



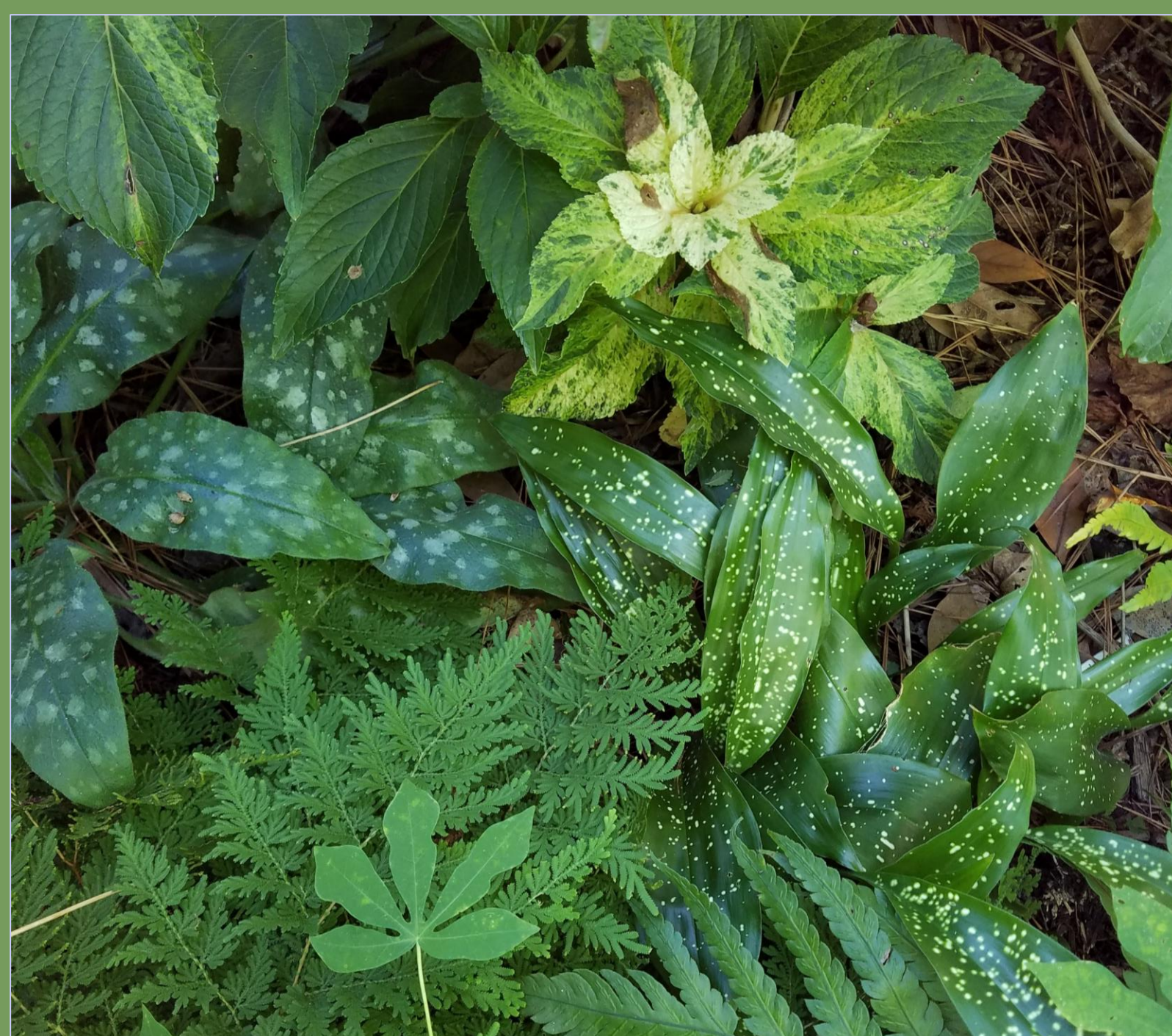
Foliage of *Aspidistra basalis* 'Green Jeans'
(Photo from JLBG Archive)



Foliage of *Aspidistra zongbaya* 'China Moon'
(Photo by Amanda Wilkins)



Foliage of *Aspidistra* 'Snow Cap'
(Photo by Amanda Wilkins)



Assortment of Foliage from the Garden, including *Aspidistra sichuanensis* 'Spectacular'
(Photo by Amanda Wilkins)

Beyond Cast Iron:

a Juniper Level Botanic Garden research collection of the genus *Aspidistra* Ker Gawl.

