



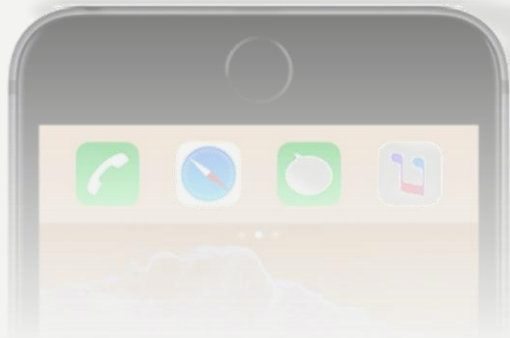
ANIMATING

the inanimate

CHRIS THOROGOOD

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD BOTANIC GARDEN





Our digital platform:

- New education tools in a changing world
- Inexpensive and low tech
- Connecting education with science

Plant Blindness

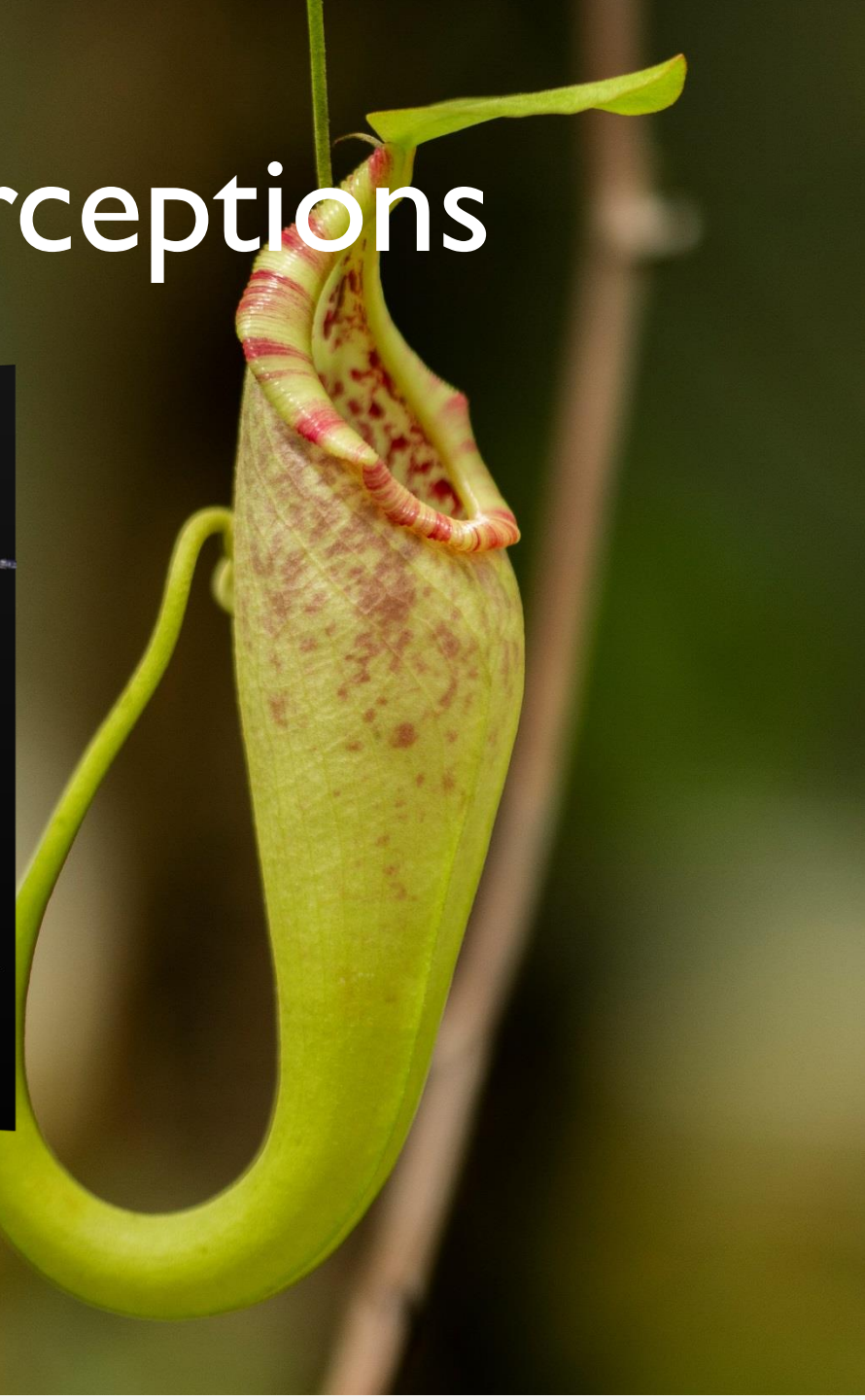
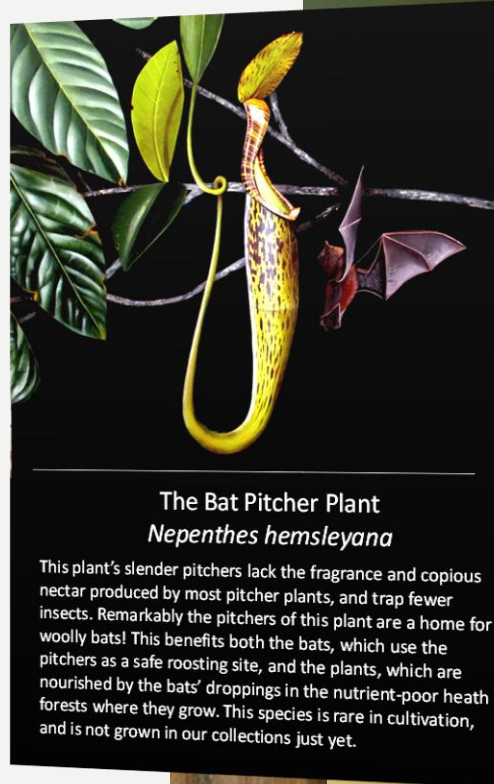


