

## December 2023 Plant of the Month



*Drosera intermedia* L., Spatulate-leaved Sundew

December *Plant of the Month* is the diminutive, native perennial *Drosera intermedia*. This is a carnivorous plant found in New Jersey acidic wetlands. Mary Hough (1983) describes it as a statewide species, where it is most abundant in the Pine Barrens, and less so in the wetlands of the northern counties. The *Drosera* genus is a member of the Droseraceae. All sundews are wetland plants with obligate wetland habitat requirements. The plants are often found growing on beds of sphagnum moss.

Spatulate-leaved sundew is one of three species found in the state: *Drosera rotundifolia*, *Drosera intermedia*, and *Drosera filiformis*. Each are distinguished by their distinct leaf shapes as their specific name implies. Each are habitat limited. November's *Plant of the Month* requires low nutrient wetlands with highly acidic soils to thrive. The plant obtains nutrients not available in the acidic soil through the digestion of insects caught in the leaf's sticky surfaces.

Native Americans used the sundew's sticky glands to treat corns, warts, and ringworm. The leaves were used to make a medicine "that would make women love-crazy" (Moerman, 1998). This plant is visible near year round in the low, peat moss bogs of the Pine Barrens or the northern counties, but you'll have to get your feet wet to see this species.