

SOWING SEEDS

Wildflower Center Giving News

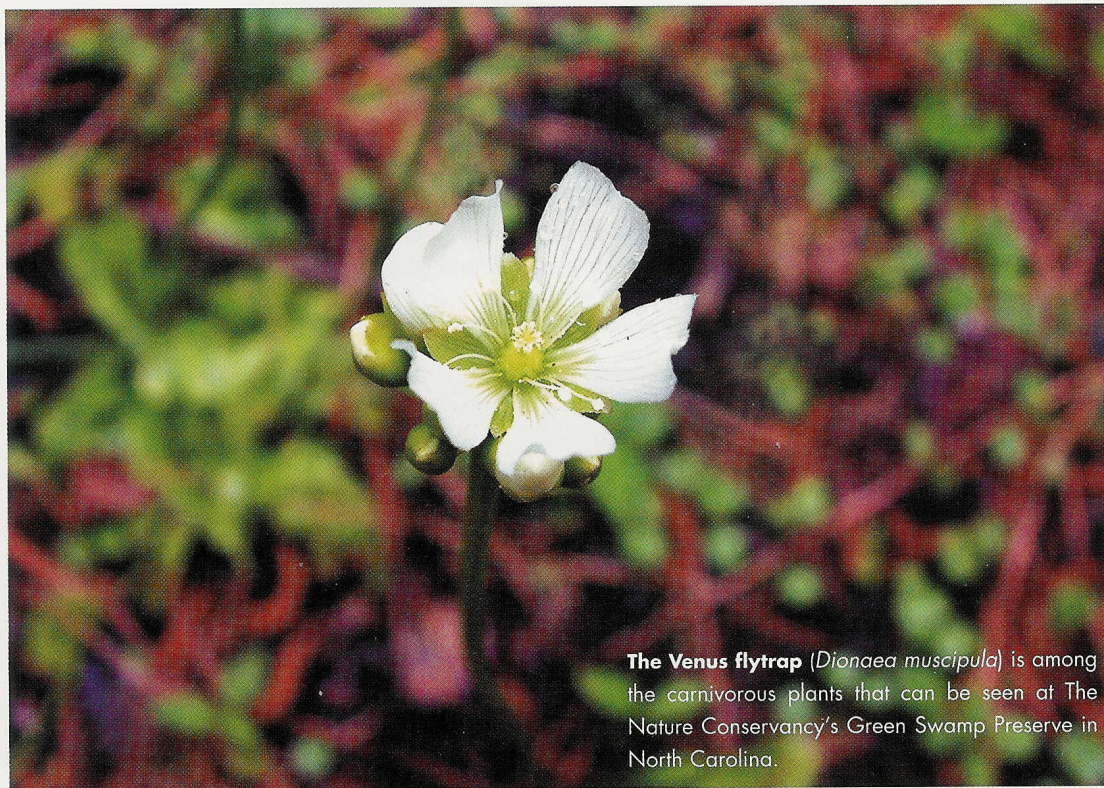
The Center is able to accomplish its work thanks to many generous donors. In each issue of *Wildflower* we feature gifts received that help to make a significant impact on our environmental work.

Spring is the most exciting time of year at the Wildflower Center. **Wildflower Days™** packs the Center's calendar with more events during spring than at any other time of the year. It is a celebratory time that would be more of a challenge to the Center's staff if not for the help of hundreds of volunteers.

Before spring 2008 is in swing, we would like to recognize these volunteers who work daily year-round for the Wildflower Center and who this past quarter contributed volunteer hours valued at well more than \$100,000. These individuals are writing press releases, folding letters and stuffing envelopes for our hundreds of mailings, and archiving our image collections. They work in our store, seed bank and herbarium, monitor our vegetation research, gather species data as Citizen Scientists and repair our arbors. They are greeting visitors, educating children and leading our tours. Volunteers are raising funds and helping make decisions that guide our advisory council. Without them, questions about native plants to our website might go unanswered and our gardens might not thrive as they do! Down to the perfectly appointed wildflowers gathered and arranged in vases on the

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GO WILD



The Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) is among the carnivorous plants that can be seen at The Nature Conservancy's Green Swamp Preserve in North Carolina.

PHOTO BY STEFAN BLOODWORTH

Swamp Things

See meat-eating plants and rare blooms on the Carolina coast

NO PLACE IN NORTH AMERICA has more species of carnivorous plants than The Nature Conservancy's Green Swamp Preserve in North Carolina. Oh sure, other Southern swamps have plenty of these otherworldly insect-eating plants, but this region in the southeast corner of North Carolina is among the few places called home by the queen of carnivorous plants, the Venus fly-trap (*Dionaea muscipula*).

The Green Swamp is home to at least 20 different species of carnivorous plants, including four pitcher plants, four sundews, three butterworts, at least eight bladderworts, and of course the Venus fly-trap. It is among the areas with the highest plant diversity in temperate North America, thanks to frequent fires and an abundance of micro-habitats.

