



## Lincoln Park Conservatory

2391 North Stockton Drive  
Chicago, IL 60614-3419  
312.742.7736  
Open daily 9AM . 5PM



# Black Anthurium

Lincoln Park Conservatory



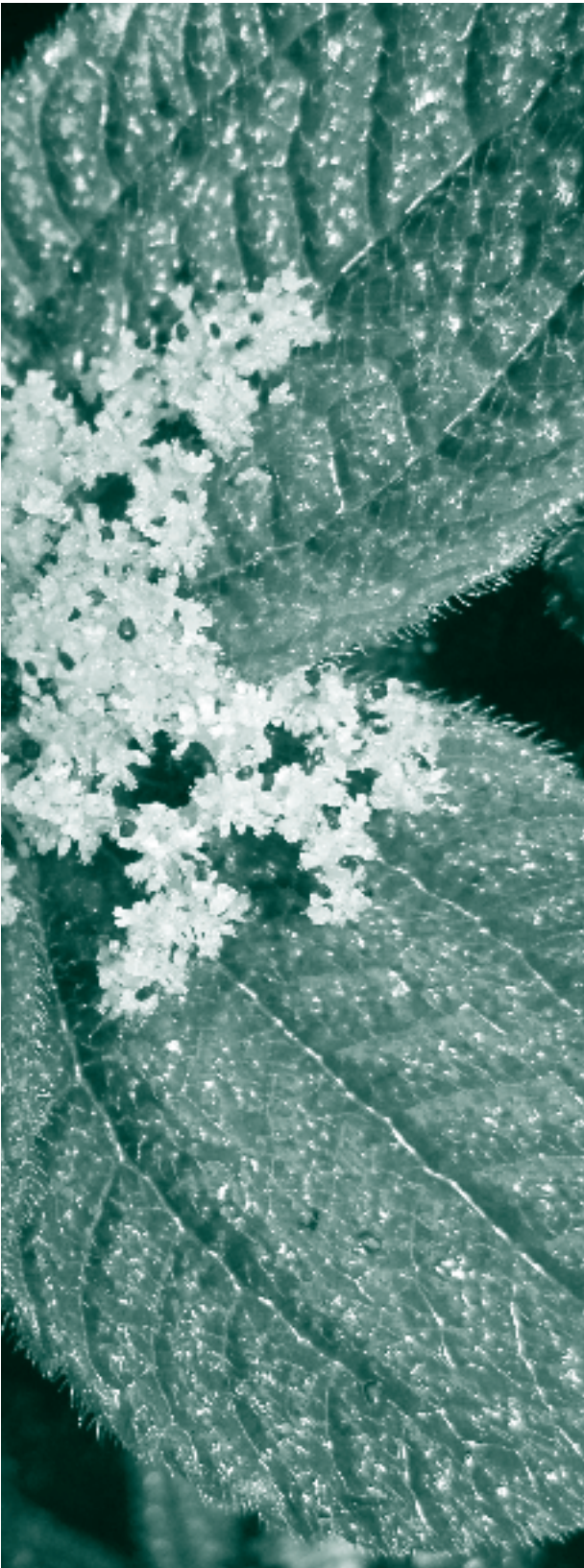
**A**naturally variable specimen, *Anthurium watermaliense* is commonly known by the name “Black Anthurium” due to the deep coloration of its dark purple inflorescent, not the color of the foliage. The group of *Anthurium* species which includes all the “bird’s nest” forms, *Anthurium watermaliense* is found from sea level to approximately 8000 feet in wet pre-mountainous rain forests, usually from Costa Rica to Colombia, with the majority of the specimens found at elevations of approximately 2500 feet or less. A “bird’s nest” form is an *Anthurium* specimen which grows in a rosette shape with the leaves extending outward from the stem.

