

Sketches from a Field Notebook

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So why is sticky tofieldia (*Tofieldia glutinosa*), sticky?

Mary Willson and I wonder about the tacky upper parts of the flowering stems. We count ensnared bugs - nearly every plant we find has trapped insects. A clever defense - but could it be more than a defense?

More to discover →

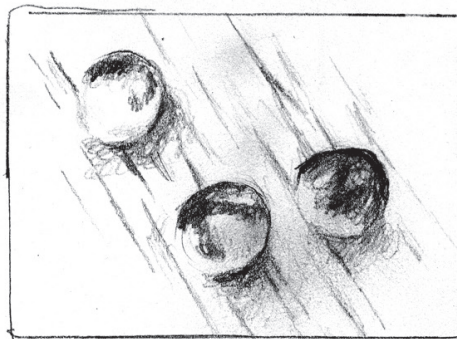
Are these plants carnivorous?

Seed capsules show chewing, which turns out to be caused by

The remains of an insect (or three) - disintegrated among the sticky protrusions on the upper stem.

Loopers! They seem fairly unaffected by the stickiness, though they move slower on the stems. Some plants have three or more.

- I plant a couple in a small terrarium, include four of the loopers. The larvae chew through the seed capsules and eat every seed. They triple in size, then vanish into the moss.



Under 60x magnification, "hairs" are reddish bulbous protrusions, very sticky