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**Common flower discovered to be meat eating – 14th August, 2021**

## Level 4

Botanists have found that a common flower is actually carnivorous. The western false asphodel is found along the Pacific Northwest coastline of North America. It was first discovered in 1879. Botanists back then did not realise the flower was a meat eater. Researchers found that sticky, tiny hairs along the flower's stem produce a chemical used by other carnivorous plants to trap insects. A professor said: "We had no idea it was carnivorous."

There are fewer than 1,000 carnivorous plant species. The western false asphodel is the first to be found in 20 years. The professor believes "there might be more carnivorous plants out there". Another researcher said the asphodel is "unique" because "it traps insects near its insect-pollinated flowers". He added this was "like a conflict" between "carnivory" and survival. He said: "You don't want to kill the insects that are helping you reproduce."

## Level 5

Botanists have found a new, carnivorous plant. It is the western false asphodel - a white flower that is common along the Pacific Northwest coastline of the USA and Canada. It was actually first discovered in 1879, but botanists back then did not realise the innocent-looking flower was a meat eater. Researchers have recently discovered that sticky, tiny hairs along the flower's stem produce a digestive enzyme used by other carnivorous plants to trap insects. Professor Sean Graham from the University of British Columbia said: "We had no idea it was carnivorous."

There are fewer than 1,000 carnivorous plant species. The western false asphodel is the first to be discovered in 20 years. Professor Graham said: "I suspect that there might be more carnivorous plants out there." He believes people will be surprised that the familiar asphodel is a carnivore. Co-researcher Dr Qianshi Lin said the asphodel is "unique" because "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."

## Level 6

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."