

## GULF COAST REDFLOWER

### PITCHERPLANT

*Sarracenia rubra* ssp. *gulfensis* Walt.

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Sarraceniaceae (pitcherplant)

**FNAI Ranks:** G3G4T2T3/S2S3

**Legal Status:** US-none FL-Threatened

**Wetland Status:** US-none+ FL-OBL



No Image  
Available

**Field Description:** Perennial **herb** with hollow, tubular **leaves (pitchers)** 17 to 24 inches tall and 1 - 1.5 inches across at the mouth. **Pitchers** clumped, erect, red or pale green with a dark red network of veins; a narrow **wing** runs the length of the pitcher and a small, pointed **hood** curves over the mouth. **Flowers** solitary, nodding at top of a leafless stalk 2.5 feet tall; **petals** 5, maroon, drooping; **sepals** 5, green to maroon, horizontal or turned upwards, persisting long after petals drop. Green, five-pointed **style disk** in the center of the flower lasts all summer.

**Similar Species:** Wherry's redflower pitcherplant (*Sarracenia rubra* ssp. *wherryi*), state-threatened, is only found in Escambia County in Florida, and is generally shorter and with a wider mouth than the Gulf coast redflower pitcherplant. Four other species of pitcherplant are listed in FL. Hooded pitcherplant (*Sarracenia minor*) resembles sweet pitcherplant but has yellow-green flowers and white

## Gulf Coast redflower pitcherplant

*Sarracenia rubra* ssp. *gulfensis*

patches near the top of the pitcher. Purple pitcherplant (*Sarracenia purpurea* or *S. rosea*) has pink or maroon flowers and inflated pitchers resting on the ground with erect, wavy-margined hoods. Parrot pitcherplant (*Sarracenia psittacina*) has maroon flowers; very wide wings; and small, deeply hooded pitchers pressed against the ground. White-topped pitcherplant (*Sarracenia leucophylla*) has maroon flowers and white hoods with red or purple veins.

**Related Rare Species:** Wherry's redflower pitcherplant (*Sarracenia rubra* ssp. *wherryi*), state-threatened, is only found in Escambia County in Florida, and is generally shorter than the Gulf coast redflower pitcherplant.

**Habitat:** The species grows in openings in thickets along spring-fed or seepage streams, wet prairies, bogs, and wet ditches in sandy-muck soils. It has also been frequently observed growing on the edges of baygalls, though this may represent areas where baygall has invaded into seepage slope. The soils where this species grows are continuously saturated, nutrient-deficient, and acidic.

**Best Survey Season:** Flowers April - May. Pitchers are identifiable until fall.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Endemic to Florida. Occurs in Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties.

**Conservation Status:** Many populations are protected on Eglin AFB and Blackwater River State Forest, but silviculture and wetland draining and filling have eliminated most habitat elsewhere. However, populations may suffer from fire exclusion or fire that is not frequent/intense enough to maintain habitat. In the future, climate change may affect this species through droughts and/or storm surge from hurricanes that reach farther inland than in the past. Pitcher plants would be especially susceptible to this salt-water intrusion due to their specialized water-retaining leaf morphology.

**Protection and Management:** Burn wet prairies every 2 - 3 years. Allow upland fires to burn into stream thickets. Avoid soil disturbance in wetland ecotones. Prevent siltation into streams from roads and logging.

**References:** Case and Case 1976, Coile 2000, Folkerts 1982, Hermann 1995, McDaniel 1971, Schnell 1976, 1977, 1979; Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.