Photograph: Prof.Chen Hualin

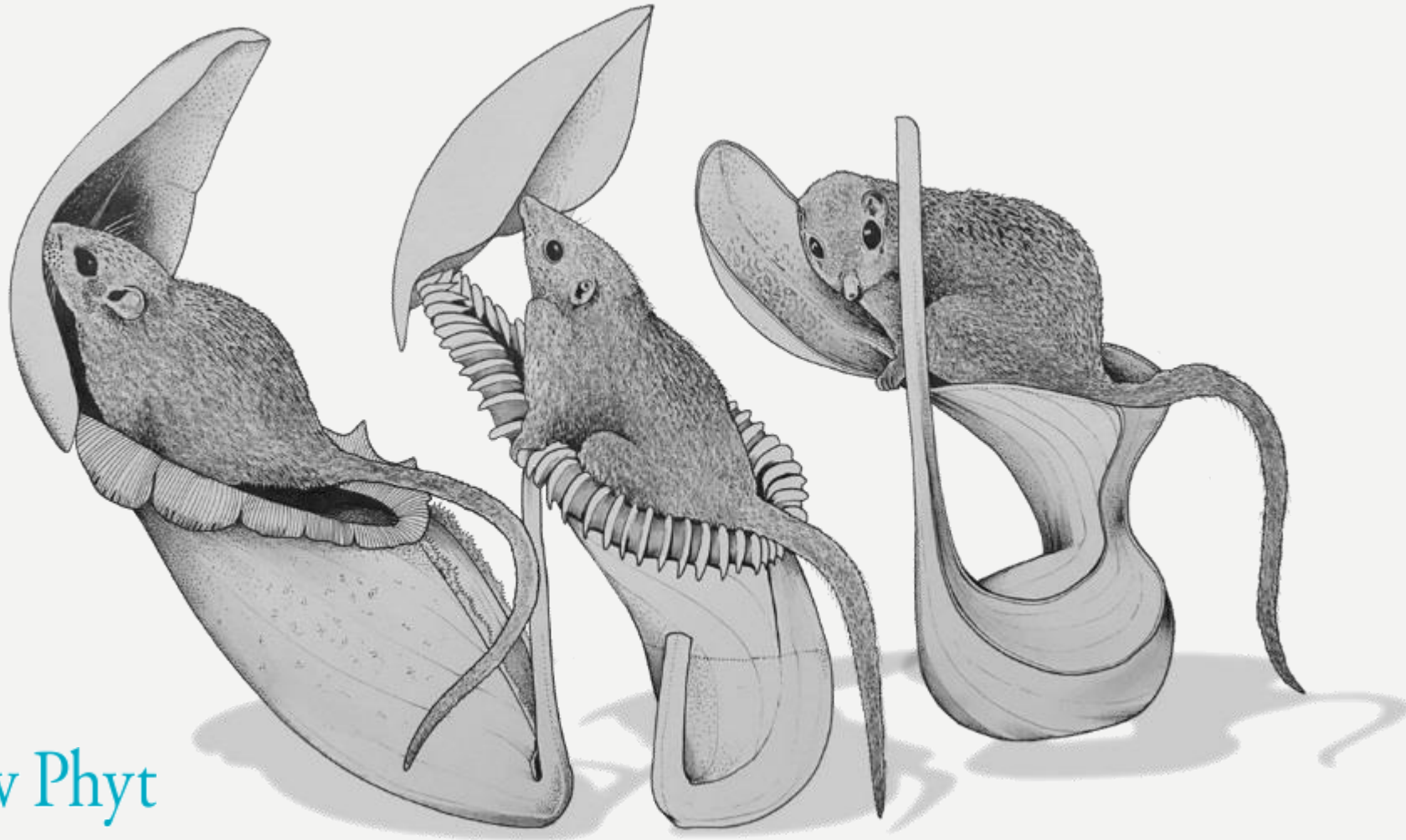


Challenging perceptions *about plants*

Challenging perceptions



‘Tricks, traps and tree shrew toilets’



1,829 Views



New Phyt
blog

THE STRANGEST PLANT IN THE WORLD?

FLORA
OBSCURA

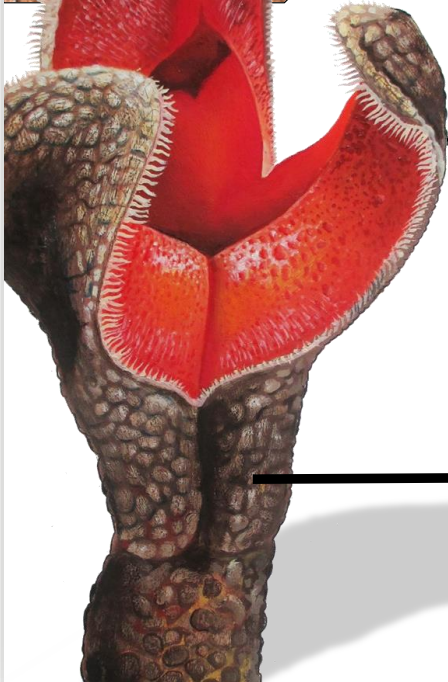
Genus: *Hydnora*

Range: Africa, Madagascar, southern Arabia

Hydnora abyssinica bursting through the ground. Photo by Vivienne Williams



Hydnora is a poorly known genus of parasitic plants which has been described as 'the strangest plant in the world'. Little research has been carried out on the genus and it remains virtually unknown in cultivation. This 'vampire' has no leaves and steals all its food from the roots of desert shrubs, only emerging above ground to flower, and can damage infrastructure by bursting through pavements! Few species are known to science and some were only discovered recently. As one of the first parasitic plants to branch from the flowering plant family tree (phylogeny), *Hydnora* shows promise for scientists investigating the evolutionary origins of parasitism in flowering plants.



Peculiar tooth-like 'bait bodies' (above) produce a foul fragrance to attract pollinating flies and beetles which enter the underground floral chamber (below).