### **During sexual anthesis**

the tiny male flowers produce pollen and the very small female flowers become receptive to pollination, however, most aroids are cleverly divided by nature to keep the aroid from becoming self-pollinated. An aroid, all *Anthurium* species reproduce via the production an inflorescence. The primary parts of the inflorescence are the spathe and spadix. The entire inflorescence of *Anthurium*

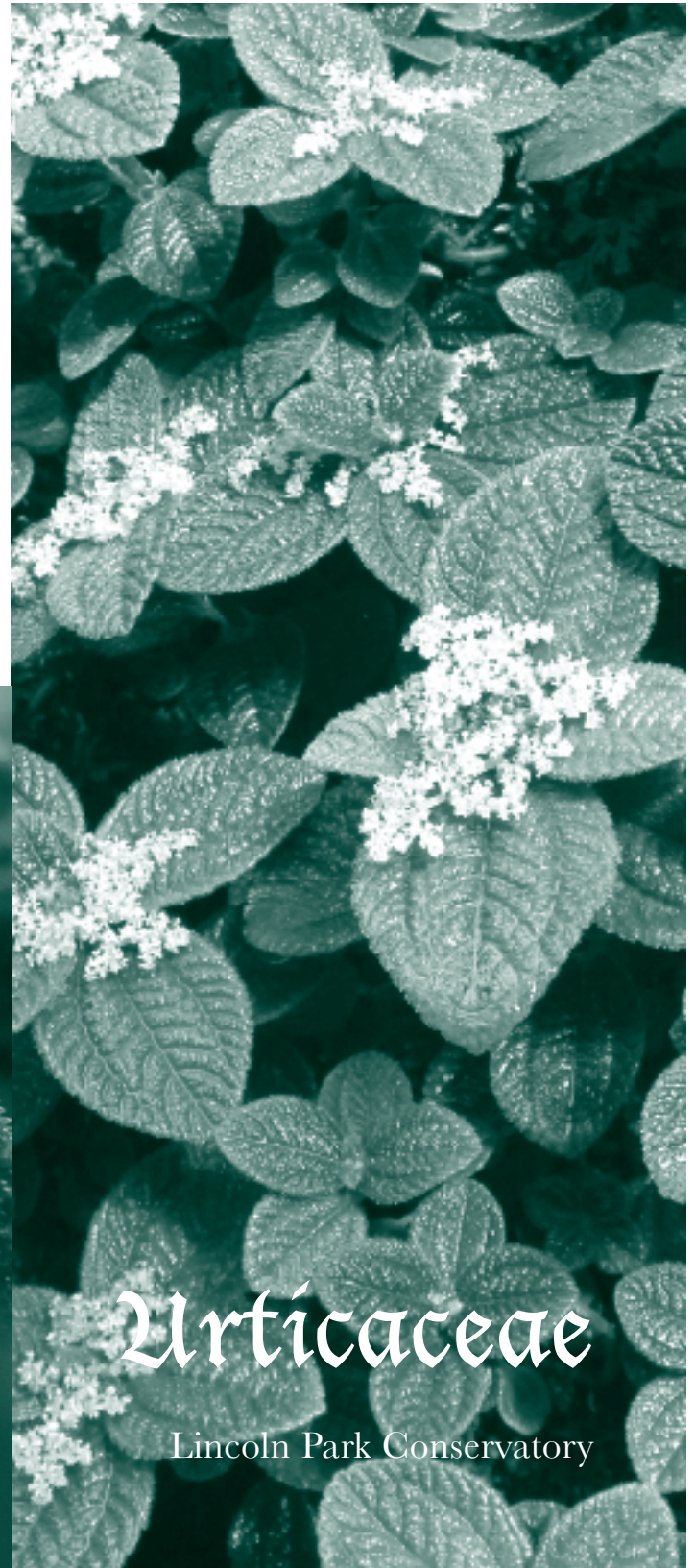
*watermaliense* stands erect on a stalk known as the peduncle which is dark purple-violet in color. The spathe is normally a dark purple-violet but may also be green tinged with purple depending on the stage of development. The female flowers reach sexual anthesis first and once they have completed the process the male flowers begin to produce pollen.

When an *Anthurium* is “**inflower**” the reference is to sexual anthesis at which time the spadix produces tiny male, female and sterile male flowers that grow on the spadix. The spathe itself is a modified leaf and is not a “flower”. The spadix may be purplish when young but typically turns green to yellowish green or tan-white tinged purple-violet as it ages. The spadix vaguely resembles an elongated pine cone and when mature both the spathe and spadix turn so dark in color they appear black, thus the common name “Black Anthurium”. the spadix is a spike on a thickened fleshy axis which can produce tiny flowers. *Anthurium* species are known to be highly variable and not every leaf or inflorescence of every specimen of *Anthurium watermaliense* will always appear the same.



