

UTRICULARIA CORNUTA Michx.
Horned Bladderwort

FAMILY: Lentibulariaceae

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial by means of overwintering leaves, leaves mostly subterranean and seldom seen, but sometimes produced above ground, flowering scapes 0.3-3.5 dm. high; flowering June-September; fruiting August, September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The flowers of this species are much larger than any other species of *Utricularia* in Ohio. This feature and the terrestrial habit make it very distinctive.

TOTAL RANGE: TX and FL, n. along the Atlantic coastal plain to se. Can., inland to MI, MN, n. IN, and n. IL.

STATE RANGE: The species currently occurs in Champaign County and Clark County. There are pre-1900 records from Summit and Portage counties.

HABITAT: Peaty, sandy or muddy shores of bogs; in Ohio, it is known only from marl flats in fens.

HAZARDS: Drainage of the habitat, compaction of the soil.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably poor due to limited habitat.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Identification can be made only with flowering material. Collect only a flowering stalk; do not disturb the underground parts. Avoid over-collecting.

COMMENTS: The bladderworts are highly specialized plants that have attracted much interest and study. Interpretation of various parts of a *Utricularia* plant (assigning them to roots, stems, or leaves) is difficult or impossible. Embryo and seedling development are also unique, and no standardized morphological terminology has been adopted. Such terms as "stem-like structures," "foliar units," and "cotyledonoids" have been used.

Bladders or traps are present on all members of the genus. The bladders actively capture prey, both animal and vegetable. The prey triggers hairs on a door or valve of the trap. The door opens inward only, sucking in the prey, and quickly closes to form a tight seal. Elimination of water inside the trap forms concave walls. The trap is then ready to be triggered again. The walls flex outward, sucking in new prey. The traps of a healthy plant can function again after about thirty minutes. The prey remains alive for various times in the traps, but the prey eventually decomposes and is assimilated into the *Utricularia* plant.

This species is obvious only when in flower. It should be sought in suitable habitats throughout glaciated Ohio.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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