

Flowers lovers flock to Vermont bog for wild orchids

June 26 2017, by Lisa Rathke



In this Thursday, June 22, 2017 photo, a rare wild orchid blooms in the Eshqua Bog in Hartland, Vt. This particular orchid is considered rare in Vermont. It thrives in the area that is technically defined as a fen because of the wet, sunny conditions, with soil containing peat and lime. (AP Photo/Lisa Rathke)

Each spring and summer, a Vermont bog yields a rare spectacle—hundreds of wild orchids in bloom, drawing visitors from around the country.

The bulbous pink and white showy lady's slippers (*Cypripedium reginae*) are on full display among the ferns, bushes and chirping birds at Eshqua Bog in Hartland.

This particular orchid, considered rare in Vermont and a number of other states and different from the more common pink lady's slipper, thrives in Eshqua, because of the wet, sunny conditions, with soils containing peat and lime.

Mary English drove about an hour from Landgrove, Vermont, to see the orchids on Thursday. When she arrived, she had the bog to herself.

"I just wandered through by myself. It was very special. It's like being in a South American country," she said.

A boardwalk allows visitors of all ages and abilities access to the bog and an up-close look at the plants.

"Gosh, aren't they beautiful?" said Heather Crawley, of Maryville, Tennessee, as she studiously photographed the orchids with a special lens on Thursday. "To think it's natural, too."

Visitors can also walk a half-mile trail.

The area is technically a fen because it's less acidic than a bog and fed by groundwater containing nutrients like calcium and magnesium from the area bedrock, according to the Nature Conservancy, which owns and manages the preserve along with the New England Wild Flower Society. The sanctuary includes an 8-acre (3.2-hectare) wetland and 33 surrounding acres (13.4 hectares).



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Other orchids also bloom, like yellow lady's slipper in late May and early June and the white bog orchid around now.

The lime-rich groundwater also helps to yield pitcher plants, insectivorous sundew and other plants.

But the orchids are typically the main show for visitors.

"The orchids love it at Eshqua, and people love to see the [orchids](#)," said Rose Paul, of the Nature Conservancy.



In this Thursday, June 22, 2017 photo, visitors photograph rare wild pink and white showy lady's slippers orchids in bloom at the Eshqua Bog in Hartland, Vt. (AP Photo/Lisa Rathke)



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