

ATAMASCO LILY

(*Zephyranthes atamasca*)

Also called “rain lily,” this fragrant (and poisonous) flower was described by colonists at Jamestown. Scientists are now finding promise of anti-cancer properties in its bulb. While flourishing in several states, it is threatened at the edges of its range: in Maryland, where it has been found in only one site, and in south Florida, where it shares a diminished habitat with the Florida panther.

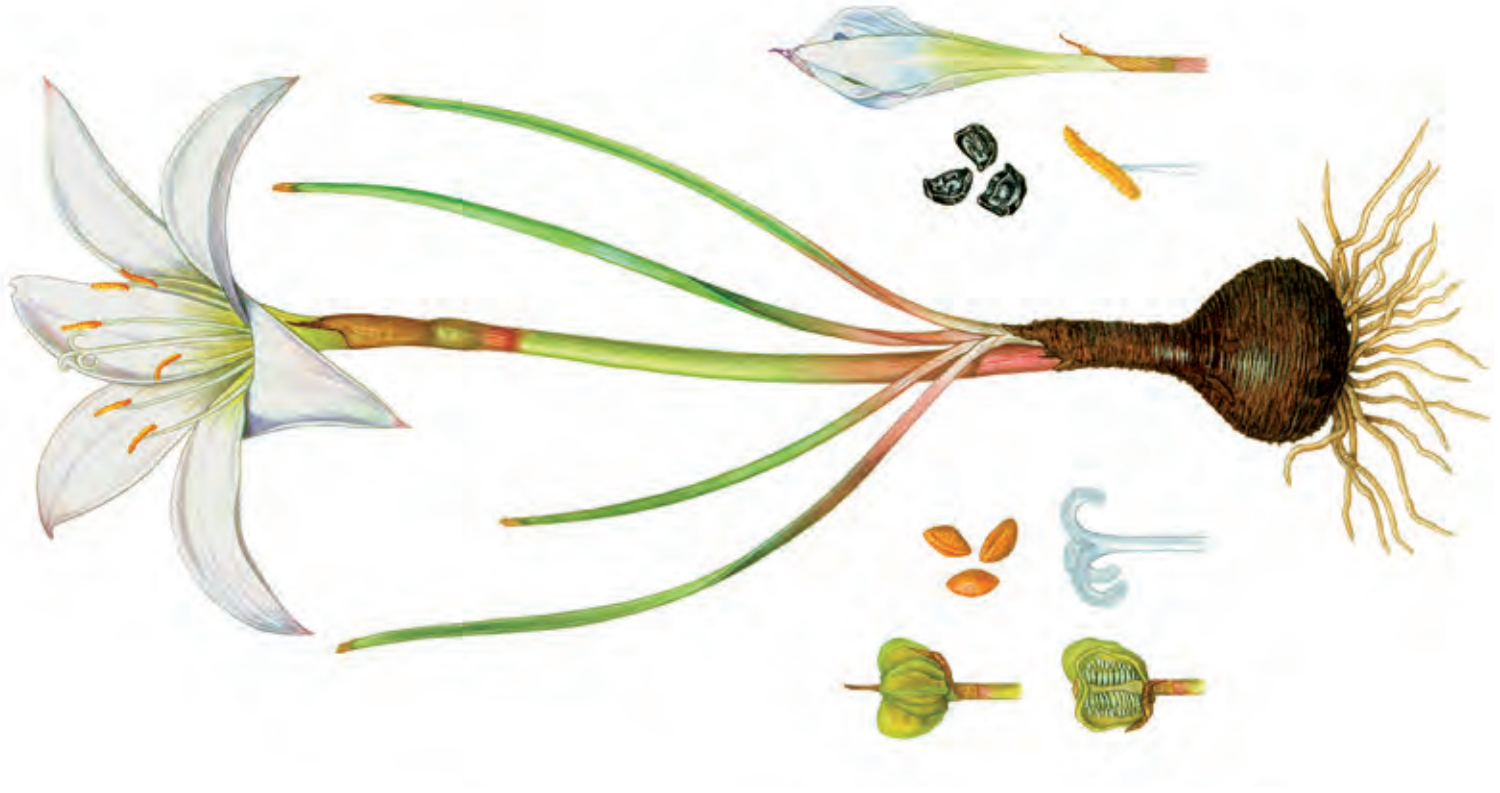
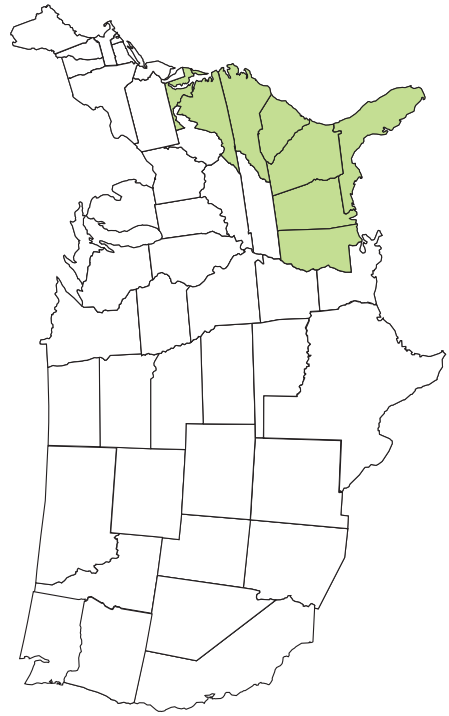


Illustration © Julie Martinez



BOWL FLOWER

(*Cypripedium japonicum*)

Only 200 individual specimens of this orchid remain in the wild in South Korea, where it is a protected species. Numbers are higher in China and Japan, but recent genetic studies indicate that it is a naturally rare plant. In China, it shares bamboo-grove habitats with the giant panda.



