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Cephalotus follicularis

ALBANY PITCHER PLANT is a carnivorous perennial. Native to south-western Australia it has small half-closed, sweetly scented white flowers.

It is also known as Australian flycatcher plant, Australian pitcher plant, Flycatcher plant, Pitcher plant, and West Australian pitcher plant.

The seeds are distributed by the wind.

Follicularis means ‘producing dry one-celled fruit that (like the peony’s, *Paeonia* genus) split open along one line when ripe’.

The juice in the pitcher digests insects that fall into it. However there are some algae and insects eg. a gadfly, which are immune to the digestive juice and actually live inside the pitcher. Botanists appear to be uncertain about the importance of the juice to the plant as it has been observed that the plant can survive without this mechanism.

Apparently Albany pitcher plant was first discovered in 1792 by La Billardière then rediscovered in 1801 by the Scottish botanist, Robert Brown (1773-1858). The latter had been appointed by Sir Joseph Banks as naturalist to the team assembled under the English explorer, Matthew Flinders (1774-1814) which was commissioned to carry out a coastal survey of Australia (1801-1805) and returned home with almost 4,000 species.

This carnivorous plant was introduced to Kew Botanic Gardens in 1823 and is understood to have first flowered there in 1827.