Rare orchids and other rare wildflowers such as the Carolina asphodel (*Tofieldia glabra*), the Carolina grass-of-parnassus, (*Parnassia carolini-*

ana), the rush-featherling (*Pleea tenuifolia*), the marsh-pink (*Sabatia kennedyana*) and many others grow here. The preserve has one of the two highest numbers of rare, endangered and threatened species in the Carolinas. The wildflower blossoms peak in May and June, with another peak in August. Its rare animals include the red-cockaded woodpecker, which is federally listed as endangered.

A hike from the parking lot along a blue-and-white-blazed trail gives a taste of some of the swamp's habitat diversity. Follow the trail over a boardwalk through the area's distinctive pocosin community, home to shrubs such as swamp titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) and inkberry (*Ilex glabra*).

On the other side of the boardwalk you enter a longleaf pine savanna. Cryptic markings on the trees note red-cockaded woodpecker activity. Yellow pitcher plants (*Sarracenia flava*), some two-and-a-half feet tall, rise in clusters from the savanna grasses.

You don't have to wander through a swamp to see the diversity of the area's carnivorous plants, however. The "Flytrap Trail" at nearby Carolina Beach State Park is a half-mile loop featuring flytraps, bladderworts, butterworts, pitcher plants and sundews. There are hundreds of carnivorous plants along the nature trail at the Alderman School in Wilmington, N.C. Wilmington's Airlie Gardens features carnivorous plants on its Waterwise Trail. There is a \$5 admission. 🌱

— MADELINE BODIN

GETTING THERE The Green Swamp Preserve is on State Route 211, 5½ miles north of the Route 17 junction. Look for the preserve's small green sign. The junction is one hour north on Route 17 from Myrtle Beach, S.C. [Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR) 843.448.1589 and 45 minutes south of Wilmington, N.C. [Wilmington International Airport (ILM) 910.341.4125.

WHERE TO STAY The quaint harbor town of Southport is 20 miles southeast on Route 211 from the Green Swamp Preserve. Upscale, car-free Bald Head Island is a ferry ride from Southport.

Lois Jane's Riverview Inn
www.loisjanes.com

Southport, N.C. 910.457.6701
The veranda of this historical building offers a harbor view. Five unique rooms, including one kitchen suite. Rates start at \$135 for two people. The owners also run the Riverside Motel (910.457.6986).

Marina Village Cottages
www.marinavillagecottages.com
Southport, N.C. 910.457.1000

Three- and four-bedroom town houses with concierge service, flat-screen TVs and marina views. Prices start at \$220 per night for up to six guests. Boat slips are available for an additional fee.

Theodosia's Bed & Breakfast Inn
www.theodosias.com Bald Head Island,

N.C. 910.457.6563 or 800.656.1812

Ten individually decorated rooms in a quaint Victorian and carriage house. \$225 to \$295 per night, double occupancy. Includes full breakfast, hors d'oeuvres, temporary membership at Bald Head Island Club and a golf cart.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Insect repellent and water are musts. The preserve has no facilities. Use those at the junction of Routes 17 and 211. A brochure with more Venus fly-trap sites is available at www.cape-fear.nc.us/pdfs/FlytrapBrochurefinal.pdf. 866.266.9690.



When disturbed by insects or spiders, the Venus flytrap's leaves snap shut to trap the prey.

PHOTO BY W.D. BRANSFORD

Venus Rising

June is the best time to see a Venus fly-trap in the wild. This is when the plant blooms with a five-petaled white flower on a stalk that reaches above the wiregrass that normally shades the plant from view. Be warned that the Venus fly-trap and the other carnivorous plants in the area can be harmed by a mere touch. Removing these rare plants is against the law, and the fly-traps in the preserve are invisibly marked to nab poachers. Venus fly-traps are native only to an area within about 75 miles of Wilmington, N.C., but they have been introduced in Florida, New Jersey and other locations.

tables at the café, nearly everything is touched by the work of our selfless, invaluable volunteers. We thank them this spring and every season.

The **Texas Commission for Environmental Quality** has contributed \$52,300 toward the Wildflower Center's Sustainable Sites Initiative. The grant will support the work of four panels of experts across the country who are collaborating to create guidelines for sustainable landscape design similar to the green building standards developed and certified by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The **Alice C. Tyler Perpetual Trust** made a grant of \$35,000 to purchase additional equipment of better quality for the Millennium Seed Bank Project. New equipment will help staff keep pace with the volume of seeds being collected and maintain the high scientific standards required for the seeds to serve their purpose as a genetic bank for the future.

The Wildflower Center is also grateful to the corporate and media sponsors of Luminations, our winter celebration. This year, in honor of the Center's 25th anniversary, we invited the community to enjoy our lighted gardens for free and to bring contributions for the Capital Area Food Bank. They contributed 5,799 pounds of food. The celebration, attended by almost 6,000 people, would not have been possible without generous contributions from **The Austonian**, **Silicon Laboratories, Inc.** and **Samsung Austin Semiconductor**.