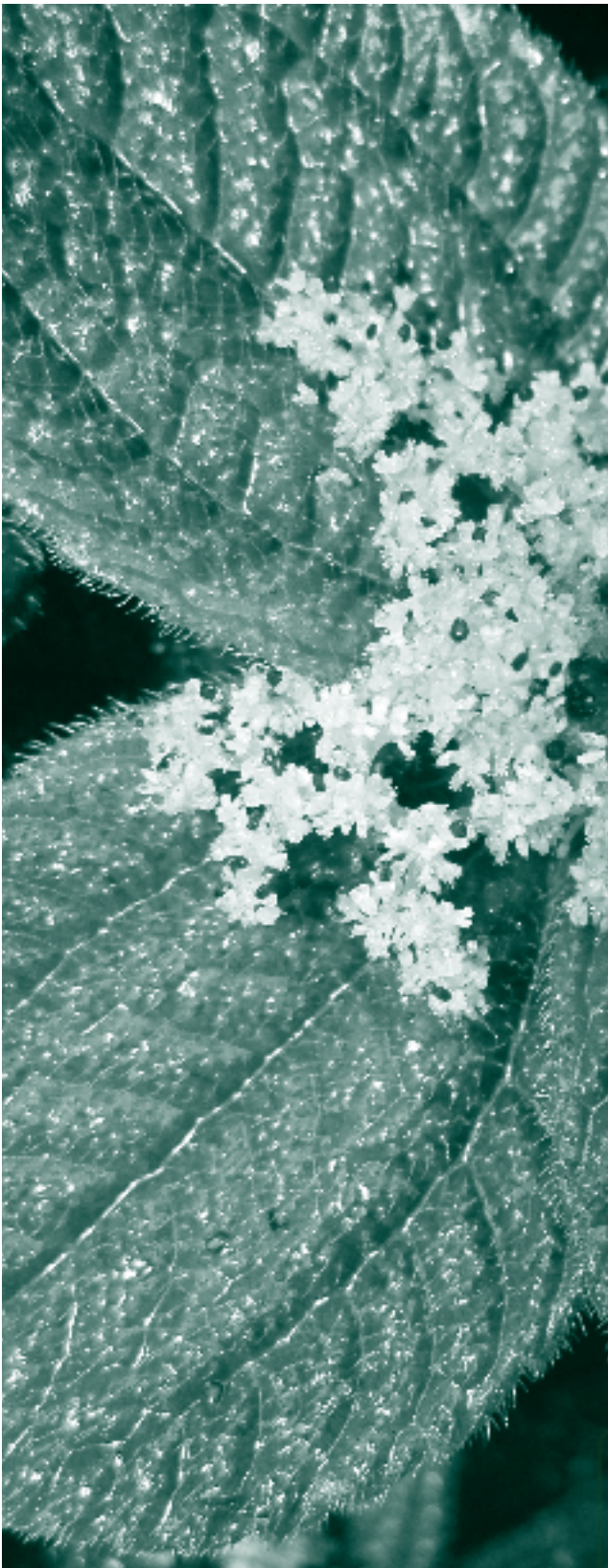
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# Urticaceae

