

Britain's rarest¹ flower given round-the-clock² police protection

THE INDEPENDENT

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It is the sort of police operation reserved for the highest-profile³ VIPs. Patrols have been stepped up⁴ around the subject's place of residence and covert CCTV⁵ is being considered. The potential target has also been security tagged⁶ to protect against abduction⁷.

What is all the more remarkable is that this treatment, normally kept for visiting dignitaries⁸ of a foreign state or perhaps a Cabinet minister⁹, is being rolled out¹⁰ for a single delicate plant on a Lancashire golf course¹¹.

What makes this specimen¹² so precious is that it is one of the few examples of Britain's rarest flower.

A Lady's Slipper orchid¹³, whose name is inspired by its distinctive shoe-shaped¹⁴ flower, is now the subject of strict security by Lancashire Constabulary¹⁵ after it bloomed¹⁶ on the Silverdale Golf Course in Carnforth – making it the most sought-after¹⁷ plant in Britain for obsessive orchid fanciers¹⁸.

The plant is strictly protected by law. Even touching one requires a special licence from Natural England¹⁹. Nevertheless, cuttings²⁰ from a Lady's Slipper, whose Latin name is *Cypripedium calceolus*, are so in demand²¹ that collectors are prepared to pay up to £5,000 for a flowering example.

Lancashire police confirmed yesterday that they had mounted²² an extensive operation to protect the Silverdale orchid; police tape²³ surrounds the site and police regularly patrol the golf course on foot. Two attempts have been made in the last six years to steal or damage²⁴ the plant, and it has now been security marked²⁵ to ensure that anyone trying to seize²⁶ a cutting can be identified.

If senior officers deem it suitable²⁷, special CCTV cameras will also be deployed²⁸ around the site in the next few days to relay²⁹ footage³⁰ direct to police headquarters, where the orchid can be monitored around the clock.

PC³¹ Duncan Thomas, wildlife³² officer³³ for Lancashire police, said: "We have been monitoring this amazing plant for a number of years and you can't help being impressed, not only by its rarity but by the incredible display³⁴ when flowering. "Sadly, there are persons who will seek³⁵ to steal it and we are working to ensure its continued success."

The Silverdale orchid is thought to be³⁶ one of less than a dozen of the flowers now growing in the wild³⁷ in Britain.

For decades, the UK population³⁸ of *Cypripedium calceolus*, once widespread³⁹ across northern England but thought to have been picked to extinction by 1917, consisted of a single plant discovered by botanists in the 1930s at a location which remains a closely guarded secret.

Such is the importance of the plant that it has its own panel⁴⁰ of botanical experts, the *Cypripedium* Committee, to discuss how to protect and propagate⁴¹ the species. The plant is now the subject of a programme led by scientists at Kew Gardens in London to plant Lady's Slipper orchids grown from the seed⁴² of wild plants at different locations, although numbers remain extremely low.

[...]



Comprehension check: True or False

1. The Lady's Slipper orchid is one of the most common flowers in Britain.
2. The flower bloomed on a golf course in Lancashire.
3. Special CCTV cameras have been deployed around the site where the flower was found.
4. Four attempts have been made in the last six years to steal or damage the plant.
5. This specimen is partially protected by law.
6. The plant has its own panel of botanical experts.

¹ **Rarest:** superlativo dell'aggettivo monosillabico *rare*, che termina con una *-e* muta, cioè non pronunciata. Il comparivo di maggioranza è: *rarer* (seguito da *than*, che introduce il 2° termine di paragone).

² **Round-the-clock:** *lasting or continuing throughout the entire 24 hours of the day, continuous:* ventiquattr'ore su ventiquattro.

³ **Highest-profile:** anche qui, il superlativo dell'aggettivo *high*: di più alto profilo, più importanti.

⁴ **Stepped up** [*to step, stepped, stepping, steps*]: *to move toward a place.*

⁵ **Covert CCTV** (*closed circuit television*): (sorveglianza con) telecamera a circuito chiuso nascosta.

⁶ **Tagged** [*to tag, tagged, tagging, tags*]: *to label, identify, or recognize with or as if with a tag for security reasons. See also security marked.*

⁷ **Abduction:** *the act of kidnapping/carrying off by force:* sottrazione. Quando si tratta di persone si traduce rapimento, sequestro di persona.

⁸ **Dignitaries** [*dignitary*]: *an important or influential person:* dignitario.

⁹ **Cabinet minister:** membro del Gabinetto, ministro di governo. Il *Cabinet* o Gabinetto è al centro del sistema politico britannico e rappresenta il principale organo decisionale del governo. I *Cabinet ministers* sono i ministri preposti ai dipartimenti o dicasteri più importanti e in alcuni casi vengono denominati *Secretaries of State* (Segretari di Stato). Formalmente l'ufficio di segretario di stato è unico e, in effetti, le leggi si riferiscono ad esso al singolare; in pratica, però, vi sono vari segretari di stato nel Regno Unito, ciascuno dei quali esercita le funzioni attribuitegli dalla legge. Vi sono poi dipartimenti il cui titolare ha un titolo tradizionale come il *Chancellor of the Exchequer* (Cancelliere dello Scacchiere), che spetta al Ministro delle finanze.

