

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Arisaema triphyllum
(L.) Schott



The Jack-in-the-Pulpit is an unusual plant in the arum family, *Araceae*. It is native to the eastern United States and Canada. It sends up but one or two leaves per year. Each leaf has three leaflets. It has an unusual flower, typical of the family, with a spathe and a spadix. The spadix is a narrow spike, the “Jack,” which bears the flowers and which is enclosed within the spathe, which is a wraparound structure of leafy origin. The flowers on one-leafed plants are usually male, while flowers on two-leafed plants are usually female. Jack can grow two feet tall or taller. The plant grows from a corm, which is completely renewed each year. It is hardy through zone 4.

Note: all parts of this plant contain a crystalline substance that can cause a burning sensation and dangerous swelling if ingested unprocessed. If the plant is cooked or thoroughly dried, this substance is not present. The Native Americans often ate the corm of the plant.

Cultivation

Jack is a hardy soul, tolerating most environments but thriving in moist bottomland soils. It is highly shade-tolerant but can become massive given enough sun. It does not tolerate spring droughts well.

Propagation

Jack seed benefits from cold stratification. This can be accomplished by direct sowing of the seed in fall or early winter, or by cold storage in a moist medium. If the latter method is used, allow 60 days of stratification, alternating at least twice between freezer and refrigerator.

Conservation Seed
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