

# Mountain sweet pitcher plant

## *Sarracenia rubra ssp. jonesii*



Mountain sweet pitcher plant,  
Gary Peoples

**Status:** Endangered

**Description:** Mountain sweet pitcher plant is a carnivorous perennial herb with tall, hollow pitcher-shaped leaves and red sweet-smelling flowers. The hollow leaves contain liquid and enzymes. When insects fall into the pitchers, they're digested and the nutrients are incorporated into the plant's tissues. The evolutionary role of carnivory in such plants is not fully understood, but some evidence indicates that absorption of minerals from insect prey may allow carnivorous species to compete in nutrient-poor habitats. The unusual red flowers (yellow in rare cases) appear from April to June, with fruits ripening in August. Flowering plants reach heights of 29 inches. Very little specific information is available on the biology of mountain sweet pitcher plant. Like other pitcher plants, it has rhizomes that are probably long-lived and capable of persisting and reproducing vegetatively for decades without producing seedlings.

**Habitat:** Mountain bogs

**Range:** Mountain sweet pitcher plant is known from a handful of counties in upstate South Carolina and southwest North Carolina.

**Listing:** Endangered, September 30, 1988. 53 FR 38470 38474

**Critical habitat:** None designated

**Threats:** The most serious threat to mountain sweet pitcher plant is the destruction or degradation of its small wetland habitat. Collecting from wild populations continues to be a problem for carnivorous plants, even though cultivated sources are available for almost all species.

**Why should we be concerned about the loss of species?** Extinction is a natural process that has been occurring since long before the appearance of humans. Normally, new species develop through a process known as speciation, at about the same rate other species become extinct. However, because of air and water pollution, forest clearing, loss of wetlands, and other man-induced environmental changes, extinctions are now occurring at a rate that far exceeds the speciation rate.

All living things are part of a complex and interconnected network. We depend on the diversity of plant and animal life for our recreation, nourishment, many of our lifesaving medicines, and the ecological functions they provide. One-quarter of all the prescriptions written in the United States today contain chemicals that were originally discovered in plants and animals. Industry and agriculture are

increasingly making use of wild plants, seeking out the remaining wild strain of many common crops, such as wheat and corn, to produce new hybrids that are more resistant to disease, pests, and marginal climatic conditions. Our food crops depend on insects and other animals for pollination.

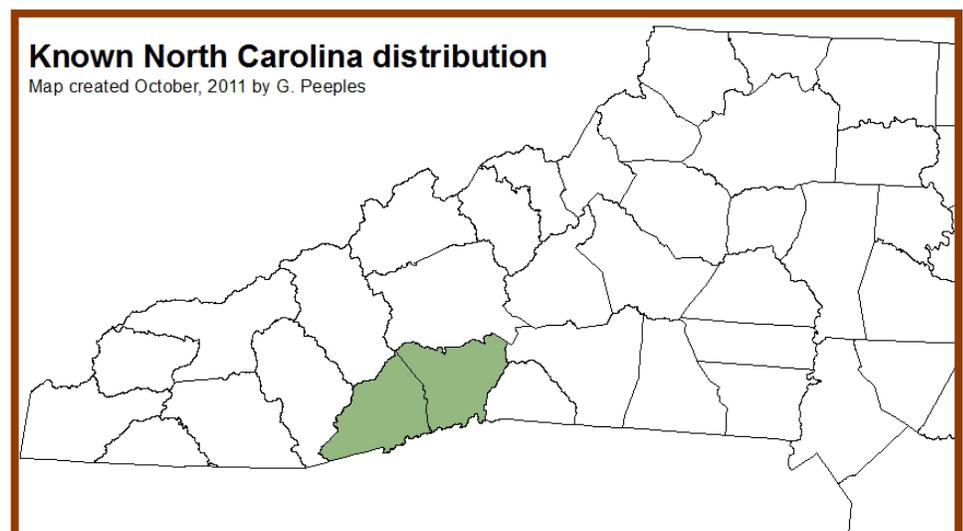
Healthy forests clean the air and provide oxygen for us to breathe. Wetlands clean water and help minimize the impacts of floods. These services are the foundation of life and depend on a diversity of plants and animals working in concert. Each time a species disappears, we lose not only those benefits we know it provided but other benefits that we have yet to realize.

### What you can do to help

Tread lightly and stay on designated trails.

Visit arboretums, botanical gardens, and parks and learn all you can about endangered plants and the causes of their declines.

Don't collect or buy plants collected from wild populations.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Participate in the protection of our remaining wild lands and the restoration of damaged ecosystems.

Support wetland protection efforts at local, state, and national levels.

Establish and maintain forested stream-side buffers. Several federal, state, and private programs are available to assist landowners, both technically and financially, with restoring and protecting stream-side buffers and eroding streams.

Implement and maintain measures for controlling erosion and storm water during and after land-clearing and disturbance activities. Excess soil in our streams from erosion is one of the greatest water pollution problems we have today.

Be careful with the use and disposal of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals. Remember, what you put on your land or dump down the drain may eventually wind up in nearby water.

Support local, state and national clean water legislation.

Report illegal dumping activities, erosion, and sedimentation problems. These activities affect the quality of our water, for drinking, fishing, and swimming.

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**December, 2011**