

Parrot pitcherplant

(*Sarracenia psittacina*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Parrot pitcherplant is a carnivorous perennial plant. Its leaves are tubular with curved lids or hoods, and form the “pitcher” part of the plant. They typically lie nearly flat on the ground in a prostrate rosette. The pitcher mouth is small, hooded and adorned with window-like features that help attract prey. The pitcher is tubular, horizontal and is lined with many criss-crossed hairs. Parrot pitcherplant flowers are red, solitary and nodding.

Parrot pitcherplant is dissimilar to most pitcherplants in both its shape and the way it traps insects. Its trapping mechanism is considered a “lobster pot” while most pitcherplants have a “pitfall” trap.

Parrot pitcherplant typically flowers in April and May. It occurs naturally in seepage slopes, wet prairies, depression marshes, dome swamps, and bogs.

Parrot pitcherplant is a state listed threatened species. Its species name psittacine means “of or relating to parrots” and refers to the shape of the flower resembling the head of a parrot.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Family: Sarraceniaceae (Pitcherplant family)

Native range: Central to western Panhandle, Baker and Nassau counties

To see where natural populations of Parrot pitcherplant have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 7–8a

Soil: Inundated to saturated soils; can also grow in semi-aquatic (periodically flooded) habitats

Exposure: Full sun

Propagation: Division, seed

Garden tips: Parrot pitcherplants do best in their natural habitat, but they can be propagated by division (most successfully in spring) and by seed, although seeds must be cold stratified prior to planting. Seeds tend to do better in sphagnum or peat.