

BOGDIVERSITY THURSDAY



—*from Head Naturalist Clinton*

Pink Ladyslipper

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Last week, we got to know a pinkish species that can be found in the Sax-Zim Bog during the winter. This week, let's get to know another pink species, but one that is most obvious during the spring and summer months: Pink Ladyslipper!

Orchids are a group of plants of great interest by visitors in the Sax-Zim Bog and for good reason! We have documented 20 species of orchid, with one additional hybrid and one unique subspecies. We hope to profile most of these orchid species, but we will start with Pink Ladyslipper, which is by far the most common species in our area. Pink Ladyslipper is very easily seen at nearly every Friends of Sax-Zim Bog property and you can easily see over 100 of these beauties by taking a quick stroll down the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk!

Pink Ladyslipper is known by a number of different names: Pink Ladyslipper, Moccasin Flower, and Stemless Ladyslipper. The most interesting of these names is Stemless Ladyslipper. Though it appears that the flower of this plant is perched upon a stem, the

"stem" is actually a flower stalk! This species does have a stem, but it is very short and underground. It is a member of the genus *Cypripedium*, known as the lady's slipper orchids or pouched orchids. These orchids have large, colorful, pouch shaped flower petals and are often pollinated by bees. Bees are strong enough to push their way in or out of the flower, pollinating it along their way.

Orchids are an amazing group of plants, often only able to grow in a specific set of soil conditions. Most orchids also have a specific relationship between mycorrhizal fungi. These fungi are found in the soil and have a specific relationship between the root systems of plants. Without these fungi many species of orchids couldn't sprout from seed or make up for nutrients that are lacking in the soil.

This beautiful orchid can be found in two very different ecosystem types: bogs and upland forests. In the Sax-Zim Bog, most of the Pink Lady's slippers are found in the slightly dappled sunlight of bogs. Keep an eye out for this species blooming through late-May into early July depending on the year.

More information included with the photos below.
(Photos by Head Naturalist Clinton)



Pink Ladyslippers are one of the many pouched orchids in the genus *Cypripedium*. The state flower of Minnesota, Showy Ladyslipper, is also a member of this genus.



Pink Ladyslippers prefer dappled sunlight and can grow in a wide variety of soil types, from saturated bogs to dry upland forests.



Pink Ladyslipper is likely the most abundant orchid found in the Sax-Zim Bog. Every Friends of Sax-Zim Bog property has this lovey orchid and often in fairly high numbers. They can be found along the boardwalks through Warren Nelson and Winterberry Bogs. With a fairly long bloom period, this species can be seen as early as late-May most years into July.