



Arisaema triphyllum

Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Indian Turnip

Aracea (Arum Family)

Blooming season: Early May to mid-July.

Voss (1972) considers it very variable.

Plant:

Perennial, growing from a corm.

Flowering plants range from 12 cm to 1 m in height.

Small plants flower as males, the larger as females.

Leaves:

Three leaflets, each up to 23 cm long, make up the 1 or 2 leaves.

Leaves unfold with flowers, persisting to late summer/early fall. Paler green beneath.



Flower:

Spathe often green, often mottled with purple, sometimes striped green and white. Size and color variable (Voss 1972).

Spathe curves over top of spadix, forming “pulpit”; spadix is the “Jack”.

Flowers inconspicuous and lacking perianth; located at bottom of spadix.

Stamens and pistils in separate flowers, pistillate above staminate if both are present.

Often only one kind is present on a spadix. Numerous authorities cite sex change in plant as a whole as being related to available resources, including both size of plant and environment. Male flowers are found by themselves on those blooming plants with the minimal requirements. Female flowers, requiring more resources to produce seed, are found on larger, often older, plants in adequate locations. On occasion both flowers are found on one plant.

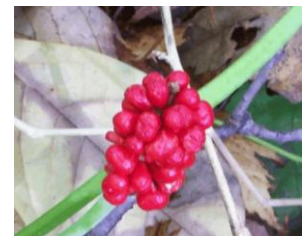
Fruit:

Berries, maturing to a bright red by late summer/early fall.

4-6 seeds per berry.

Can be confused with:

When not in flower can be confused with *Trillium* spp., leaves of which are less long in proportion to their width.



Kasey Hartz Natural Area Reference Sheet



Muskegon Community College

Arisaema triphyllum

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Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Indian Turnip

Geographic range:

Type specimen location:

State: Throughout.

Regional: New Brunswick and Quebec to Manitoba, south to Florida, Louisiana and Kansas.

Habitat:

Local: Riparian.

Regional: Deciduous woods, floodplains, swamps.

Common local companions:

Many other wetland plants such as skunk cabbage, *Trillium*, and ferns to name a few.

Usages:

Human: Native Americans ate the very nutritious root (corm) much as a turnip, after boiling or baking, and used the berries, particularly with venison. Because all parts of the plant contain calcium oxalate crystals, appropriate treatment is required before eating; boiling or other high heat cooking method, or thorough drying, "destroys the toxic principle" (Muenscher 1975 p. 44).

Native Americans also used dilute infusions for coughs, fevers, sore throats, and as an eyewash.

Animal: Berries are reported as being eaten by some birds.

Why is it called *that*?

Jack-in-the-Pulpit refers to the spadix standing in the spathe (the pulpit). *Arisaema* is from the Greek words *aron*, for arum, and *haima*, meaning blood, referring to the red color of another species' leaf.

Triphyllum refers to the three leaflets of the leaf.

Prepared by: Barbara Lukacs Grob December 2007