

Station 5: Pink Lady's Slipper and Sarsaparilla

One beauty that you might see throughout Hayes Woods in late May or early June is the pink lady's slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*). The pink lady's slipper is one of many native orchid species that grow in Massachusetts. Although pink lady's slipper is widespread in Massachusetts, its habitat requirements and unique relationships with soil fungus make successful transplanting unlikely. Please don't pick or dig up the pink lady's slippers!

Wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*) grows throughout Hayes Woods and plays several important roles in its ecosystem. As a low-growing perennial in the forest understory, it helps stabilize soil and prevent erosion. The berries of wild sarsaparilla are edible and can serve as a food source for various animals, including birds and mammals. Historically, this plant has been used for medicinal purposes by Indigenous peoples. In late May or early June, the careful observer will find its greenish-white spherical flowers hidden beneath its compound umbrella-like leaf.



Pink Lady's Slipper
Wild Sarsaparilla

