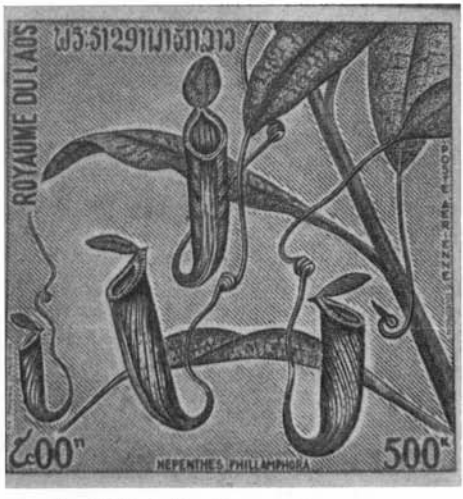

Fig. 8. *N. phyllamphora* on Laos stamp.

the common name 'Pitcher Plant of Mount Roraima' given as well. (Fig. 9) As an aside, Mt. Roraima is honored on a series of British Guinea stamps put out before independence.

Pinguicula has been shown on stamps twice, both appearing in 1978 as parts of series dealing with nature conservation. Japan protrayed *P. ramosa* on a 50 yen value, and Ireland (Eire) did likewise with *P. grandiflora* on all 11 pence value. (Figs. 10 and 11 respectively)

Of the aquatic arnivorophytes, *Aldrovanda vesciculosa* was pictured on a 20 bani

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Fig. 9. *H. nutans* on Guyana stamp.

Fig. 11. *P. grandiflora* on Irish stamp.

Fig. 10. *P. ramosa* on 50 yen stamp.

Fig. 12. *Aldrovanda* on Romanian stamp.

stamp issued in 1966 by Romania, part of a series on aquatic plants. (Fig. 12)

For those wishing to buy these aforementioned stamps, I list below the catalog numbers. When contacting a stamp dealer, give him the country, year of issue, and catalog number. Be prepared to contact quite a few dealers, as the stamps, while inexpensive, are not easy to locate, most having been absorbed into collections and no longer readily available. You may also have to buy them as part of a set. Scott's catalog is used in Canada and United States, Stanley Gibbon's in the British Isles and pound sterling area.

Before closing out this article, mention should be made of one country which has not yet issued any carnivorophyte stamps, namely the United States. There are any number of species which might be considered for such honors, but one would think the Venus flytrap is the best choice. To the general public, it is *the* carnivorophyte, instantly recognizable. It is solely an American plant found nowhere else in the world, and suitable for the U.S.P.S. policy of honoring subjects related in some way to the U.S.

U.S. American CPN readers might wish to send a letter to the Stamp Advisory Committee (c/o Postmaster-General, Washington, D.C.) lobbying for a Venus flytrap stamp. The Stamp Advisory Committee considers thousands of design proposals every year, of which only 30 or 40 are accepted, so one should not be too hopeful, but there is no harm in trying. The stamp might be suitable as part of an Endangered Flora series.

Catalog numbers of carnivorophyte stamps

COUNTRY	YEAR	SCOTT'S	STANLEY GIBBON'S
Canada	1966	427	552
(Canadian postal stationery not cataloged, ask for by description)			
Eire (Ireland)	1978	430	423
Guyana	1972	133	542
Japan	1978	1320	?
Laos	1974	C116	394
Malagasy	1973	496	255
		497	256
Romania	1966	1867	3399
St. Pierre & Miquelon	1962	C24	419
Seychelles	1970	280	288

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The seeds of *Byblis gigantea* can be germinated by pouring boiling water over them.When the seeds are cool, they can be planted out onto 50/50 peat and silica sand. The main problem with *Byblis gigantea* seedlings is damping off.

The medium I have used with excellent results for growing mature *Byblis gigantea* plants is 50/50 perlite and peat.

In cultivation the plants do not go dormant and die back to a woody stump as they do in the wild. I have noticed that they slow down their growth in the cooler months, but move very fast when the warmer weather arrives in early summer. In the summer months, I stand my plants in water. When *Byblis gigantea* get older, they tend to get rather untidy. When this happens, it pays to cut back the plant com-

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B. gigantea in A. Lowrie's greenhouse. Photo by Author