

The Pitcher Plant traps and eats insects

South of Gold Beach, following up Pistol River, is a new road that invades one of the primitive areas of the state and opens up a wide region where years ago ~~where~~ hunters found deer almost as abundant as sheep in the forest.

^{The} A party composed of E. F. Averill, John Yeon and the writer was led by Mr. and Mrs. Miller of Gold Beach. All eyes were watching for deer, but ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ all we saw were tracks, ^{one cent} ~~none more~~ ^{expect more than the} than one might expect in the middle of a warm day. ^{But} We were looking for deer, ~~but~~ we found a few wild pigeons and remarkable clusters of the Pitcher Plant, one of the most unique species of ~~the~~ floral displays in the southern Oregon mountains.

The Pitcher Plant might well be compared to the carnivorous variety of animals that catch and devour others clothed in fur and feathers. Not that it creeps stealthily along and springs like a cat upon a mouse to crush the flesh and bones between its strong molars, but it has a lethal trap set to attract all sorts of insects, little and big, that enter to sink and die in the digestive juices and then be absorbed by the plant.

The Pitcher Plant, growing ^{in sphagnum bogs} ~~at an altitude of 2,000 or 3,000 feet~~ in the Coast Range of southern Oregon, is called ^{R.} Darlingtonia, named for the American botanist, William Darlington. It is interesting to note that the first specimen of this species collected was near Mt. Shasta. The early explorers were attacked by Indians and while retreating, one of the members of the ~~expedition~~ expedition grabbed up a plant and later the fragments of this were identified as an interesting and distinct pitcher plant.

We saw clusters of the plant two feet in height. The stems are spirally twisted, rounded at the top like a fiddle-head. Underneath this rounded top is the entrance to the trap. From this

entrance hang two long, reddish flaps, a sort of an attractive landing place for insects ^{and} with a little walk that leads to the fatal entrance.

Whether it's the color or some attractive odor that rings the death knell for flies, millers and grasshoppers is not quite clear, but the fate that follows is sure. Down the long, narrow funnel the victims crawl guided by hairs that point downward. Lower down, the insects find the attempt to turn is blocked by an impassable array of little ^{hair-like} lances. They gradually sink into the ^{oblivion} digestive juices and are then ^{digested} absorbed by the plant.

The roots of three clusters were brought back to Portland and planted on the damp soil by a little pool. Here they are gathering bumble bees and yellow jackets, which seem to add pep ^{and vigor} to the pitchers of greenish yellow.