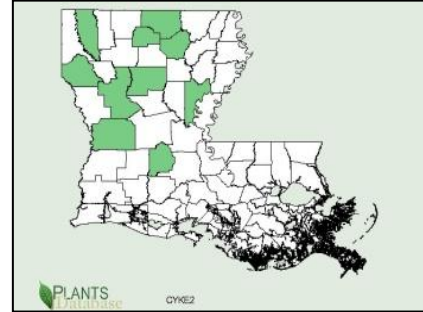


## Native Orchid of the Month—April

### *Cypripedium kentuckiense* (Kentucky lady's slipper)

*Cypripedium kentuckiense* is a large, showy orchid with stems up to about 28 in. in length. The stems have about 5 leaves and usually bear a single flower when mature. The pouch of the large flower is creamy to pale yellow with greenish purple-mottled petals. It has the largest flowers of any *Cypripedium* known. Once seen in flower it is never forgotten.

The sepals and petals are usually deeply striated with a purple brown color, forming a near chocolate brown appearance, though in truth their base color is apple green.



It blooms from April to June and seed capsules develop through the summer months.

Kentucky lady's slipper occurs across the southern United States from Virginia to Texas in widely separated populations. It is found in deciduous forests on well-drained soils and bases of slopes, mucky seeps. Despite its fairly wide distribution, it is thought that less than 3000 individuals still exist in the wild. It is an endangered species throughout its range.

For centuries *Cypripedium* species have been sought after and collected for their unique beauty. Widespread collection, attempts at transplantation, and loss of habitat have drastically reduced their numbers. Wild lady's slippers have special requirements that make them difficult to cultivate, and rarely survive transplanting from the wild.

The Central Louisiana Orchid Society has a restoration effort underway with the Kistatchie National Forest with the goal of reintroducing these orchids into the forest.

