

Notes and Quotes

Linnean nettles!

David Galloway

In his bicentenary history of the Linnean Society of London (Gage & Stearn 1988: 111), William Stearn makes an intriguing comment on nettles while discussing the fate of the Linnaean Library and the Linnaean Herbarium during the Second World War, and worth recounting here: "...Although the Linnean collections were away at Woburn, it by no means followed that they were safe even there from German bombing. The Council, largely at the instigation of Ramsbottom [John Ramsbottom, Keeper of Botany at the British Museum], sought ways of having a photographic record made for distribution to various centres of learning abroad. An appeal to the Carnegie Corporation of New York, supported by E.D. Merrill, received a typically generous American response: the Corporation made a grant of 2000 pounds sterling for the undertaking. Before the specimens of the Linnaean Herbarium were photographed by Messrs Wallace Heaton at Tring (to which they were transferred), Spencer Savage added numbers to the sheets for reference purposes. If the Herbarium had thereafter been destroyed, the microfilm would have been an invaluable record, even though it was inferior to the one made in 1959 for the International Documentation Centre with much better equipment. While handling the specimens, the photographer, Gladys Brown, was stung on the arm by a specimen of stinging-nettle (*Urtica*) which had been dried and mounted some 200 years earlier: the arm showed a definite blister, apparently similar to one produced by a fresh specimen..."

Reference:

Gage, A.T. & Stearn, W.T. 1988: A Bicentenary History of the Linnean Society of London. Academic Press: London.

Urtica urens, small annual nettle. WH Fitch, *Illustrations of the British Flora*, 1949

Nettles with watercress and horopito!

Chuck Landis

July: I really enjoyed Bill Sykes' article. Went right out and gathered some new growth (*Urtica urens*, I believe) and some watercress from the creek. Stir-fried and found it very flavourful as well as attractive in appearance. Carol agreed that it was yummy, though she could feel the back of her throat prickling as I cut up the green plants. Soup next?

August: Further to stir-fried nettles and watercress.....since both *Urtica urens* and *Nasturtium microphyllum* (= *Rorippa microphylla*) are Northern Hemisphere



Urtica urens L.