Zac Hill¹, Amanda Wilkins², Jeremy Schmidt³ and Tony Avent⁴

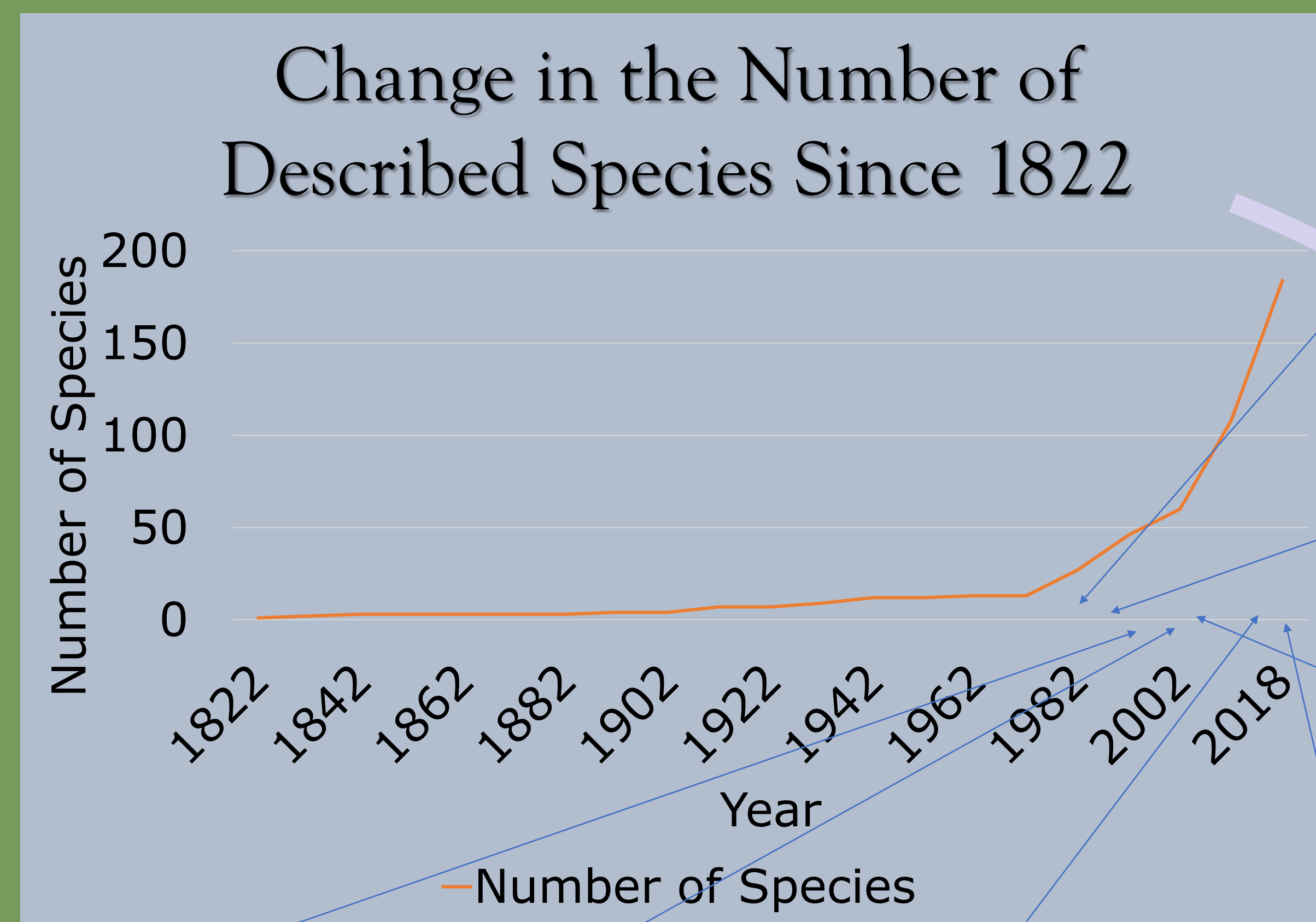
¹Plant Records Specialist/Taxonomist; ²Garden Curator; ³Grounds and Research Supervisor, ⁴Proprietor

