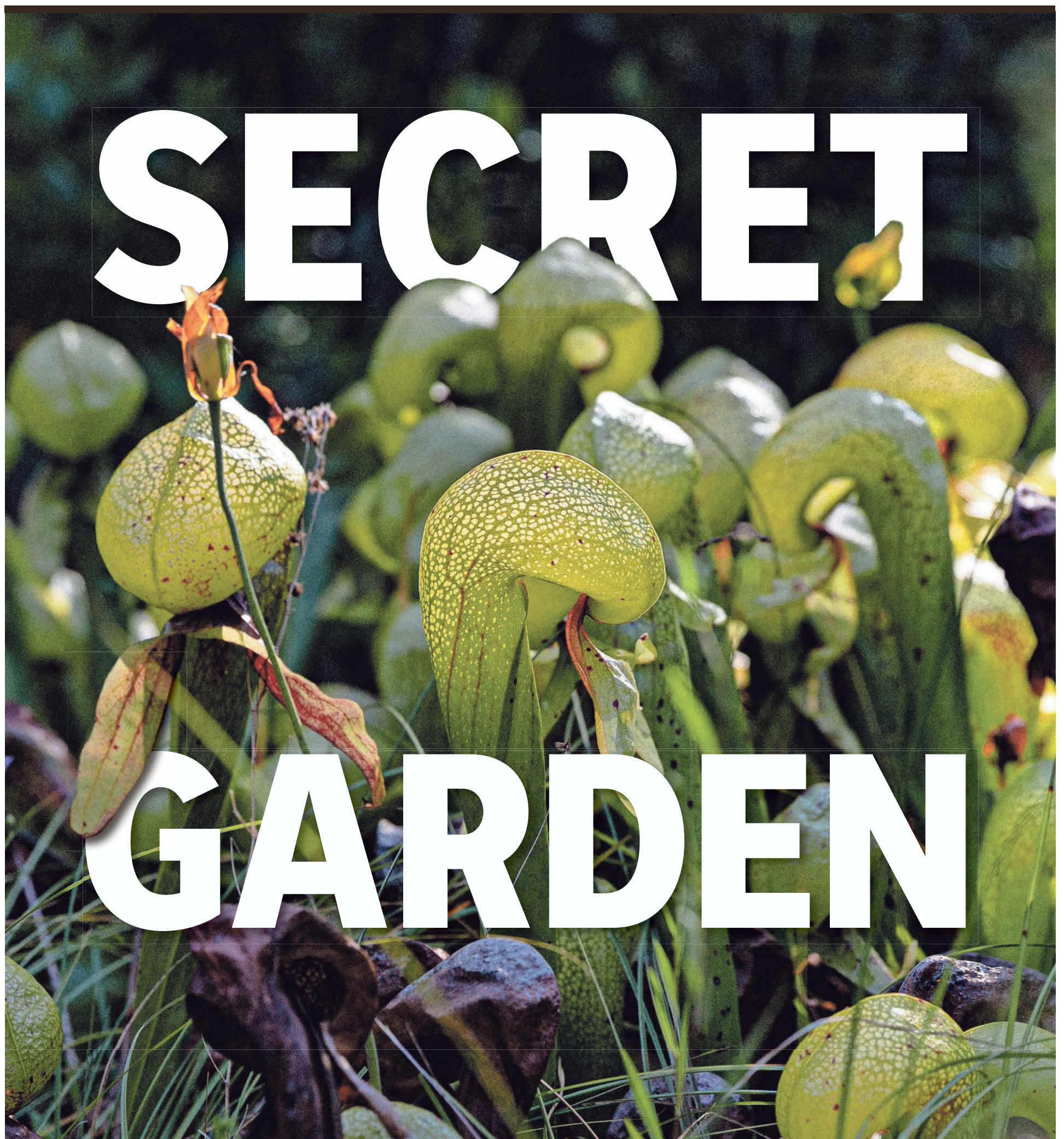


# OUTDOORS



## Hidden Florence preserve is home to bog of carnivorous cobra lilies

**Wesley Lapointe** Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Tucked between Florence’s ancient dunes and sea lion caves, Darlingtonia State Natural Site is easily overlooked on the Oregon Coast. But this 18-acre site is just as unique — if not more so — as its neighboring attractions.

