

Purple Bladderwort

Utricularia purpurea

NS General Status Rank: Secure

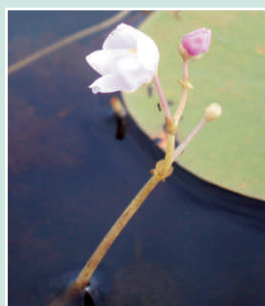
HERBS: NON-WOODY PLANTS



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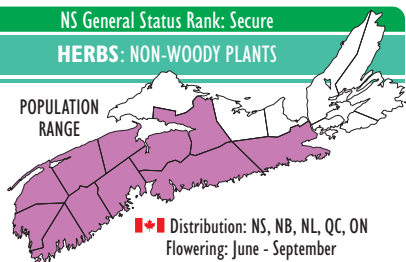
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Purple two-lipped flower © BRUCE MACINNIS



Yellow spot on lower lobe © ALAIN BELLIVEAU



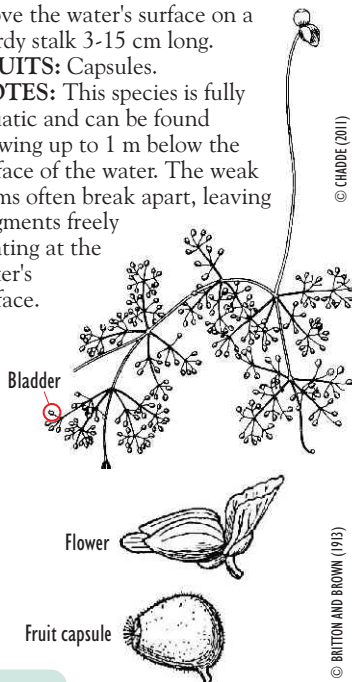
SIZE: Underwater stem up to 1 m long.
LEAVES: Branch-like and circularly arranged around the stem (whorled) in groups of 5-7. Each section branches into thin, fine segments, many with small bladder-like insect traps at the tip.

STEM: Long and thin.

FLOWERS: Purple and two-lipped with 1 cm long petals (look similar to snapdragons). The lower lip is divided into 3 lobes and has a yellow spot near the base. One to four flowers are found above the water's surface on a sturdy stalk 3-15 cm long.

FRUITS: Capsules.

NOTES: This species is fully aquatic and can be found growing up to 1 m below the surface of the water. The weak stems often break apart, leaving fragments freely floating at the water's surface.



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Habitat:

Lakes, ponds and slow streams.

Interesting point: Bladderworts are carnivorous plants! They obtain extra nutrients and energy by trapping insects in the bladder-like sacs on their leaves.

Similar species: Small Swollen Bladderwort (*Utricularia radiata*, page 38), Hidden-fruited Bladderwort (*Utricularia geminiscapa*), and Greater Bladderwort (*Utricularia macrohriza*) can appear similar, however Purple Bladderwort is the only species with consistently whorled leaves along the entire stem.