

## Carnivorous plants inhabit the Los Indios Ecological Reserve

Category: News

Created: Monday, 15 February 2021 09:27 - Last Updated: Monday, 15 February 2021 09:27

Written by webmaster

Hits: 622



Carnivorous plants - surrounded by fanciful attributes due to their predatory nature - grow on the white savanna of the Los Indios Ecological Reserve, located in the western center of the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud.

Of the more than 600 different species distributed on the planet divided into 14 botanical genera, in Cuba two families are reported: the Droseraceae (Drosera) and the Lentibulariaceae (Genlisea, Pinguicula, Utricularia), both represented in this protected area classified as one of the 77 of importance for the country.

While we retrace the area -rich in biological diversity and characterized by its endemic values-, the conservation worker Jesús Silva comments to the Cuban News Agency that these really insectivorous plants have a very attractive appearance in order to attract attention and catch with ease their prey.

Drosera is a common species of the savannas with infertile sandy soils and its existence is reported in areas of Africa, Europe, Australia, the southern United States, Mexico, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, the Guianas, Brazil and in the Antilles region.

Known by the common names Drósera or Flytrap, it has rosette leaves with a linear shape and they are covered with viscous reddish hairs that seem to have a drop of dew at the tip.

The *Drosera capillaris rosada* or leaf spade secretes a sticky liquid, thanks to which the insects are trapped and the plant breaks them down

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~~with its digestive enzymes, says Silva, while showing the abundant~~ presence of the Pinguicle, another of the species of these biological natural controllers.

It specifies that this small carnivorous plant, called Pinguicola filifolia, constitutes a homophilic tropical species (with clones of white and purple flowers) that uses its sticky and glandular leaves to attract, trap and digest insects, in order to complement the poor mineral nutrition obtained ground.

In Cuba this filifolia grows in the western white sand savannas, in Candelaria, San Luis and Laguna de la Maquina (Pinar del Río), while in Isla de la Juventud they abound in the protected area of managed resources La Cañada, the town La Demajagua, Cristal river and Los Indios Ecological Reserve.

It was only impossible to appreciate the Utricularia, because this tiny aquatic plant only becomes visible in the wet period.

The Cuban archipelago has a unique flora, with an estimated seven thousand to seven thousand 500 species, which places it as the island's richest territory in plants on the planet and the first in number of species per square kilometer.

Likewise, the Cuban flora has around 53 percent of the country's exclusive species, a value that places it among the seven islands with the highest percentage of endemism in the world.





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