Taxonomic Troubles

- Generally overlooked by botanists until recent history
- Under-representation in wild sampling in botanic collections
- Plants being released into the horticultural trade before the species is described
- Asian cultivar names changed to English cultivars without recognizing origin
- Lack of consensus on what constitutes a species
- Leaves are diverse within a species and can lead to species confusion

Collection Impacts

- Helped describe three new species: *Aspidistra basalis*, *gracilis* and *columellaris*. Type specimens held in reference collection.
 - See: "Four new species of *Aspidistra* Ker. Gawl. (Asparagaceae) from China and Vietnam with a comment on *A. longifolia* Hook.f. and *A. hainanensis* W.Y.Chun & F.C.Ho" Gardens' Bulletin Singapore 64(1): 201-209, 2012.
- Point of Contact: Tony Avent and JLBG staff have been a point of contact and interest in the genus since the 1980s, working and sharing information and plants with botanists, collectors and keen plantspeople around the world.

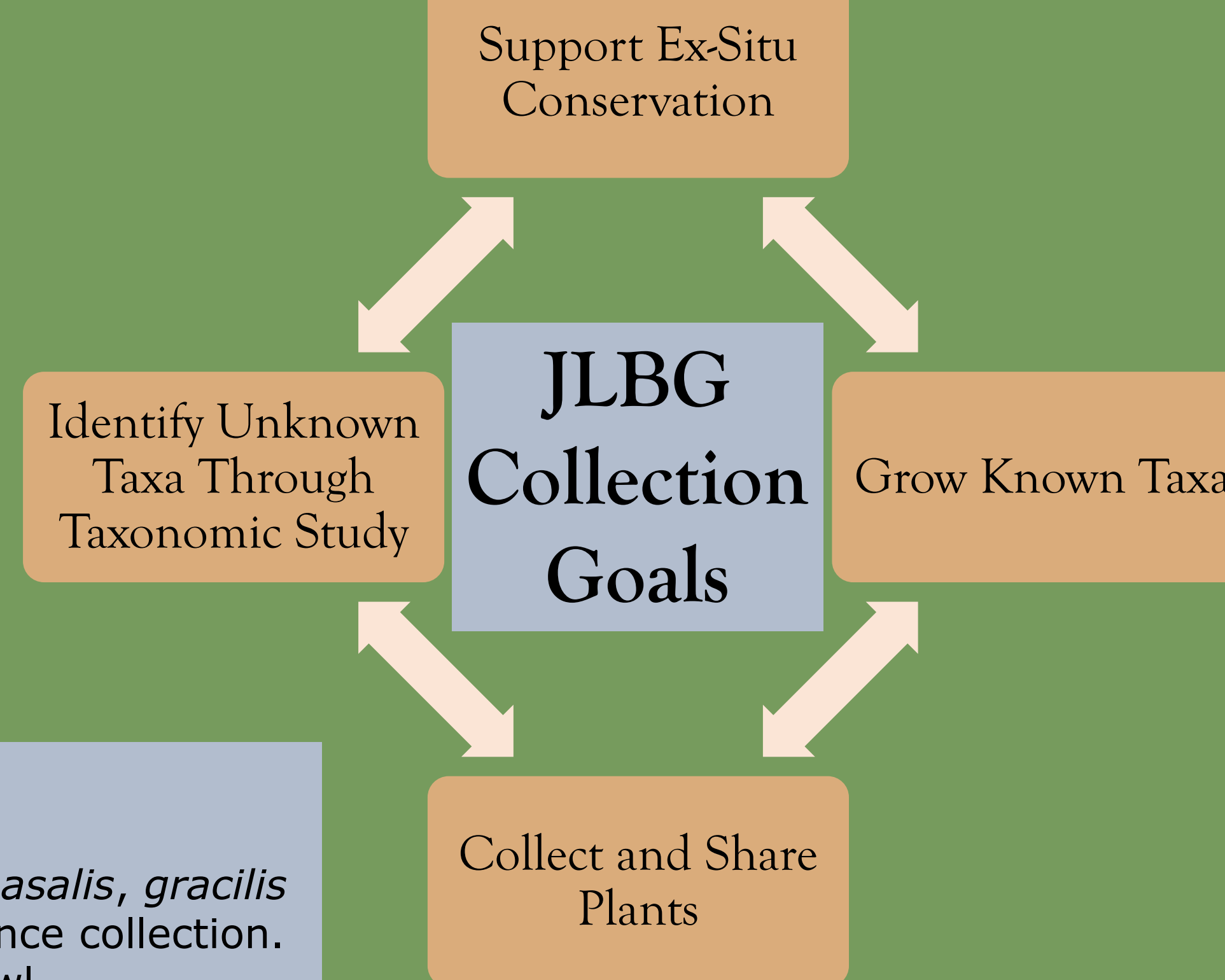


1996: First Exchange with Shanghai Botanic Garden

2000: Central Florida Foliage reaches out to share plants and information

2012: Three new species published from collection

2018: Exchange with Crug Farm



Collection Statistics

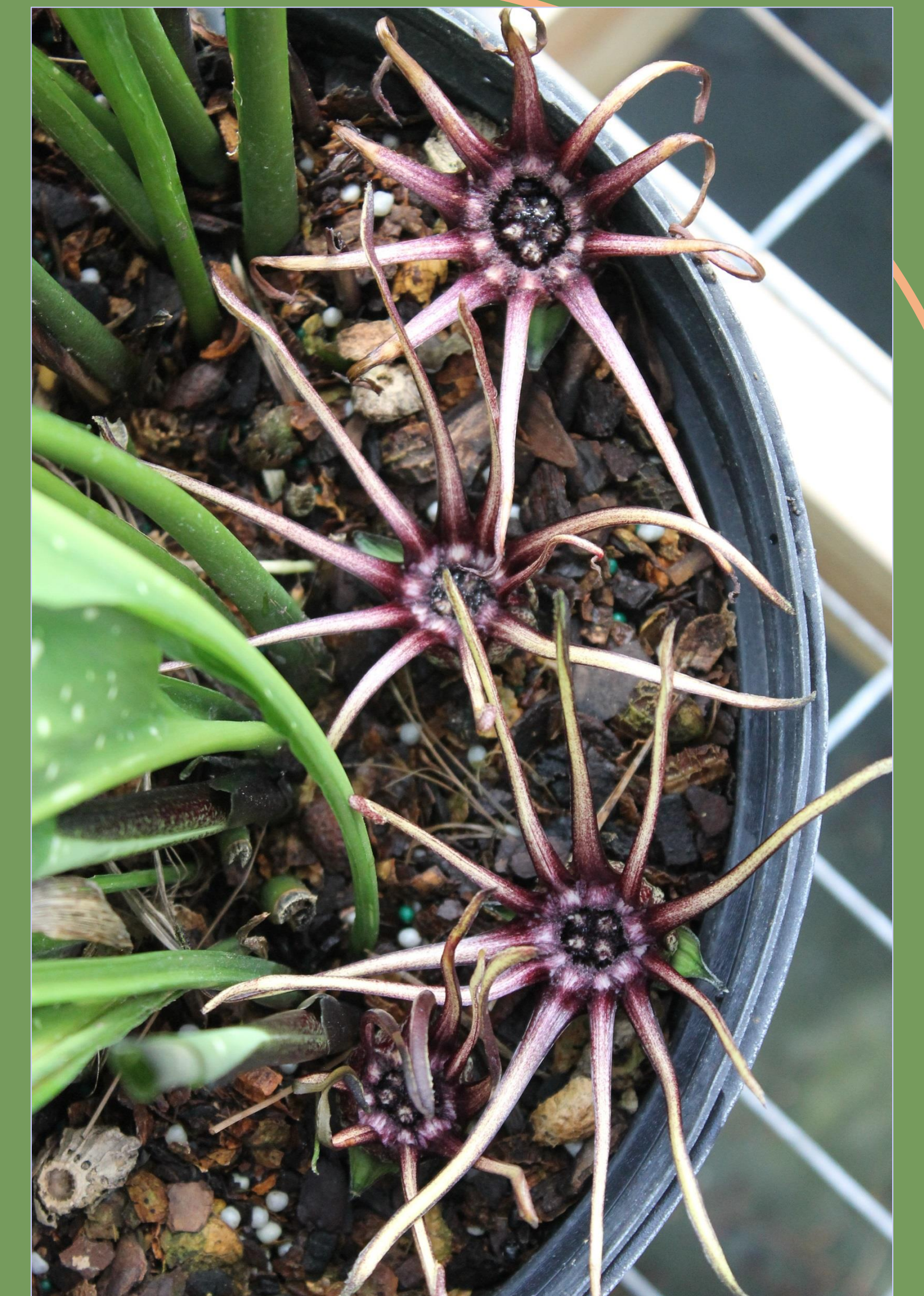
Total Number of Taxa	170
Number of Verified Species	41
Wild-Collected Specimens	76
Cultivars	86
Unidentified Specimens	13
Active Records	289
Specimens in the Reference Collection	101
Percent of Collection in Good Condition	83.6%

