

Skunk Cabbage

Symplocarpus foetidus

Skunk cabbage (also known as Eastern skunk cabbage) is a perennial plant that is one of the first to bloom every year in early spring, and is typically visible from February to May. The flower buds of the plant can warm up to 70 degrees due to rapid cellular respiration, which allows it to bloom when the ground is still frozen. Skunk cabbage can be found in Eastern Canada as well as the northeastern United States, and mostly grows near bodies of water, in woods, or in wetlands. It is called the “skunk cabbage” because of the odor it emits, which mimics the odor of rotten meat to attract pollinators. Most animals also avoid eating the cabbage because of a burning sensation.

