

# Jack in the Pulpit

*Arisaema triphyllum*

Look for Jack in the Pulpit in moist, shady areas especially in the woods behind the Roost.

The intriguing blossom of this woodland perennial is a large, green, cylindrical, hooded spathe, sometimes with maroon stripes. It surrounds a green or maroon spadix that bears tiny, embedded flowers. The distinctive Jack-in-the-Pulpit formation grows beneath two large, glossy leaves, divided into three leaflets that rise on their own stems 1-3 feet tall.

By late summer, the spadix has become a cluster of bright red berries having the consistency of a ripe tomato and a very attractive food source for both birds and mammals.



Native Americans gathered the fleshy taproots in early spring to eat as a vegetable. But because all parts of this plant contain calcium oxalate crystals, they are intensely bitter and will cause painful irritation of the mouth and throat if ingested raw. So Native Americans dried the roots for six months, peeled and roasted them before eating.

Jack in the Pulpit, also known as Indian turnip, blooms April through June.