

Short notes

“Flower of *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii* used as a hat by a native of British Guiana” – a photograph from Everard im Thurn at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew



Figure 1. “Flower of *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii* used as a hat by a native of British Guiana. 1897 E. F. im Thurn Esq.”; print 88 × 127 mm (photograph reproduced by the kind permission of the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew).

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, holds a small but valuable and unstudied collection of photographs by Everard im Thurn (1852–1932) who contributed to botany, with specimens and publications, and to anthropology, publishing works that highlight his interest in photography. Most of his extant photographs from British Guiana (now Guyana), where he lived for almost 20 years, are held by the Royal Anthropological Institute, of which im Thurn was President between 1919 and 1920, and the Royal Geographical Society.¹ While im Thurn’s work in photography is relatively well known (see Tayler 1994; Cox 2007; Pinney 1992), none of the photographs that Kew presently holds have hitherto been acknowledged or published. One of these, dated 1897, is entitled “Flower of *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii* used as a hat by a native of British Guiana . . .” (Figure 1).² The date and the phrase in the inscription – “a native of British Guiana” – suggests that the photograph could have been taken somewhere in Guyana. Although the known geographic range of *Aristolochia grandiflora* (which the Amerindian subject was wearing as a hat) does not include Guyana³, there is the possibility that this species could have been cultivated there, presumably from seeds sent from Trinidad or Jamaica, where it occurs naturally.

Im Thurn’s photograph collection at Kew is useful for the study of plants but is also a valuable asset in the history of science, anthropology, the social sciences and museum studies.

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NOTES

¹ URL (accessed 3 November 2014): http://www.sh-web.ch/stadtarchiv/fileadmin/Redaktoren/Dokumente/Im-Thurn_Sir_Everard.pdf (A. Aerni, not dated. "Sir Everard im Thurn. *Schaffhausen Municipal Archives*, pp. 348–357").

² The currently accepted name of *Aristolochia gigas* var. *sturtevantii* is *A. grandiflora* Sw. (URL (accessed 30 September 2011): <http://www.tropicos.org> (Tropicos.org, 2011 "Aristolochia grandiflora").

³ *Aristolochia grandiflora* (pelican-flower, duck-flower (Guatemala, Mexico); swan-flower (Jamaica); poisoned hogmeat (Jamaica); dutchman's pipe)) occurs in Mexico, Central America, Cuba, Jamaica, Colombia, Trinidad and Ecuador. However, the species has been introduced and cultivated in other countries, including Brazil. No specimens of this species collected in Guyana exist in the Kew herbarium.

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***Flora Lituanica inchoata* (1781–1782) by J. E. Gilibert: a preliminary census of copies in Polish libraries**

An inventory of copies of *Flora Lituanica inchoata*¹ (Gilibert 1781–1782) in 18 European libraries was published by Ričkienė (2013), according to which the only Polish library holding a copy was that of the Ossoliński National Institute, Wrocław. This was an incomplete first volume and a complete second volume. While preparing a presentation for a conference marking the bicentenary of the death of Gilibert, I conducted research in Polish public libraries and located additional copies of *Flora Lituanica inchoata* (see Table 1). I did not investigate monastic and private collections, so there may be additional copies of Gilibert's work in Poland.