Collection Development and Management

- **Horticulture:**
 - Plant out species and cultivars in the Garden for horticultural and hardiness evaluations
 - Maintain a collection of species and cultivars in a covered house for use as a research reference collection
 - Develop new cultivars from Garden offspring
- **Records**
 - Maintain internal catalogue of known species, corresponding taxonomic publications, species ranges, floral phenological data on species in the collection, and holdings in others' collections
 - Record plant information in Access database
 - Develop and maintain a database of images of floral dissections

Overview of the genus *Aspidistra*

- First described in 1823
- Member of Asparagaceae, Asparagales
- Native to East Asia
- Centers of diversity in Southern China and Vietnam
- Horticultural benefits: Evergreen leaves, adaptable to dry conditions, deep shade presence
- Historical Relevance:
 - *Aspidistra elatior* has been a favorite houseplant since Victorian times, due to its tolerance of pollution, low light and cool temperatures
 - Horticultural specimens brought into the U.S. since the early 1900s



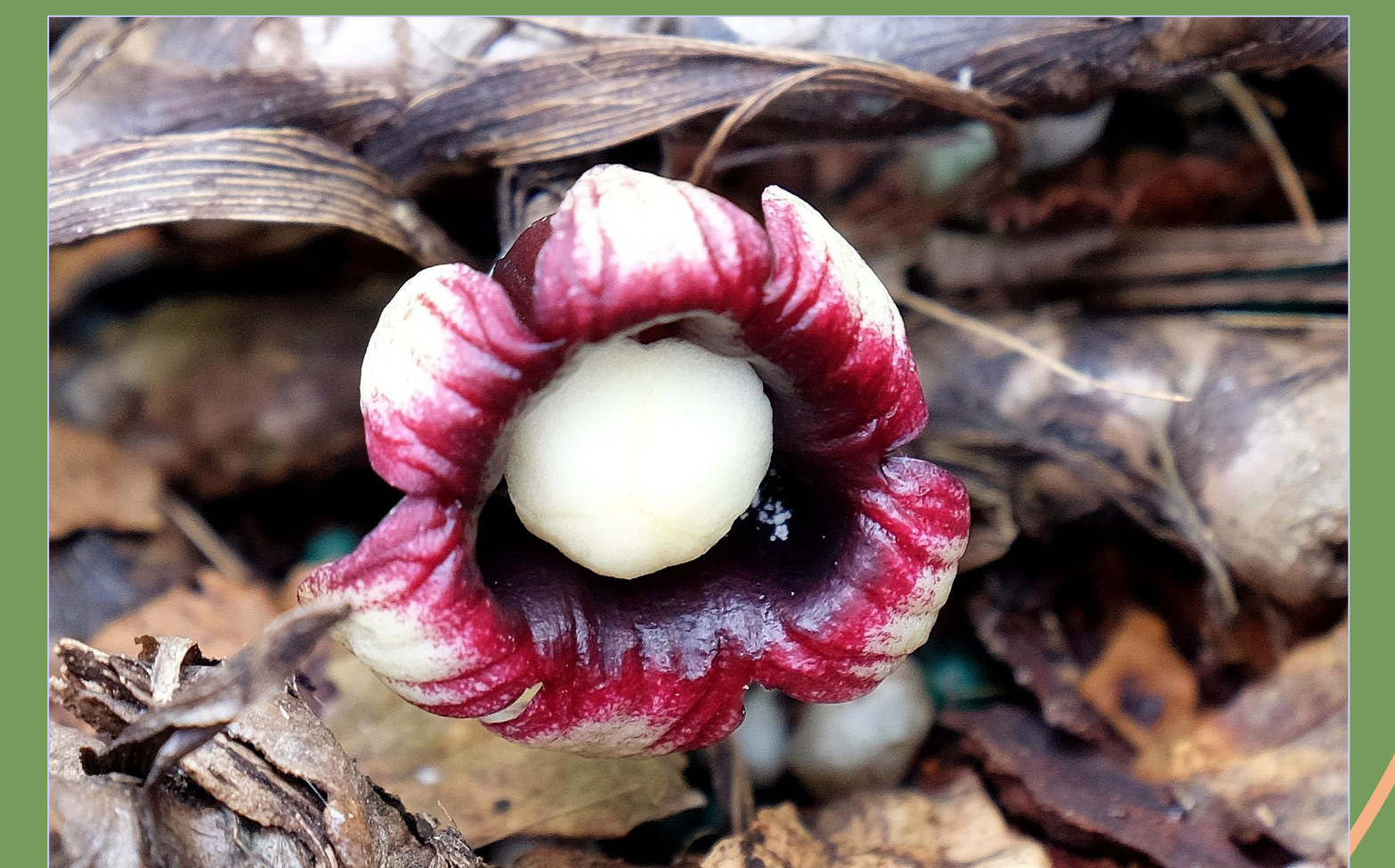
Aspidistra grandiflora 'Mary Sizemore', June 2014 (Photo from JLBG Archive)