¹⁰ **Rolled out** [*to roll, rolled, rolling, rolls*]: (*idiom*): to introduce.

¹¹ **Golf course:** campo da golf.

¹² **Specimen:** *an example regarded as typical of its class:* esemplare.

¹³ **Lady's Slipper orchid:** *Cypripedium calceolus*, chiamata anche scarpetta di Venere, è l'orchidea europea dai fiori più grandi e proprio per questo è in pericolo di estinzione, per la raccolta indiscriminata che ne è stata fatta.

¹⁴ **Shoe-shaped:** a forma di scarpa. Per ulteriori approfondimenti sulle parole composte si veda la scheda Ebac "Compound words".

¹⁵ **Constabulary:** in Gran Bretagna, la polizia di un distretto.

¹⁶ **Bloomed** [*to bloom, bloomed, blooming, blooms*]: *to come into flower, to open into flower.*

¹⁷ **Sought-after:** dal verbo *to seek* [*to seek, sought, sought, seeking, seeks*]: qui: richiesto, ricercato, ambito. Cercare qualcosa si dice *to seek after or for something*.

¹⁸ **Fanciers** [*fancier*]: *somebody who is especially interested in or enthusiastic about something:* appassionato.

¹⁹ **Natural England:** è un'agenzia governativa di consulenza istituita nel 2006. Si occupa della difesa e della protezione della natura e del territorio; fornisce consulenza scientifica sulla salvaguardia del patrimonio ambientale a beneficio delle generazioni presenti e future.

²⁰ **Cuttings** [*cutting*]: qui: talea.

²¹ **In demand:** *to be in demand:* essere richiesto (sul mercato).

²² **Mounted** [*to mount, mounted, mounting, mounts*]: qui: *to organize and equip.*

²³ **Police tape:** *caution tape (also known as warning tape) is a resilient plastic tape that is wrapped and affixed as visual warning sign and demarcation, for instance against entering a dangerous area or the scene of an accident or a crime: nastro di delimitazione usato dalla Polizia per isolare la scena del crimine, di un incidente o simili.*

²⁴ **Damage** [to damage, damaged, damaging, damages]: *to harm somebody or something. Attenzione ad utilizzare damage quando è sostantivo, infatti, se significa danno/i, lesione o guasto è uncountable, o non numerabile, e pertanto NON è mai utilizzato al plurale e NON è mai preceduto da un articolo indeterminativo né da un numero: These toxins can cause damage to the lungs. Great damage has been done to forests in South America.*

Nella forma plurale (*damages*) è un termine specialistico del settore giuridico che risponde alla seguente definizione: *money that a court orders you to pay someone because you have harmed them or their property.* Si traduce con: danni, risarcimento, indennizzo.

²⁵ **Security marked** [to mark, marked, marking, marks]: *to single out or indicate by or as if by a mark for security reasons; security tagged.*

²⁶ **To seize** [seized, seizing, seizes]: *qui: to take hold of, to grab: prendere, impossessarsi di.*

²⁷ **Deem it suitable** [to deem, deemed, deeming, deems]: *to deem something suitable: considerare, ritenere opportuno.*

²⁸ **Deployed** [to deploy, deployed, deploying, deploys]: *qui: to use something, to put something to use.*

²⁹ **To relay** [relayed, relaying, relays]: *to broadcast, to transmit a broadcast: trasmettere (una trasmissione, un segnale). Il relay è quello che noi chiamiamo relé o relais.*

³⁰ **Footage:** *a filmed sequence showing event: filmato.*

³¹ **PC:** *Police Constable: agente di polizia.*

³² **Wildlife:** *wild animals, birds, and other living things, sometimes including vegetation, living in a natural undomesticated state: flora e fauna (selvatiche).*

³³ **Officer:** *agente.*

³⁴ **Display:** *the act of displaying: qui: spettacolo, mostra (di sè), esposizione.*

³⁵ **Seek** [to seek, sought, seeking, seeks]: *qui: to attempt something, to try to do something: tentare, provare a fare.*

³⁶ **Is thought to be** [to think, thought, thinking, thinks]: *si noti la costruzione passiva che si traduce: è considerato, è ritenuto essere.*

³⁷ **In the wild:** *allo stato brado o allo stato libero.*

³⁸ **Population:** *qui: all the organisms that constitute a specific group or occur in a specified habitat: popolazione.*

³⁹ **Widespread:** *existing or happening in many places: diffuso.*

⁴⁰ **Panel:** *group of experts: commissione, panel.*

⁴¹ **Propagate** [to propagate, propagated, propagating, propagates]: *qui: to create new plants, to multiply plants by the use of seeds or cuttings: propagare, diffondere.*

⁴² **Seed:** *a fertilized ripened ovule of a flowering plant that contains an embryo and is capable of producing a new plant: seme.*