

Sarraceniaceae

pitcher-plant family

Unmistakeable in form and function, these carnivorous species live in peatlands and other inhospitable habitats. There are only 15 species worldwide; one in Nova Scotia. All have modified leaves forming passive traps into which their prey falls. These basal, cuplike structures are armed with strongly recurved hairs, forbidding escape. As the cups fill with rainwater, the small invertebrates, mostly insects, drown. The green leaves are also ornamented with bright red veins. Single flowers are borne on erect scapes above the leaves. Their styles are modified into an umbrella-shaped shield protecting the carpels.

***Sarracenia* L.**

pitcher-plant

A single species reaches Nova Scotia.

***Sarracenia purpurea* L.**

Purple Pitcher-plant; saule des vanniers



The cuplike basal leaves are marked with purple veins. Distally they are modified into a hood, extending over the pitcher opening. The inside of the leaves are bristly as above. Single flowers are erect when young, nodding with maturity. Tepals are purple.

Plants lacking the purple marking on the leaves are common in Cape Breton, with a single report from mainland NS in Annapolis County. This form is recognized by some as f. *heterophylla*. Ours is ssp. *purpurea*

Frequents bogs, swamps and sphagnum lakeshores.



Photo by Martin Thomas

Nutrient-poor habitats.

Common where suitable habitat is found.

Ranges across Canada to NT and BC; disjunct, NJ to FL and LA.