



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Natural Heritage Program

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*Cypripedium kentuckiense* C.F. Reed  
**Southern Lady's Slipper, Kentucky Lady's Slipper, Yellow Lady Slipper**

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**Identification:** Perennial plants with erect stems 6-8 dm tall. Leaves 2 or more (usually 5) in number, broadly ovate and 15-20 cm long. Flowers solitary, relatively large, and white or pale creamy white. The upper sepals 7-8 cm long, the lower connate pair 5-7 cm long, the lateral petals 8-9 cm long; the labellum (lip) is a large inflated pouch 5-6 cm long, with its margins inrolled around the orifice, and white to creamy or dull yellow; the column declined over the surface of the lip, bearing a fertile stamen (with granular pollen) on each side and dilated staminode above.

**Key ID characters:**

- Plant 6-8 dm tall.
- Flowers solitary, with a creamy lip and darker pigmented sepals and petals.
- Lip is a large inflated pouch.



*C. kentuckiense* from *The Flora of North America, Volume 26*.  
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**Habitat:** Mesophytic woods, calcareous forests, and hardwood slope forests.

**Taxonomic Comments:** This species is a member of the family Orchidaceae, to which there are about 40 species found in LA. There are no other species of the genus *Cypripedium* known to LA.

**Status:**

Wetland: No Data

Global: G3 - Vulnerable

State: S1 - Critically Imperiled

**Range:** Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

**Soils:** Typically acidic to calcareous, silty or clayey loams.



Hardwood Slope Forest

**Similar Species:** Although there are many species of orchids present in LA's flora, many are very

easily recognizable, at least to genus. The genus *Cypripedium* is no exception to this, as members have a large pouch-like lip. *C. kentuckiense* is the only species documented to occur in LA, it is unmistakable.



*Cypripedium* sp., Photo by L. Urbatsch

**Reason for Rarity:** Habitat loss, narrow habitat range, and collection by plant enthusiasts.

**Known Distribution in Louisiana:**

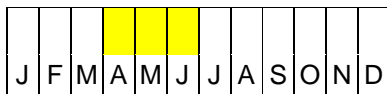
Bossier, Catahoula, De Soto\*, Evangeline\*, Lincoln\*, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Union, Vernon, and Winn\*.

\* Indicates unverified presence in parish.

**Dates of Natural Heritage Program Observations:**

1916, 1939, 1968, 1975, 1978, 1978, 1979, 1985(5), 1987(4), 1988(2), 1989(2), 1991, 1992, 1993(2), 1994, 1996(3), 1997

**Best Time for Viewing this Species:**



Distribution in Louisiana

**References :**

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Thomas, R. Dale, and Charles M. Allen. *Atlas of the Vascular Flora of Louisiana, Vol. I: Ferns & Fern Allies, Conifers, & Monocotyledons*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, 1993.

Sheviak, Charles J. *Flora of North America, Vol. 26, Magnoliophyta: Liliidae: Liliales and Orchidales*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Reed, Clyde F. "Cypripedium kentuckiense Reed, a new species of orchid in Kentucky." *Phytologia* 48(5): 426-427. 1981.