

Root Causes

by Martin Heavisides

The Angstcrawler or Creeping Anxiety plant appeared at this time--it could hardly have grown and flourished in a happy one. As a mood elevator it beat anything dispensed in pill or needle form and on top of that it was a plant, of rare and bewitching (some thought sinister) beauty. Even that thought was food to boost its growth, it wasn't called the Creeping Anxiety plant for nothing. Fears fled the minds and even the overstressed muscles of everyone in its ambient field, and sent ivy-like wrigglers out in all directions, topped by vivid multicoloured leaves, the main leaf a variously deep green (few leaves are light or even middle green, their owner would pretty much have to be Bobby McFerrin) the veins a rich blend of crimson; purple; burnt ochre; cobalt blue ochre; cadmium yellow; clockwork orange (I think that's the descriptive name that was internationally agreed upon); a variety of shades and hues previously unnamed and perhaps even unseen in the visible spectrum before, which paint shops and chemists' labs have been working long hours in an effort to duplicate. Curiously enough Angstcrawlers in these labs and shops seem to be modest and contained in their growth.

The colour blend in the veins of every Creeping Anxiety plant is as unique as a fingerprint, in fact it can be thought of as the externalized (visibly proliferating) fingerprint of its owner, or more accurately its owner's immediate social ambit since every visitor adds in some way to the mix.

The use of these in corporate boardrooms is beginning to be discouraged because they proliferate there at astoundingly accelerated rates, besides which boards of directors under the

sapping influence of these wild jungle growths vote in distressing and erratic motions such as throwing the coffers open far too wide to charity, independent research and artistic projects and paying employees a more nearly legitimate share of the profits they generate. Enough corporations have been permanently reorganized into models of social responsibility already, to send a deep chill of fear through the remainder.

The only worrying thing about the Angstcrawlers (to any but hardcore fans of social irresponsibility) is the astonishing speed at which they proliferate especially since the wilder and more far-reaching their growth, the less people feel inclined to check its spread. At first there may be widespread alarm, but vines pop out everywhere with leaves swelling at their tips and people settle back and say "Why bother? They aren't hurting anything." However it has been noticed that the plants tend to recede to more normal dimensions in neighbourhoods where people wrestle with and solve local problems they'd previously resolved were permanently intractable. Studied calm is the optimum mood apparently for getting to the root causes of anxiety. Who knew? This has led some of us to hope that this is one crisis at least, in the long entangled history of humankind, that carries within its own resolution.

