

## Utricularia Gibba - The Carnivore!

By Jutta Hamilton

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On a recent visit to a neighbour, my attention was drawn to a dainty, very pretty bright yellow flower. It measured only a centimeter across and sat on tiny fragile stem, blooming on mass in a small water feature.

On questioning what it was and where it came from, I was given detailed information.

'Well, it just appeared one day in the shallow water of the pond'. Its name is Yellow Bladderwort and while it flowers beautifully above the water, beneath there are black dots housed by a wild and fine tangle of roots. These black dots are tiny bladders to catch food. Each bladder has a small entrance, which is closed by a door with a trigger device. When the trap is set, the bladder is empty, flat and under negative pressure. If the trigger is touched by a microscopic creature, the bladder is triggered, sucking in water and the prey and becoming a full round shape. The door rapidly shuts and the catch is processed. High speed camera images show that the prey is swallowed in less than a millisecond.

After a couple of hours the bladder expels the liquid and flattens itself back into trap form, ready to assist the plant to survive in a nutrient poor water.

It's been reported that bowls of water plants that have Yellow Bladderwort keep the waters mosquito larvae free.

This locally native plant is a great example of a carnivorous plant with underwater leaves modified as specialized traps, operating at extraordinary high speed. Simply amazing.

For more details, visit <http://www.stillcreeklandcare.com.au/> Facebook or phone 9653 2056



## Speaking at Australian Plants Society



The Australian Plants Society-North Shore Group will meet 7-30 pm for 8 pm on Friday May 11th in the Willow Park Community hall, 25 Edgeworth David Avenue, Hornsby. Our speaker will be Ross Rapmund

from Hornsby Council Community Nursery and his topic is: "Showy Monocots"

What's a "monocot"? Come to this talk to find out more about this intriguing group of plants and how they have some of our best known floral displays. We'll look at the local diversity, distribution and how they can grow in your garden.

Visitors welcome. Come and browse through our library and enjoy a cuppa. More details at [www.austplants.com.au/North-Shore](http://www.austplants.com.au/North-Shore)