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Green Dragon

Arisaema dracontium

- ❖ Family: Araceae, The Arum Family.
- ❖ Genus: Arisaema is a combination of two Greek words, “Aris” meaning arum and “haema” meaning blood, probably due to the color of a different plant in the genus. A closely related plant is the Jack-in-the-Pulpit. These two plants are often reported to grow near one another.
- ❖ Species: dracontium is from the Latin draconem, meaning huge serpent or dragon. The Latin name came from the Greek word dracon, which means serpent.



Characteristics

- ❖ Herbaceous perennial
- ❖ Found growing in damp woods, along streams or ponds, under trees or shrubs.
- ❖ Fertile moist, slightly acidic, woodland soil.
- ❖ Grows from a corm.
- ❖ Ht.: 1'-3'
- ❖ Width: 1'-1.5'
- ❖ Light: Deep Shade, Part Shade (Part Shade= 2-6 hours of sun)



Flower Parts



- ❖ Spathe – A tightly wrapped green leaflike bract.
- ❖ Spadix – A spikelike structure holding many tiny flowers.
- ❖ The flowering stalk grows off the leaf stem near the ground.
- ❖ Green Dragon flowers are at the bottom of the long, narrow, tail-like spadix.



Fruits



- ❖ After flowering comes a cluster of berries, first green, then turning red. Song birds, woodland birds, and some mammals eat the berries.
- ❖ Flies and a few other insects are attracted by the flowers.

Leaves



Leaf stem in center of compound leaf.

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- ❖ Generally produces one large compound leaf with a long stem and 7-13 leaflets that are held out horizontally over the plant.
- ❖ The largest central leaflet ties directly to the leaf stalk while other leaflets grow from a “branch” on either side. Note the venation.

Poisonous, All Parts

- ❖ Poison Severity: High
- ❖ Poison Symptoms: Irritation and swelling of lips, tongue, and throat if it is eaten raw
- ❖ Caused by Calcium oxalate crystals and other toxins.
- ❖ Poison Parts: Flowers, Fruits, Leaves, Roots, Sap/Juice, Seeds, Stems – basically all of it.
- ❖ Most people can touch and handle it.



Ethnobotany and Wildlife Benefits

- ❖ Used in rituals by Native Americans.
- ❖ The root is considered edible once it has been dried, aged and processed. It has been used in herbal medicine. Do NOT do this without knowledgeable supervision!
- ❖ The seeds are eaten by song birds, woodland birds, and some mammals.



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Diphasy

- ❖ This plant, as well as the closely related Jack-in-the-Pulpit, sometimes changes sex. In plants this is called gender diphasy. When small and young, *Arisaema dracontium* is typically male. When larger, it can become female. Plants may change sex from year to year depending on ecological factors such as weather.



Credits and Thanks

- ❖ <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/arisaema-dracontium/>
- ❖ <https://warcapps.usgs.gov>
- ❖ Arkansas Native Plant Society www.Anps.org
- ❖ Missouri Department of Conservation.
- ❖ www.wildflower.org
- ❖ www.Illinoiswildflowers.info



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