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GOLDENSEAL

(*Hydrastis canadensis*)

The root of the goldenseal is used as an herbal remedy—it contains antibiotic and anti-inflammatory alkaloids. Thriving in the shade of the eastern forests, it was threatened first by loss of forestland and then by global demand for its root. State governments began listing it as endangered in the 1990s. The roots of cultivated plants are sold legally, but tend to be expensive. The collection of wild plants, therefore, continues.

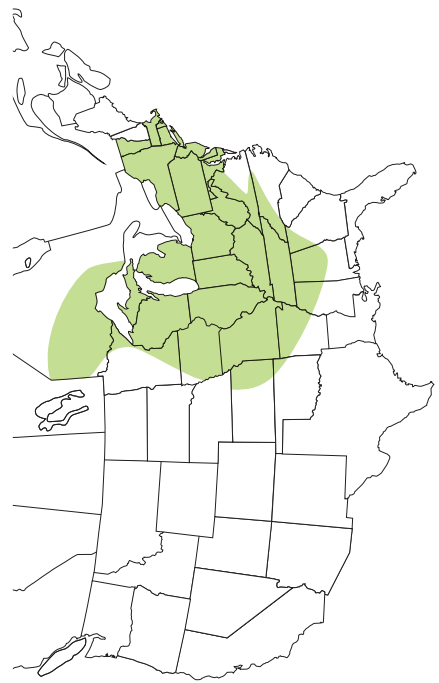


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HAU KUAHIWI

(*Hibiscadelphus distans*)

This is one of the world's rarest trees. Only 20 specimens are known to exist in their native habitat of Kauai, Hawaii. The genus name, *Hibiscadelphus*, means "brother of hibiscus." Of the seven species of the genus, three are extinct. Threats to the survivors include tree-climbing, seed-eating rats, introduced to Hawaii by the original Polynesian settlers, and cliff-climbing goats, introduced by Europeans.

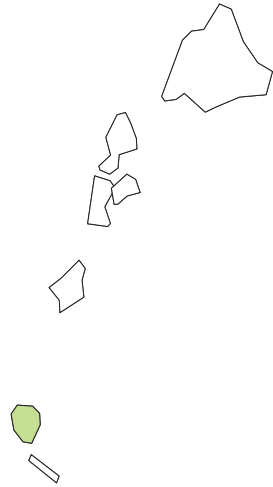


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MARSH GENTIAN

(*Gentiana pneumonanthe*)

The rare Alcon blue butterfly depends on this plant and an ant species for survival. The butterfly's caterpillar has a smell similar to the ant's larvae. The caterpillar feeds on the plant until found by ants. Mistaking the smell, the ants carry the caterpillar back to their nest to raise it as if it were one of their own. When the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it beats a hasty exit from the nest—before the duped ants can kill it! Both plant and butterfly are threatened by the shrinking of European marshland.



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YELLOW LADY'S SLIPPER

(Cypripedium parviflorum)

According to a 1920s guide to botanical medicine, the root of this orchid was used to treat disorders ranging from “muscular twitching” to “gloom.” Valued today for the beauty of its shoe-shaped flower, the plant is protected against “orchid poachers” by several state governments. For reasons not yet known, its numbers are declining drastically even in protected areas.

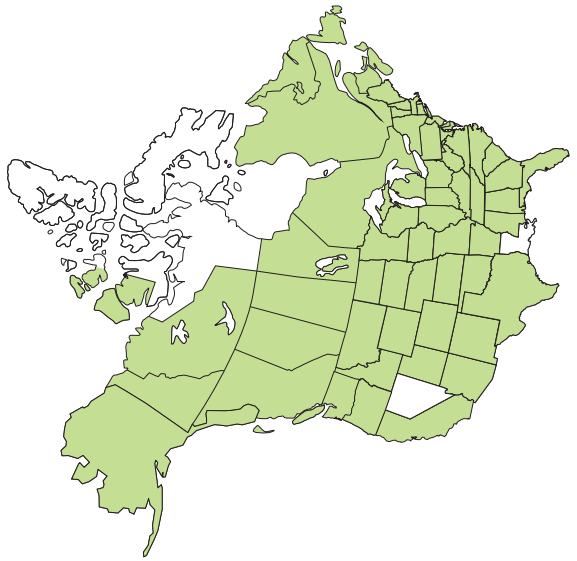


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