

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

April 2025

What comes to your mind when you think of carnivorous plants? It would be a safe bet that you probably think of the Venus Flytrap, arguably the most well-known carnivorous plant in the world. However, it might surprise you to learn that there are dozens of carnivorous plants in Florida, more than any other state in the U.S. ([Gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu](https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu)). *Pinguicula pumila* is one of these many plants, and the THPO's Collections is fortunate to have a specimen.

This plant, commonly known as small butterwort, is native to the Southeastern United States. *Pinguicula pumila* only grows about 6-8 inches tall when flowering (flwildflowers.org). Small butterwort is the smallest butterwort that can be found in the Southeastern United States, explaining its common name (pinguicula.org). Their petals can be a pale violet, pink, nearly white, and in rare cases pale yellow. It can thrive in wet, nutrient-poor environments, which explains why it can be found in Big Cypress National Preserve (regionalconservation.org, flwildflowers.org). The carnivorous adaptations that it has developed help it survive in these kinds of nutrient-poor environments. The hairs on its leaves and stem secrete a substance that insects can become trapped by (Figure 1). Enzymes are then used to help digest the bugs (flwildflowers.org).

Currently, there is no evidence that it was used by past Seminole ancestors. However, modern carnivorous plant enthusiasts appreciate them.



Figure 2

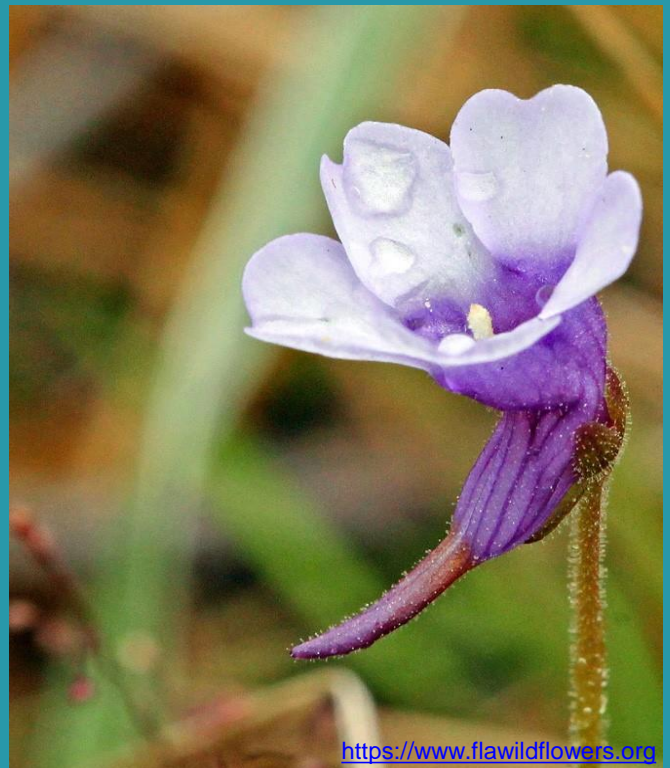


Figure 3



Figure 1

The Institute for Regional Conservation. (n.d.). *Small butterwort*. The Institute for Regional Conservation.

<https://regionalconservation.org/ircs/database/plants/PlantPage.asp?TXCODE=Pingumi#:~:text=Pinguicula%20pumila%20has%20been%20found%20in%20the,Status.%20Big%20Cypress%20National%20Preserve%2C%20Present%2C%20Native.>

Eric PARTRAT. (2025, February 25). *Pinguicula pumila*. A world of Pinguicula.

<https://www.pinguicula.org/plants/pumila/>

Small butterwort. Florida Wildflower Foundation. (n.d.).

<https://www.flwildflowers.org/flower-friday-pinguicula-pumila/>

University of Florida. (n.d.). *Carnivorous plants*. Gardening Solutions.

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/carnivorous-plants/>

