

Pitcher Plants

Carnivorous Plants are Not Science Fiction!

In the bogs and fens of the Waterloo Recreation Area, live plants that lie in wait for unsuspecting animals. Not to worry, you are safe unless you are an insect! The most common is the pitcher plant whose leaves resemble water pitchers that actually hold water. Unsuspecting insects fall into a leaf's watery pit, drown and sink to the bottom. Then the leaf releases digestive enzymes that dissolve the soft parts of the insects. Eventually the lower section of the leaf becomes filled with insect exoskeletons and the leaf dies, but not before it is replaced by a new one.

You can see these fascinating plants along the bog trail boardwalk at the Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center. They are visible most of the year. The Center is located at 17030 Bush Road about three miles west of downtown Chelsea. A recreation passport for your vehicle is required for entry. If you didn't get one when you registered your vehicle with the Secretary of State, they are available at the Discovery Center. The cost is \$10.00 and provides unlimited access to any Michigan State Park for an entire year.



A pitcher plant growing in the bog at the Discovery Center (above). Pitcher plant flower (below).



Pitcher plant leaf filled with water (right), a death trap for unsuspecting insects.