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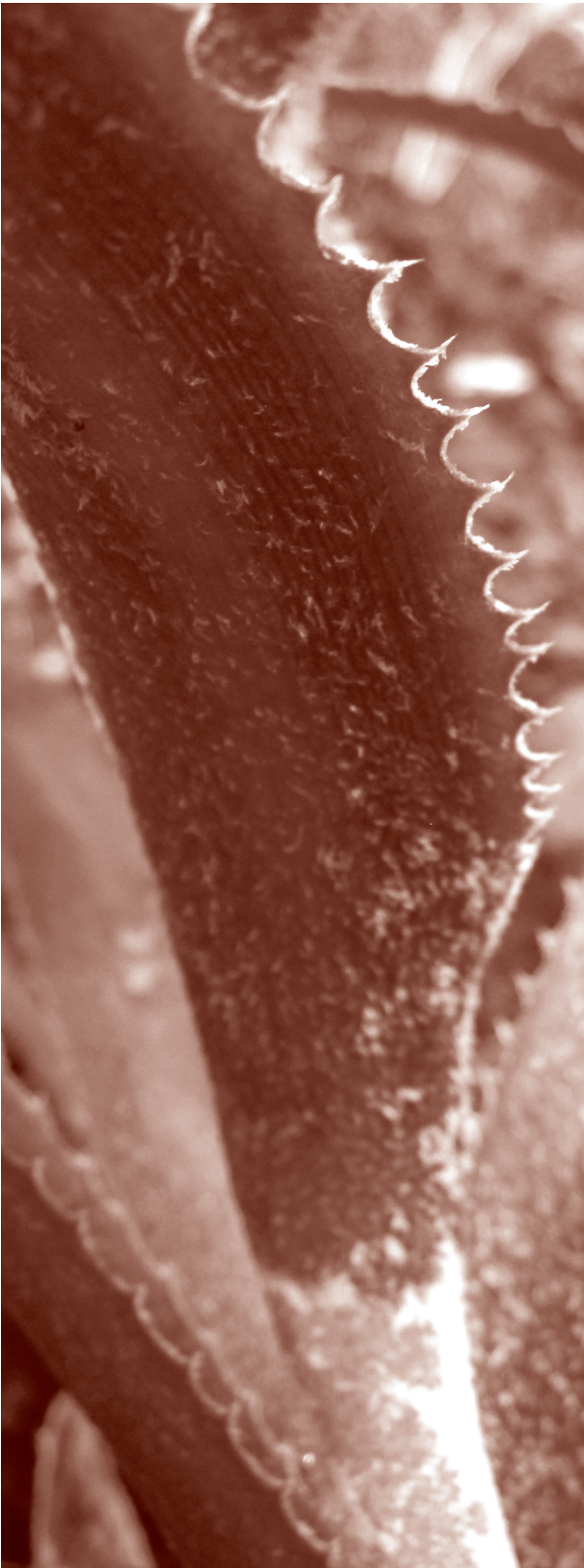
**U**rtica dioica, Stinging Nettle, reddish-brown to greenish-white, in dangling clusters at junction of stems and leaves. The nettle family comprising about 45 genera of herbs, shrubs, small trees, and a few vines, distributed primarily in tropical regions from Europa, to Australia and the Bay area. Can grow up to 7 feet tall, growing in stands and connected by underground roots. The plant grows as a large main stem, the leaves are in opposite pairs, and the flowers concentrate in clusters from the leaf axils. The flowers do not have petals, male flowers have a 4-lobed calyx and 4 stamens, the female flowers are either 4-lobed or 2-lobed and have a pistil that produces a single seed.

**The family** is typical of the nettle order, having stinging hairs on the stems and leaves. The leaves are varied and the sap is usually watery. The small, greenish flowers often form clusters in the leaf axils. Both male and female flowers may be borne on the same plant. The curled stamens of the male flowers straighten quickly as the flowers open, releasing the pollen. The dry, one-seeded fruit often is enclosed by the outer whorl of the cluster. The long fibers

in the stems of some species are used in the textile industry, the native varieties and the European types are used extensively in herbal remedies and preparations, it uses are far-ranging as diuretic, and alkalizer, and anti-inflammatory astringent, for stress reduction and scalp conditioning. Powdered nettle leaves are very high in chlorophyll, protein and useful minerals, it is claimed to be a much more effective green food than algae and pollen products, and a lot cheaper.

