

Jack in the Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*)

1-2' spring woodland wildflower.

CT native, found in moist woods, swamps.

Numerous tiny green to purple musky April-May flowers contained on a single flower structure, the "Jack", an erect spike, which is protected by a large hood, or spathe, the "pulpit". The outside of the spathe is usually green or purple, the inside usually striped purple and greenish-white. Lots of color variation between plants. Usually no blooms the first three years, then only thread-like male flowers, but with age plants have both male and female (green, berry-like) flowers.

Female flowers produce a cluster of seeds, first green, then vibrant red. As seeds ripen, the spathe dries and splits. Though most plants in a colony are dormant by mid-summer, berries last from mid to late summer.

Bold glossy single or paired three-parted 6" leaves, medium green, sometimes with silver veins or red coloration. Leaves on 1' petioles. Highly variable in color. Paired leaves often indicate presence of female flowers.

Grows from rounded tuberous corm, which increases in size and produces small offsets, which detach over time and grow on their own. Colonies can form in a few years.

Part to full shade. Prefers dappled sun to light shade in spring; medium shade ok later. Medium to seasonally wet soils, adaptable. Fertile moist soils, lots of leaf-litter humus preferred. Give heavy leafy winter cover. Does not like heavy clay soils. Corms are prone to rot in sites with poor drainage. If plants within a colony get a rust, destroy them. By fall, the corm sheds its outer skin and root system. To move the plant, carefully dig yellowing plant to find corm, which is up to 12" deep. Small teardrop shaped ones easy to miss. Replant 6" deep.

Use in woodland gardens, wild gardens, rain gardens.

Food for some upland game birds, for Wood Thrushes, Wild Turkey. Most mammals avoid plant, which burns the mouth intensely and can cause vomiting.

Photo 1: National Park Service, Prince William Forest, VA
nps.gov/prwi/naturescience/wildflowers.htm

Photos 2, 4: Steve Baskauf Bioimages
bioimages.vanderbilt.edu/

Photo 3: Hardyplants
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arisaema_triphyllum

Photo 5: David G. Smith
delawarewildflowers.org/plant.php?id=0140

Photo 6: Janet Novak, Connecticut Botanical Society
ct-botanical-society.org/

Photo 7: Missouri Botanical PlantFinder
mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder

Photo 8: [Ahekse!](#)
wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arisaema_triphyllum_bulbs.JPG