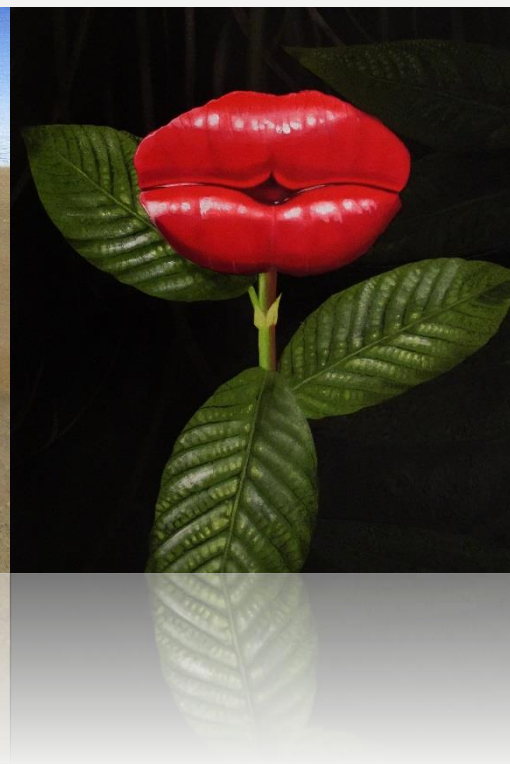
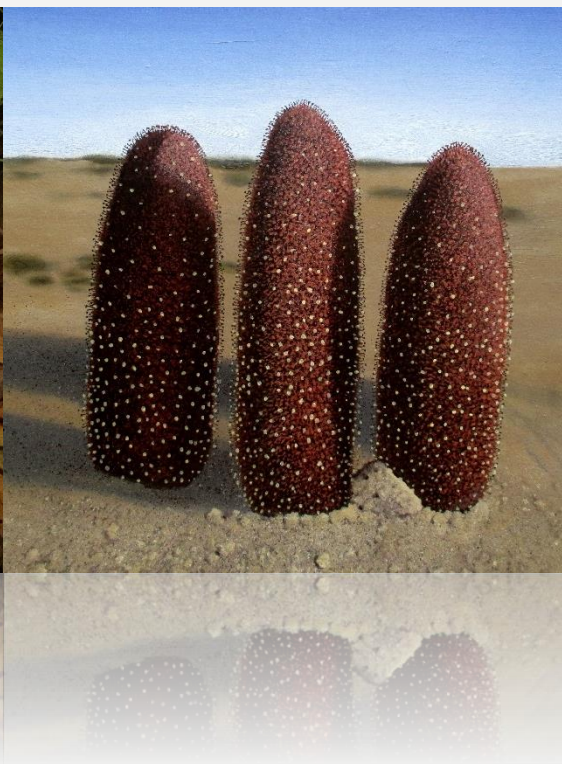
PPF
Plants People Planet



New Phytologist
Trust

FLORA
OBSCURA

PPF
Plants People Planet







‘WOW plants’



10K engagements



14K engagements



500K engagements

Relevance

Monkey Puzzle

*Conservation
Conundrum*



A*raucaria araucana* is Endangered, like the chimpanzee. This species is an evergreen conifer from the temperate rainforests of south-central Chile and adjacent forests of Argentina. In Chile, its distribution is divided between the Andes and the coast, owing to the tree's tolerance to salt. It is of great historical and social importance in its native range: 'piñones' (seeds) are edible and form an important food source for the indigenous Pehuenche people of Chile.

DID YOU KNOW?

The monkey puzzle was given its name by an observer who thought that monkeys would not be able to climb the spiky branches.

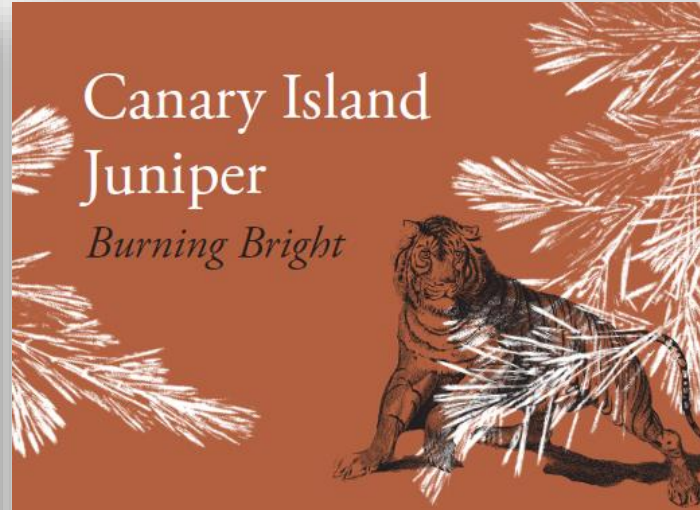
According to the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species

