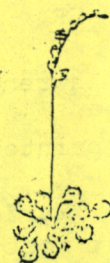


The uppermost third of the leaf on the outer side is expanded into an erect, heart-shaped hood; the other side, not so much developed, is closely rolled under, outwards, to form the pitcher rim. It is usually coloured red, the stain running around the inside of the pitcher at the same level. The sides of the hood, where they meet the rim, are expanded beyond it, and are rounded upwards and backwards in an ear-shaped process. The inside of the hood is thickly beset with bristles, pointing downwards; but the interior of the pitcher itself below the hood, is absolutely smooth.



Drosera rotundifolia. About $\frac{1}{2}$ size

Glands, secreting a honey-like fluid, are not only dotted on the inner side of the lid and the lip of the pitcher, but are said to be found on the edge of the projecting wing, and similar structures are grouped in patches for some little distance down within the pitcher. It has been suggested that these last named may possibly secrete a disintegrating fluid, which, poured forth into the rainwater in the pitcher, aids in the destruction of the victims of the plant.

Insects visiting these plants are most likely to alight either upon the lid or on the honey-baited border of the wing, which leads them to the cleft between the side of the hood and the mouth of the pitcher. Some people have thought that the "honey" may also have an intoxicating effect upon the poor, doomed insects, and so contribute to the ease and rapidity of their capture. The downward-pointing hairs on the inside of the hood direct the victim's course towards the smooth-lined lethal vault, from which, once entered, escape is scarcely possible. The slightest upward turning movement brings the insect full against the fell 'cheval-de-frise' and, should he then essay to fly, the overhanging hood cuts short his upward flight; while, if he follow downwards, soon he cannot fail to lose his footing upon the glassy lining of the leaf.

In either case he falls an easy victim, drowning in the stagnant, liquid mass, where his body, decomposing, supplements the food supply of the treacherous murderer plant.

"Gentlemen of the jury, do you find a verdict for the plaintiff or the defendant?" Surely, reader, acting as a jury, you must answer make, - "We find the prisoner guilty of murder in the first degree!"

But if the pitcher plant stands convicted, what about the Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), in comparison with which the plant which drowns its living prey is a merciful destroyer of insect life? *Sarracenia* attracts its victims by painted banner and luscious feast; it sets its cunning traps, and goads unwary insects on to death. It goes about its business in a lazy, mechanical sort of way, without respect of persons, and exercises neither the nicety of discrimination nor the subtlety of torture which the Sundew employs. If there be an excellence of method, and an admirable perfection in the science of murdering, to the Sundew must be awarded the victor's palm. *Drosera* has not even the attractive bloom of *Sarracenia*; its flowers are inconspicuous, and the plant is small. It crouches, as though guilty, close to the earth, and haunts damp situations where insect life abounds.

From a centre where the solitary flower stalk stands, leaves, like blood-smeared fingers, radiate on every side, their upper surface beset with ruby-coloured hairs, bearing each upon its point a tempting drop of moisture, glistening in the sunshine - whence the name of "Sundew."

Watch with me an insect come to quench his thirst, alighting where, around him, spread with lavish wealth, the treacherous banquet tempts him to his death. Unsuspectingly he sips the feast, all unconscious of the trap so surely closing in upon him.