

Common flower discovered to be meat eating

14th August, 2021



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Botanists have discovered a new, carnivorous plant. It is the western false asphodel. This is a white flower that is relatively common along the coastline of the Pacific Northwest in the USA and on Canada's western

coast. It was actually first discovered in 1879, but botanists back then did not realise the innocuous-looking flower was actually a meat eater. Researchers have recently determined that sticky, tiny hairs along the bloom's stem produce a digestive enzyme that other carnivorous plants use to ensnare and eat insects. Professor Sean Graham, a botanist with the University of British Columbia, told the NPR news agency: "We had no idea it was carnivorous."

There are fewer than 1,000 carnivorous plant species known to scientists. The western false asphodel is the first to be discovered in 20 years. Professor Graham believes there may be more carnivores among our common flora. He said: "I suspect that there might be more carnivorous plants out there than we think." He believes many people will be surprised that the familiar asphodel is actually a carnivore. Co-researcher Dr Qianshi Lin said: "What's particularly unique about this carnivorous plant is that it traps insects near its insect-pollinated flowers." He added: "This seems like a conflict between carnivory and pollination because you don't want to kill the insects that are helping you reproduce."

Sources: nenews.com / thehill.com / nerdist.com

Writing

All children should study botany at school. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

discovered / carnivorous / plant / coastline / botanist / meat / enzyme / professor / species / scientists / flora / researcher / insect / conflict / pollination / reproduce

True / False

- 1) The newly-discovered carnivorous plant is black and dark red in colour. T / F
- 2) The plant was originally discovered in the 19th century. T / F
- 3) The plant has sticky hairs on its stem which trap insects. T / F
- 4) A professor from Colombia did research on the plant. T / F
- 5) The last time a carnivorous plant was discovered was 20 years ago. T / F
- 6) The professor doubted more carnivorous plants would be found. T / F
- 7) The researcher said the new discovery would not really surprise people. T / F
- 8) A researcher said the plant is unique because it traps insects. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. discovered | a. trap |
| 2. common | b. notice |
| 3. realise | c. procreate |
| 4. determined | d. widespread |
| 5. ensnare | e. distinctive |
| 6. suspect | f. clash |
| 7. familiar | g. unearthed |
| 8. unique | h. well known |
| 9. conflict | i. found out |
| 10. reproduce | j. guess |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about carnivorous plants?
- b) What do you think of carnivorous plants?
- c) What would life be like if there were human-eating plants?
- d) What are your favourite plants?
- e) What is the job of a botanist like?
- f) How do carnivorous plants catch and eat their prey?
- g) What three adjectives best describe this story?
- h) What are the most interesting things about flowers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. relatively common along | a. flora |
| 2. It was actually first discovered | b. actually a meat eater |
| 3. the innocuous-looking flower was | c. unique about this |
| 4. sticky, tiny hairs along the | d. known to scientists |
| 5. ensnare and | e. be surprised |
| 6. 1,000 carnivorous plant species | f. the coastline |
| 7. among our common | g. bloom's stem |
| 8. He believes many people will | h. you reproduce |
| 9. What's particularly | i. in 1879 |
| 10. insects that are helping | j. eat insects |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What are the world's most useful plants?
- Why do people like plants in their homes?
- Why do people give flowers?
- Is a carnivorous plant a good gift?
- What do you know about the process of plant pollination?
- What do you think of the plants in or around your house?
- What questions would you like to ask the botanists?

Spelling

- unoivscrrao plant
- ealelrvyit common
- an nuoncousi-looking flower
- produce a devstgeii enzyme
- sneaern and eat insects
- a tsntoiab with the university
- plant esiceps
- among our common larfo
- the afmailr asphodel
- What's particularly nqueiu about this
- a conflict between carnivory and oiinltaplon
- helping you erecorpdu

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. b	4. i	5. a
6. j	7. h	8. e	9. f	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Venus Fly Trap

You think a Venus fly trap is the best plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their plants. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): cactus, bamboo or moss.

Role B – Cactus

You think a cactus is the best plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their plants. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Venus fly trap, bamboo or moss.

Role C – Bamboo

You think bamboo is the best plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their plants. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): cactus, Venus fly trap or moss.

Role D – Moss

You think moss is the best plant. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their plants. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): cactus, bamboo or Venus fly trap.

Speaking – Plants

Rank these with your partner. Put the best plants at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| • Venus fly trap | • Moss |
| • Cactus | • Pine tree |
| • Rose | • Rice |
| • Bamboo | • Ivy |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	F	5	T	6	F	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.