

Growing *Heliamphora* from the Venezuelan Tepui

By Andreas Wistuba (Mudauer Ring 227, 6800 Mannheim 52, West Germany)

The photographs accompanying this article were taken by me on a Venezuelan field trip in the spring of 1989. Joachim Nerz, Peter Harbarth and I stayed for about two months and we climbed Mt. Roraima, Mt. Kukenam and Ilu Tepui.

Besides numerous species of *Genlisea*, *Drosera* and *Utricularia*, we found *Heliamphora nutans*, *H. heterodoxa* and *H. ionasi*. These plants are shown in the pictures. *H. ionasi* is an especially impressive plant with giant pitchers up to 50 cm tall. I will never forget the moment we saw the first plants of this species!

Here are some growing hints for *Heliamphoras* that work for me. In nature, the genus never grows in sphagnum although there is sphagnum in the adjacent habitat. I would also not recommend growing them in sphagnum in culture. I use the following mix with great success:

- 1 part cork
- 2 parts pine bark
- 2 parts meranti wood shavings
- 1 part polystyrene foam (fine grain)
- 1 part polystyrene foam (very coarse—"orchid chips")
- 1/2 part charcoal (fine grain)
- 1/2 part peat

We mix this well before using.

Heliamphoras require fertilizing! Mine grow very fast and produce beautiful pitchers when I give them foliar feedings with a fertilizer similar to Miracid. They will thank you by growing as fast as *Sarracenias*.

In fact, I use the same compost and fertilization for my *Nepenthes* which grow beside the *Heliamphoras*. As I am mainly interested in highland *Nepenthes* I keep a cool and humid climate in the greenhouse which is also ideal for *Heliamphoras*. *Heliamphoras* do best with cool nights, but day temperatures for them and the *Nepenthes* are not as critical. I shade only if the day temperature rise above 30°C. I use much light. Many people erroneously grow their *Heliamphoras* in deep shade. This only results in soft and ugly plants which do not resemble the colorful plants in nature. Try to adapt your plants to harder conditions and you will be surprised with their beauty. *Heliamphoras* benefit from water misting several times a day.

I have limited material for trade but will trade only for plants of comparable value.



H. nutans



H. ionasi and Author

Below: *Brocchinia reducta* swamp in the background
Mt. Kukenam and Roraima Tepui





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Front cover: *Helimphora heterodoxa* in habitat. Photos by A. Wistuba. See article beginning on page 44.

Rear cover: *H. ionasi* in habitat on Ilu-tepui.

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