

CYPRIPEDIUM PARVIFLORUM var. PARVIFLORUM (Salisb).
Small Yellow Lady's-slipper

FAMILY: Orchidaceae

SYNONYMS: *Cypripedium calceolus* var. *parviflorum* Salisb.

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial, 1.0-5.5 dm.; flowering late May-early June.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This variety is exceedingly similar to the more frequent var. *pubescens* (Large Yellow Lady's-slipper) and often is confused with it. The names "small" and "large" are misleading. Depauperate specimens of var. *pubescens* often are mistaken for healthy specimens of var. *parviflorum* and vice versa. Distinguishing characters are the shape and coloration of the flower parts and the general dimensions of the flowers as a whole. The var. *parviflorum* tends to bloom a week or two later than var. *pubescens*. The two do not occupy the same habitat and they do not occur in close proximity to each other in any Ohio station now known. There also are slight leaf differences, but non-flowering plants cannot be identified with certainty.

TOTAL RANGE: Circumboreal, s. in our range to New England, the Lake States, n. NJ, PA, OH, and at progressively higher elevations in the s. Appalachian mts. to NC.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Champaign, Geauga, and Portage counties. Pre-1980 records are from Auglaize, Clark, Lorain, Montgomery, and Summit counties.

HABITAT: A variety of wet situations in neutral or slightly alkaline substrates; wet openings and borders in fens and swamp forest; wet prairies; arbor vitae thickets; not a species of acid sphagnum bogs; more tolerant of wet conditions and shade than other lady's-slippers.

HAZARDS: Trampling and compaction of soil; casual picking of the flowers; digging by nureserymen and wildflower gardeners; over-collecting.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably poor. Less tolerant of disturbance than other lady's slippers.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Avoid over-collecting. Data are very sensitive since populations have been raided by gardeners. Color and shape of the flower parts should be noted when fresh, as these essential characters are virtually destroyed by pressing and drying. Habitat data are significant in determining identification. All dubious reports should be disregarded.

COMMENTS: Though often reported, this variety seems very rare in Ohio. Almost all sight records and collections can be referred to the variety *pubescens* (see Similar Species). In addition, there are other dubious reports from throughout the state. These reports generally are based upon poor collections that cannot be determined with certainty and upon confusions with the wide-ranging var. *pubescens* (see Similar Species).

Though this variety and the variety *pubescens* are very similar, studies indicate that it is not a growth form, nor an ecotype, and that it deserves taxonomic rank.

Handling of the leaves may cause a severe dermatitis similar to that induced by poison ivy.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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