

**IDENTIFICATION:** The Alabama canebrake pitcher plant (*Sarracenia alabamensis* ssp. *alabamensis*) is a member of the Sarraceniaceae family that was [designated as an endangered species](#) on March 10, 1989. Like all pitcher plants, it is carnivorous, trapping and digesting insects in its tubular leaf. The tube is 8 - 16 inches tall in the spring and may be curved in shaded conditions. The flower is maroon and droops from a 2-foot stalk, appearing April through June. Summer leaves are also tubular and may be up to 27 inches long. They are light green and covered with white hair.



Photo credit: Chuck Byrd, Alabama Chapter of the Nature Conservancy



Photo credit: U. S. Forest Service

The plant grows in wet areas and seeps in central Alabama along the fall-line with grasses, sedges, sweetbay, poison sumac, bayberry and sparkleberry. Soils are typically acidic, deep peaty sands or clays with a high water table. Fire exclusion has increased woody competition and caused populations to decline on several sites. Other threats include habitat destruction, herbicide application and over-collecting by plant enthusiasts. This species has been reported from 27 sites but at the time of listing was known to occur at only 11 sites in three counties. Critical habitat was not designated as part of the listing process because of the potential for additional over-harvesting by plant collecting enthusiasts.

**FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS:** Pitcher plants are sun loving, so fire, which releases them from shade and woody brush, is beneficial. They are very dependent on the moist soil conditions where they grow, so any activity that affects the water table or drainage of the site, including construction of firelines, site preparation, or harvesting is potentially harmful and should be carefully planned.

**DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY:** Alabama canebrake pitcher plants are known to occur only in Autauga, Chilton, and Elmore counties but the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service believes they may occur in Bibb, Dallas, Lowndes and Montgomery counties.



This information is provided by the Alabama Forestry Commission  
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