EN

LEAST CONCERN NEAR THREATENED VULNERABLE ENDANGERED CRITICALLY ENDANGERED EXTINCT IN THE WILD EXTINCT

Canary Island Juniper

Burning Bright



J*uniperus cedrus* is Critically Endangered, like the Malayan tiger. Native to the Canary Islands and Madeira, it is now restricted to inaccessible places. Grazed by goats and threatened by fire, there are probably not more than 600 mature trees remaining in the wild. The valuable, aromatic timber was used by local people for furniture, construction and for making boxes because the wood deters insect pests. Canary Islands juniper is difficult to grow in the UK but trees like this are vital to secure the future of this species.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'gin' is a corruption of 'genever', the Dutch word for juniper.

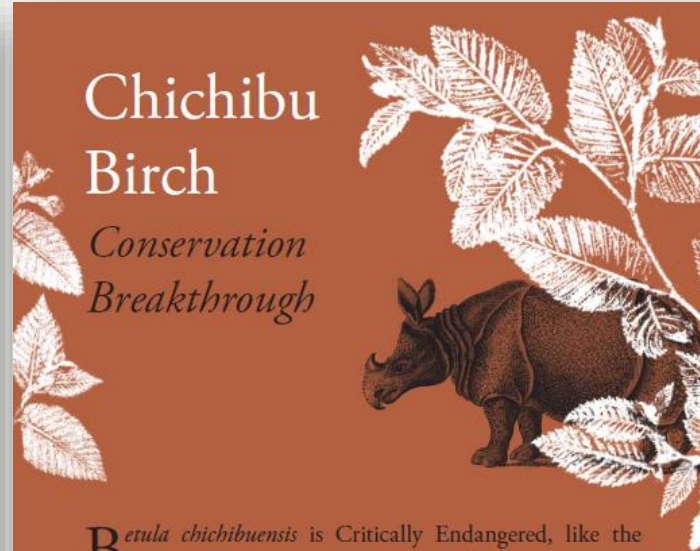
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Chichibu Birch

*Conservation
Breakthrough*



B*etula chichibuensis* is Critically Endangered, like the black rhino. It only grows in the Chichibu region of the island of Honshu in Japan. Recent fieldwork carried out by the University of Tokyo Chichibu Forest, Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum has identified important new populations. The species is exceptionally rare in cultivation and the specimens grown at Harcourt Arboretum are vital to the tree's continued existence.

DID YOU KNOW?

Small population size and limited distribution make the Chichibu birch particularly vulnerable to natural disaster and disease.

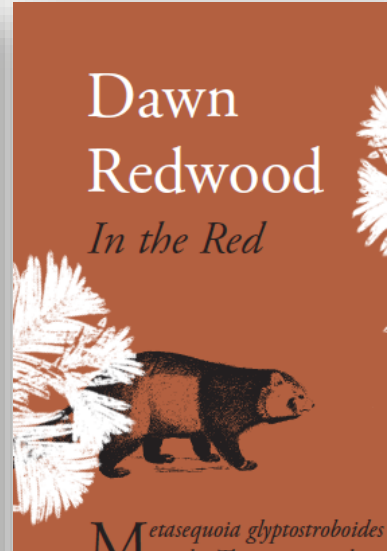
According to the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species

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Dawn Redwood

In the Red



M*etasequoia glyptostroboides* is Critically Endangered, like the giant panda. The species only grows at the border of two Chinese provinces. The trees are survivors of extensive fires that would have stretched unbroken across the landscape before farmers arrived. The few remaining trees are surrounded by agricultural land and the dawn redwoods were introduced to the UK.