Aspidistra attenuata 'Dungpu Dazzler', January 22, 2009 (Photo from JLBG Archive)



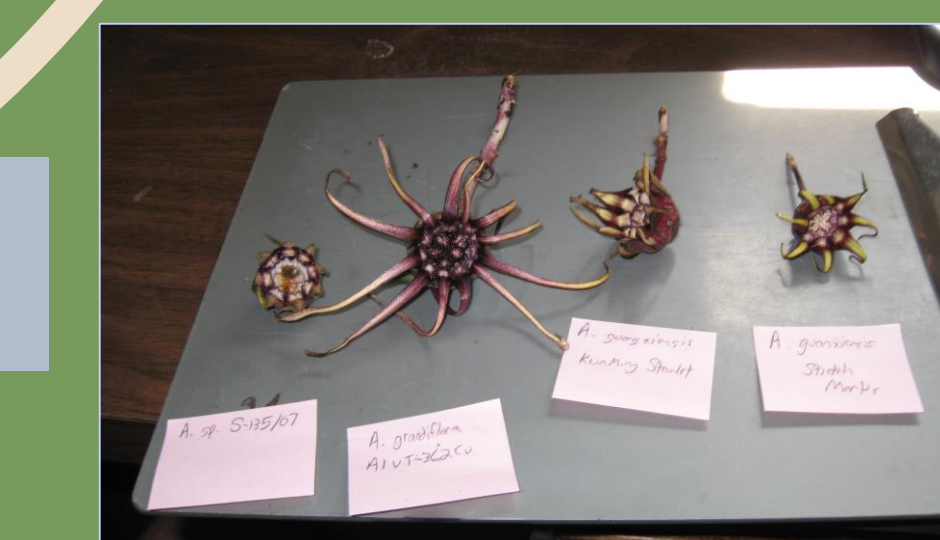
Aspidistra columellaris 'Giraffe' in flower (Photo from JLBG Archive)



Aspidistra fungilliformis 'Stargazer' (Photo from JLBG Archive)



Zac Hill checks for flowers on *Aspidistra* 'China Moon' (Photo by Amanda Wilkins)



Floral dissections and vegetative studies: (Top) Stigma of *A. guangxiensis* 'Kunming Starlet'; (Above) Flower size comparison; (Far Left) Leaves of unidentified plant; (Left) Fruits and seed



Juniper Level Botanic Garden is a 28+ acre garden located in Raleigh, NC. The collection contains more than 25,000 different taxa collected and grown from all over the world. The Garden is in the process of establishing an endowment and will eventually transition to be part of N.C. State University. At least ten percent of purchases from Plant Delights Nursery, Inc. go to fund JLBG.