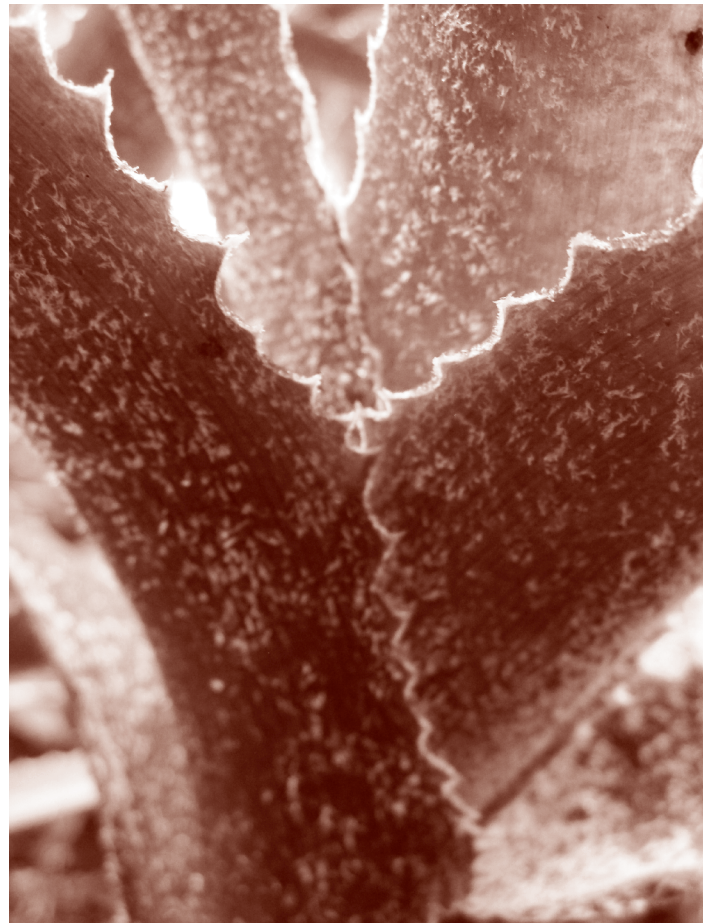
**Urtica** is apparently also very efficient in the filtering of metals, minerals and cleansing water supplies. It is an excellent candidate for organic waste treatment and detoxification systems. Many of the materials it collects can be recovered afterward from the dead plant matter.

Most species have **stinging hairs** on the leaves and stems. The hairs contain a skin-reactive poison that can cause severe stinging in the affected area that can last for days. Because of the poisonous stingers, collecting, handling, and cultivate must be done carefully and properly.



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Warren  
Loose

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*Orthophytum gurkenii* is described as solitary with short, thick caudex, the sterile plants mostly up to 15 cm tall and 25 cm in diameter, large in shade, somewhat smaller in the wild, especially when in full sun the leaves sub erect to spreading. Flowering plant 90 cm tall and leaves 25 cm long and 4.5 cm wide, shallowly and broadly canaliculate, spreading, arching recurved or the uppermost on the on the inflorescence deflexed, with a distinct sheath enfolding the stem, the blades broadly triangular attenuate, laxly spinose with teeth up to 2,5 mm long, deep purplish or purplish brown, irregularly and sparsely white lepidote beneath, above white lepidote in straight, wavy or irregular to jagged lines mostly 2-3 mm wide extending to the margins or nearly (zebra-striped), alternating with glabrous zones about 5 mm wide. The plants have small flowers about 3-4 mm in diameter, the flowers close up in the venings, new flowers seen to grow fairly regularly. The texture of the leaves is very interesting, they are furry and look very stiff with “gotya” spines along their edges.

**Orthophytum's** are in the Bromeliad family with more than 25 species. The wild species are limited to the eastern Brazil where they seem to grow on rocks and sides of cliffs. Orthophytum do not have “cups” or hold water in the center leaves of the plants.

The name *Orthophytum* means “erect plant” which refers to the upright flower spike of most species. The thick stalk can grow quite tall and produces tiny flowers at the top amongst foliage that looks like miniatures plants. *Orthophytum* come in many shapes and sizes, most as erect rosettes but some are semi-climbing varieties.

Many *Orthophytum* have long leaves having **sharp “teeth”** along the margins yet others no “teeth”, fuzzy foliage covered in scurf (a whitish powdery substance), some have apple green leaves while others are red, spotted, multi-colored, and even streaked, striped or variegated. Being terrestrials the roots grow into the cracks and fissures between rocks which generally contain moisture and nutrients.

Is a plant **suitable for** hanging in baskets, container gardening, mixed plantings with other succulents or even rock gardens in warmer climates. They can grown as house plants in a sunny window, on patio gardens or under trees and in tall pots that show off the draping foliage. The handling characteristics of *Orthophytum* “Warren Loose” could easily be described as severe, so watch for wounds when handling a Warren Loose. But no questions that the plant's favor is it's splendor.