DID YOU KNOW?

The foliage is similar to that of the giant sequoia (*Sequoia sempervirens*), however dawn redwood is deciduous.

According to the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species

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Relevance



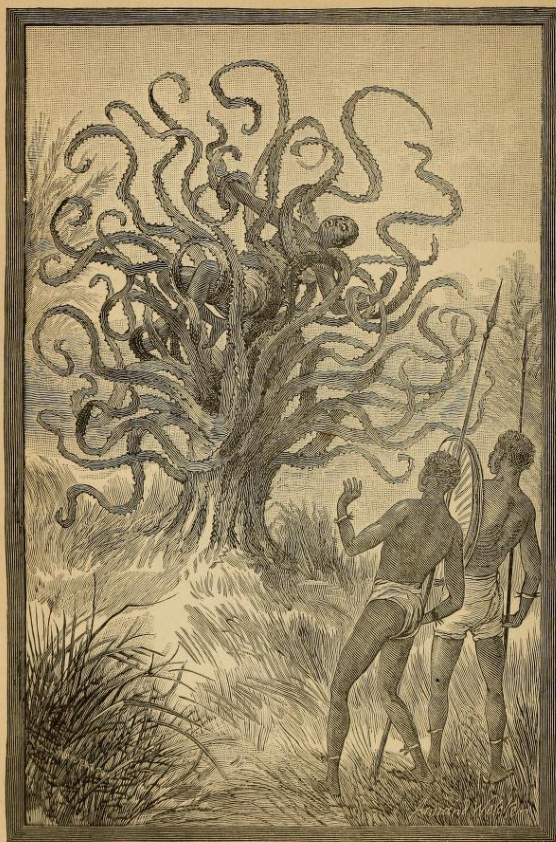
Relevance



Collaboration



Kira Allmann



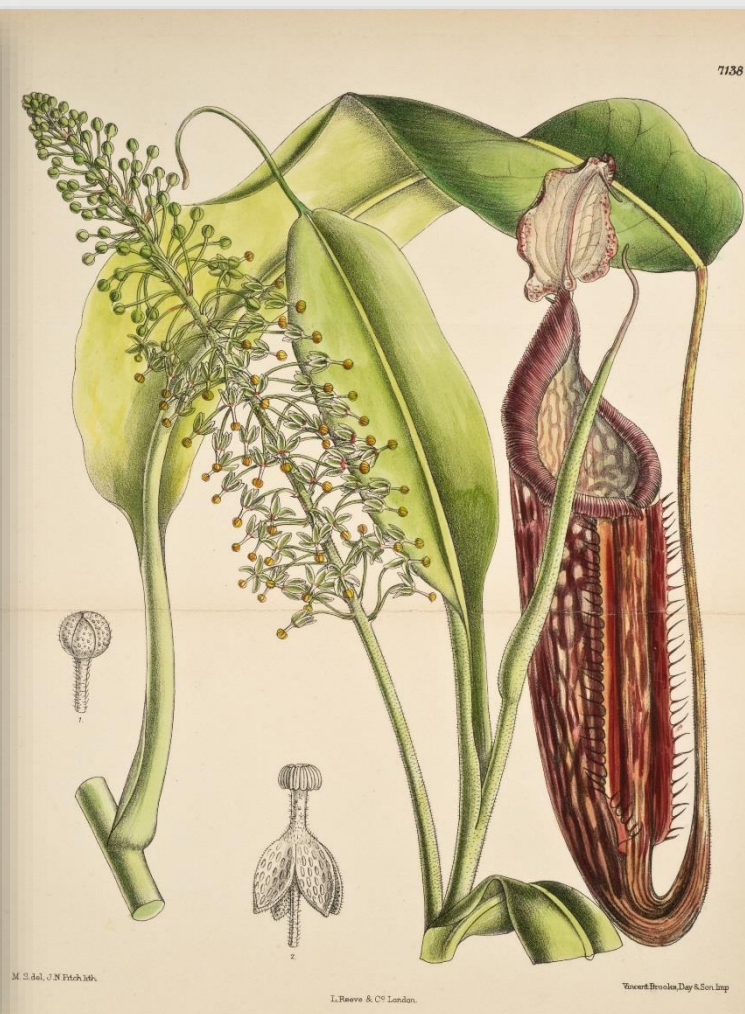
THE YA-TE-YEO, OR CARNIVOROUS PLANT.