It’s the only Oregon State Parks property dedicated entirely to the preservation of a single plant species, harboring over a thousand carnivorous cobra lilies, or *Darlingtonia californica*.

Much of the site consists of a roadside lot, a few picnic tables and a short trail through a spruce and ash thicket. But after just a few minutes of walking, the thicket opens, and a boardwalk cuts through a bog carpeted with cobra lilies.

“I’ve found this a great spot to relax after a windy beach walk,” said Chris Havel, spokesman for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

### An unusual plant

The cobra lily looks other-worldly. Its common name comes from the serpentine hood and tongue-like forked appendages atop its tapering stem. In late spring, the plants grow a tall crimson flower.

One of three American pitcher plant varieties, the cobra lily is native to northern California and southwest Oregon.

Its insect diet is an evolutionary adaptation to provide nitrogen to the lilies in nutrient-poor fens. To that end, sweet nectar coats the tongue-like appendage that hangs from the tubular leaf forming the “serpent’s head”.

Unlike other pitcher plants, which collect rainwater to digest bugs, the Darlingtonia’s inner workings are hidden from view, and it sucks up groundwater through its roots to digest the insects that are lured into its tubular leaf structure.

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The cobra lilies glow in the sun due to the translucent windows in their hooded leaves, which serve as false exits for flies that get lured inside by the sweet nectar. PHOTO BY WESLEY LAPOINTE/ STATESMAN JOURNAL; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MICAELA ENCINAS/USA TODAY NETWORK

## Net, weigh, measure, collect — 100,000 times



**Fishing**  
Henry Miller  
Guest columnist

HEBO — “Whatever we’re doing, we’re just going to keep doing it,” Ron Byrd, the president of the all-volunteer Nestucca Anglers, said about Rhoades Pond.

The occasion for the comment was the 21st annual netting, transport and release of about 100,000 fall-run Chinook “king” salmon on Aug. 19 from the fish-raising facility on Three Rivers, a tributary of the Nestucca River.

If you’ve ever been lucky enough to catch a hatchery Nestucca Basin fall-run king, odds are pretty good that it spent most of its first year growing from fingerling to smolt size, between 6 and 7 inches, at Rhoades Pond.

“They’ve done studies on the Nestucca to where up to 25 percent of the fish (caught) have been Rhoades Pond,” Byrd said. “So we’re getting a huge, huge return on these fish.

“Normally, statistics show there’s a 2 percent return on hatchery fish, and we’re probably getting 4 or 5 percent return.”

Nestucca Anglers works in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Cedar Creek Hatchery farther downriver under the depart-

ment’s Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP).

Farther north, the Tillamook Basin has a similar volunteer-run, salmon-raising facility under the STEP program at Whiskey Creek on Netarts Bay operated by volunteers from Tillamook Anglers.

“That’s part of the deal, getting volunteer groups involved in stuff like this,” said Ron Rehn, the STEP biologist out of the Tillamook office of Fish and Wildlife. “It’s great. All these fish are benefiting anyone who comes to fish in both the Tillamook and Nestucca basins.”

Weighing and measuring some of the juvenile salmon as volunteers used nets to crowd the wriggling swarms of fish

toward a large tube that sucked them into a waiting tanker truck, Rehn said the fish were right on schedule.

“They’re right on target, right where we want them: 12 to a pound,” he said, using a calculator and a clipboard to make entries on a tally sheet. “We’re averaging about 150 millimeters. That’s close to 6 or 7 inches, smolt-size.

“That’s what we’re going for.”

And a lot better than the drought year of 2015, the worst in the pond’s history, when heat and resulting low, warm water triggered emergency releases of salmon, steelhead and trout from multiple state and federal hatcheries and raising ponds.

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