



Orchid Specialist Group North American Region

FLAGSHIP TAXA

Cypripedium reginae Walter
The Showy Lady's Slipper



Habitat: Calcareous wetlands including wooded and open fens between sea level and up to 1500 feet (400 metres). Rarely in seeps on cliffs (in Missouri). Large colonies, often with 5000 or more stems, are not uncommon. Colonies thrive where tall trees provide dappled sunlight.

Plant: Terrestrial, 75 to 100 cm tall with underground rhizome. Stems and broad oval leaves are hairy. One to several flowers, white with pink, rose to carmine red lips or totally white, as single or paired blooms at the top of the stem. Flower: about 8.0 cm wide and high.

Pollinators: Solitary bees.

Threats: Loss of wetland habitat due to agricultural practices, ground water pumping lowering the water table, or prolonged flooding caused by beavers. Herbivory by White-tailed Deer. Illegal digging of plants.

Economic and cultural value: The Showy Lady's-slipper has economic value as a horticultural plant and for ecotourism.

Conservation methods in place: Artificially propagated stock is available from a growing number of nurseries in Canada, the U.S.A. and abroad. Many large colonies are protected within provincial, state and national parks as well as in conservation lands.

Conservation measures suggested: The Showy Lady's-slipper is dependent on permanently wet areas. While natural fluctuation in water levels may be tolerated over the long term, ground water pumping and stream diversion should be restricted in areas supporting the orchids. Measures to control deer browsing will benefit the orchid and its survival.

Research: Research is needed to determine if and how the Showy Lady's-slipper recovers from periodic drought and flooding and how long such recovery takes. It is especially important to determine if supposedly extirpated colonies recover after exceptional flooding or drought events. Assess reintroduction outcomes.

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Links:

- Tour Canada: <http://www.tourcanada.com/orchid.htm>
- Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre: <http://www.accdc.com/products/profiles/ladyslipper.html>
- Chicago Botanic Garden: <http://www.chicago-botanic.org/plantinfo/pp/PPOrchid.html>
- Connecticut Botanical Society: <http://www.ct-botanical-society.org/galleries/cypripediumregi.html>
- A Digital Flora of Newfoundland and Labrador Vascular Plants:
http://www.nfmuseum.com/flora_orchidaceae_index.htm
- Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Garden, Ontario, Canada: http://www.osrbg.ca/files/CYP_REG.HTM
- University of Wisconsin: <http://www.botany.wisc.edu/Orchids/reginae.html>
- USDA Plants Profile: http://plants.usda.gov/cgi_bin/plant_profile.cgi?symbol=cyre6
- Orchid Specialist Group: <http://www.orchidconservation.org/OSG/>

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