W. H. D. 12

Plat by S. Curtis. Glasgow and Essex Dec. 1. 1831.

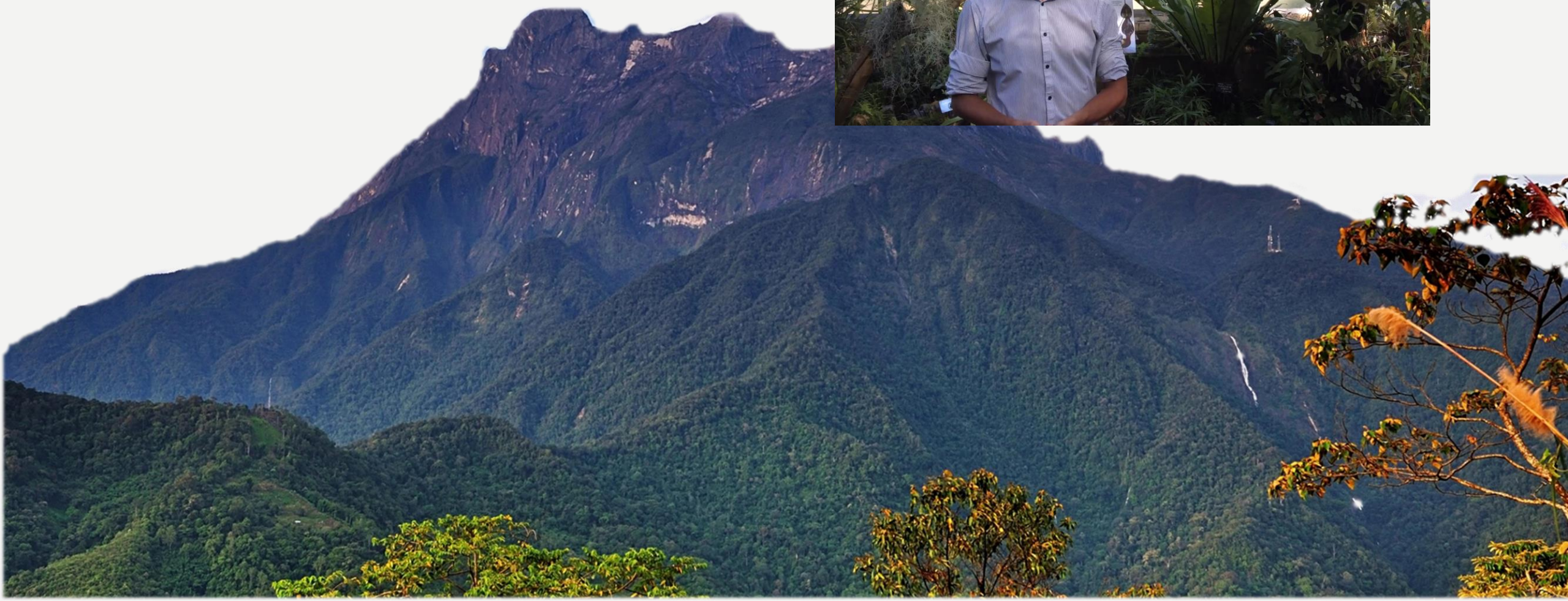
S. Curtis



M. S. 344, J. N. P. 1836.

L. Reeve & Co. London.

Vineyard Brook, Day & Son, Imp.



Key Takeaways

- Challenging perceptions
- Building relevance
- Interdisciplinary
- Multi-media
- Trial-and-error process
- Feedback into research agenda

OXFORD BOTANIC GARDEN & ARBORETUM

ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH PLANTS





Thank You



Thank you