

Cypripedium pubescens

[Synonyms : *Cypripedium assurgens*, *Cypripedium aureum*, *Cypripedium bulbosum* var. *flavescens*, *Cypripedium bulbosum* var. *pubescens*, *Cypripedium calceolus* var. *planipetalum*, *Cypripedium calceolus* var. *pubescens*, *Cypripedium calceolus* forma *rupestre*, *Cypripedium flavescens*, *Cypripedium furcatum*, *Cypripedium hirsutum*, *Cypripedium luteum* var. *angustifolium*, *Cypripedium luteum* var. *biflorum*, *Cypripedium luteum* var. *concolor*, *Cypripedium luteum* var. *glabrum*, *Cypripedium luteum* var. *grandiflorum*, *Cypripedium luteum* var. *maculatum*, *Cypripedium luteum* var. *pubescens*, *Cypripedium parviflorum*, *Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *planipetalum*, *Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*, *Cypripedium planipetalum*, *Cypripedium spectabile*, *Cypripedium undatum*, *Cypripedium veganum*]

YELLOW LADY'S SLIPPER is an orchid. Native to eastern North America (particularly the north), it has fragrant magenta-purple spotted inside, dull cream to golden yellow flowers with a yellow lower lip.

It is also known as American valerian, Bleeding heart, *Calceolo* (Italian), *Cypripède* (French), Downy lady's slipper, Ducks, *Fior farfallone* (Italian), *Frauenschuh* (German), Golden slipper, Greater yellow lady's slipper, *Hanim pabuc otu* (Turkish), Indian shoe, Lady's slipper, Large yellow lady's slipper, Large yellow slipper-plant, Male nervine, Moccasin flower, Monkey flower, Nerve root, Noah's ark, Our Lady's shoe, *Pantoufle de dame* (French), *Pianella della Madonna* (Italian), Pine tulip, *Sabot de Venus* (French), *Scarpa di venere* (Italian), Showy lady slipper, Sleeve of the Virgin, Slipper root, Small-flowered lady's slipper, *Soulier de la vierge* (French), *Soulier de Nôtre-Dame* (French), Sysper root, Umbil root, Valerian, Venus cap, Venus' cup, *Venus-schuh* (German), Venus shoe, Water stealer, Whippoorwill's shoe, Yellow downy lady's slipper, Yellow Indian shoe, Yellow moccasin flower, Yellows, Yellow slipper orchid, Yellow umbil, and *Zapatito de la virgen* (Spanish); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of capricious beauty, fickleness, and 'win and wear me'.

The plant varies in fragrance.

Warning – large doses can cause hallucination and headaches, and handling fresh plant can cause dermatitis.

Yellow lady's slipper is subject to a preservation order in the United States. Yellow lady's slipper was rare even 100 years ago there.

This North American *Cypripedium pubescens* is confused with the closely related *Cypripedium calceolus* (the different Eurasian species) that commercially is also often called 'yellow lady's slipper'.

Pubescens means 'hairy or downy'.

The women of some of the North American Indian tribes used to wear the flowers in their hair.

But records suggest that for some tribes such as the Menominee the plant may have had esoteric qualities, as it seems to have been included in sacred bundles that were used to encourage supernatural dreams.

The plant was used by North American Indian tribes to treat nervous diseases and by the Iroquois for instance to ease pain. Some such as the Menominee and some of the Chippewa employed it as an ingredient in the treatment of various female disorders. It

provided a remedy for tuberculosis for the Iroquois, and the Chippewa also used it to treat indigestion, toothache and inflamed skin. For the Cherokee Indians it was a cure for worms.

Medicinally, it used to be taken locally in sugar water to encourage sleep and today it is still used in North American folk medicine for sedation. During the 20th Century it has been used in the treatment of epilepsy. Today it can provide a remedy for headaches, neuralgia, cramp, emotional tension and anxiety states.

It is the birthday flower for 23rd April.