



**Natural Heritage  
& Endangered Species  
Program**

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*Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife*

**Showy Lady's-slipper  
*Cypripedium reginae*  
Walter**

State Status: **Endangered**  
Federal Status: **None**

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Showy Lady's-slipper, a member of the Orchid family, is a striking, two- or three-flowered, hairy perennial, usually 15-40" (.35-1m) tall. The stem bears three to seven, coarse, elliptic to oval leaves, usually 4-9" (10-23 cm.) long and 2-5" (5-12 cm.) wide. The flowers have white sepals and white lateral petals. The lip petal or "slipper" is white and heavily suffused with magenta. Flowering occurs from mid-June through early July.

**SIMILAR SPECIES:** Pink Lady's-slipper (*C. acaule*) is similar to Showy Lady's-slipper but is smaller (6-15"; 15-37 cm. in height), produces leaves only at the base of the plant, and flowers only at the top of a leafless stem. The sepals and lateral petals of the Pink Lady's-slipper are brownish green and the lip is uniformly dark pink and veined with red.

**HABITAT:** Showy Lady's-slipper inhabits coniferous forested fens (wet, calcareous swamps) and naturally open peatlands influenced by calcareous (or alkaline) groundwater seepage. These communities tend to be dominated by *Larix laricina* (Larch), *Fraxinus nigra* (Black Ash), *Acer rubrum* (Red Maple), *Alnus rugosa* (Speckled Alder), *Cornus stolonifera* (Red-osier Dogwood), and *Geum rivale* (Water Avens).

**RANGE:** Showy Lady's-slipper ranges from Newfoundland to Manitoba, south to New Jersey, western Pennsylvania, Georgia, Tennessee, northern Indiana, Missouri, and North Dakota.

**POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS:** Showy Lady's-slipper is listed as an Endangered species under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Currently (1984 to the present), 14 occurrences are documented in the state. The rarity of this plant is attributable to a scarcity of alkaline habitats, destruction of suitable habitats, and deer browsing.



*Photo by Jennifer Garrett, NHESP*

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**A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan**

**Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife**

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Please allow the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to continue to conserve the biodiversity of Massachusetts with a contribution for 'endangered wildlife conservation' on your state income tax form, as these donations comprise a significant portion of our operating budget.

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