

Pitcher's Thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*)

Quick Facts

- **Description:** Stem covered in white hairs, spines along the edges of leaves, nonflowering form is a rosette or cluster of silvery leaves, flowering form can grow to 3ft tall, grows 5-8 years before it flowers
- **Flowers:** cream or pink flowers, blooming from June to September
- **Habitat:** low open beach ridges and grassland and open sand dunes
- **Status:** Threatened

Do you know about Pitcher's Thistle? This plant is native to the coasts of Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior and isn't found anywhere else in the world, making it very rare. The Pitcher's Thistle prefers open sand dunes and low beach ridges and has adapted to this specific environment by being covered in white hairs that help prevent water loss and reflect the sun's rays.

The Pitcher's Thistle is listed as threatened by the state of Michigan and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and various groups are working to protect this species. The threats faced by this plant include shoreline development and road maintenance and construction, which lead to its habitat being fragmented, and recreational activities along the shoreline can harm or destroy the plants.

There are various methods that we can use to conserve the Pitcher's Thistle across its native range. One way is by taking into the plant into account during project planning, whether it is a construction project or an environmental project. By considering the species beforehand it can be located and left undisturbed. Another method utilized is educating public and private landowners about the importance of conserving the species and what it needs, which can involve a greater number of people in the protection of this plant and increases awareness of threatened and endangered species. To learn more about this threatened plant visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/plants/pitchers.html>.



Did you know? The conservation efforts done for a particular species often benefits other species that share its habitat. The Great Lakes dunes are the largest system of freshwater dunes in the world and are a vital and unique part of Michigan's natural heritage, and by protecting the Pitcher's Thistle we are also protecting an irreplaceable part of Michigan.

How can you get involved? You can support conservation efforts in Michigan by donating to the Nongame Wildlife Fund, and you can learn more at www.michigan.gov/dnr. Another opportunity is by volunteering at events with local environmental organizations like Huron Pines. To learn more about how you can get involved visit www.huronpines.org.

