

# Ram's Head Lady Slipper

*Cypripedium arietinum*

**STATUS**

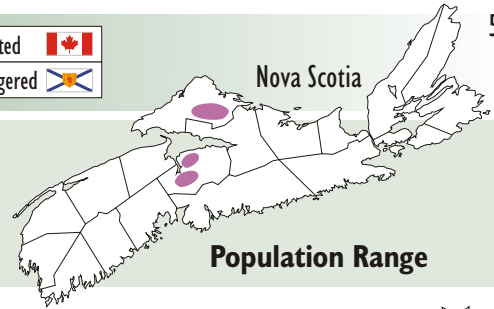
Not listed



Endangered



Nova Scotia

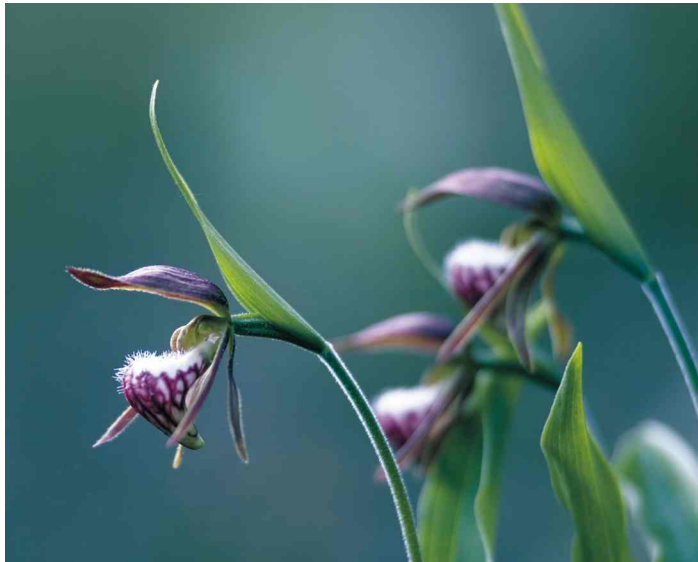


**Population Range**

Around 1000 plants are known to survive within six sites in Hants and Cumberland Counties.

## Habitat

Found in moderately open forests with cool soils and a neutral pH. It is associated with rough country woodlands (areas with gypsum bedrock and sinkholes). Also occurs on outcrops, cliff tops, river banks, and moderate to steep slopes.



© SCOTT CURRIE

## Species Description

Ram's Head Lady Slipper is a small (10-40 cm tall), herbaceous, perennial, orchid. Its small white flowers are fuzzy, with purplish veins on top, and a pinkish-purple lip below. Three purple-green sepals (leaf-like petals) droop from the flower, and three to five lance-shaped leaves are scattered on the stem.



© REG NEWELL



© BRENNAN CAVERHILL

Ram's Head Lady Slipper has only been found in Hants and Cumberland Counties - it flowers in late May to early June

## Interesting Points

- The genus *Cypripedium*, which is in the orchid family, has 47 species - most are rare and close to extinction in the wild.
- Resembles a charging ram with its head down, hence the common name.
- Very long lived: matures 10 years after germination, and can survive up to 20!
- Seeds require the presence of specific fungi in the soil in order to grow.



© SCOTT CURRIE



© REG NEWELL

## Threats to Survival

- Habitat loss and destruction, due to gypsum mining, forestry, agriculture, cattle grazing, housing developments, and other types of land conversion.
- Competition with exotic species, especially sedge.
- Collection by humans.
- Disturbance from OHV traffic.



© BLUENOSE COASTAL ACTION FOUNDATION

## Similar Species

### Pink Lady Slipper:

Larger, pale-pink flower; two large, opposite leaves at the base of the flower stalk.



© BRENNAN GIBERILL

### Yellow Lady Slipper:

Large, yellow flower; hairy, usually two leaves per stalk.



© THOMAS BARNES

### Showy Lady Slipper:

Royal appearance; pink, purple, and white flower; many leaves that are very hairy.



© USDA PLANTS DATABASE

## How You Can Help

This flower and its habitat are protected by law - like all species listed in this guide. Do not pick or remove plants for gardens. If you find a new location, or know of one under immediate development threats, be sure to contact NS DNR as soon as possible.

### Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** NS DNR (902) 679-6091

**Info:** [www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife),  
[www.ontariowildflowers.com/main](http://www.ontariowildflowers.com/main)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447 or  
[sightings@speciesatrisk.ca](mailto:sightings@speciesatrisk.ca)