

Native Orchid News:

April/May, 1999

Newsletter of Native Orchid Conservation Inc.



Native Orchid Conservation Inc.

Promotional Displays:

April 8,9,10	Polo Park
April 24,25	Living Prairie Museum
May 8, 9	Oak Hammock Marsh
May 10-15	Grant Park
May 23-29	St. Vital Centre

Please contact Bud Ewacha at 253-4741 if you can assist on any of these dates.

Board meetings held 7:30 PM the first Wednesday of every month at 35 St. Michaels Road.

Native Orchid Conservation Inc. (NOCI) is celebrating its 1st anniversary on April 15, 1999. We have come a long way in one year having already worked on a number of projects related to the conservation of rare or endangered plant species in Manitoba. We are looking forward to the Spring and Summer of 1999!

There will be a number of promotional activities taking place this spring: Our presence at the Orchid Show at the Conservatory on the weekend of March 19-21 was very well received and we are looking forward to unveiling a 'new' and very catching display at the 16th Annual World Orchid Show in Vancouver in May. Please take note of the above-mentioned dates where we will take our display 'on the road' throughout the Winnipeg area. If you can spare an afternoon or a morning on any of the above dates, we would love to have your involvement.

And indeed we are starting to get a lot of attention both from within the Province of Manitoba and from other provinces interested in our progress and direction in the area of native orchid conservation.

Update on Gull Lake Wetlands:

The Gull Lake Wetlands project is of particular importance and we will be very focused on it throughout 1999 given its ecological significance. This started out as a government-commissioned botanical survey of the native flora of the Gull Lake Wetlands. Native Orchid Conservation Inc. received a grant from Manitoba Hydro in June, 1998 to conduct this study. Based on the results of this study, the Gull Lake Wetlands, contains twenty-eight species of orchids in the two hundred and fifty-five total plant species identified so far. Twenty-four plant species are considered rare in Manitoba. According to Dr. Karen Johnson, Curator of Botany at the Museum of Man and Nature the Gull Lake Wetlands has a greater number of rare and unusual plants (including orchids and carnivorous plants) than any other site known in Manitoba. It may be just good fortune that this historically overlooked 'Scanterbury Bog' which was not considered of value for agriculture or forestry is now capturing such attention as a unique and rare ecosystem worthy of protection.

For your information, the 28 native orchid species found in the Gull Lake Wetlands study area are:

<i>Amerorchis rotundifolia</i>	Small round-leaved orchid
<i>Arethusa bulbosa</i> L.	Dragon's mouth
<i>Calopogon tuberosus</i> (L.) BSP var. <i>tuberosus</i>	Grass Pink
<i>Calypso bulbosa</i> (L.) Oakes var. <i>americana</i> R.Brown Luer	Fairy or Venus Slipper
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i> Hartmann	Long bracted orchid
<i>Corallorhiza maculata</i> Raf.	Spotted coralroot
<i>Corallorhiza striata</i>	Striped coralroot
<i>Corallorhiza trifida</i>	Northern or Early coralroot
<i>Cypripedium acaule</i>	Moccasin flower
<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	Ram's Head Lady's-Slipper
<i>Cypripedium calceolus</i> var. <i>parviflorum</i> (Salisb)	Small Yellow Lady's-Slipper
<i>Cypripedium calceolus</i> var. <i>pubescens</i> (Willd.)Correll	Large Yellow Lady's-Slipper
<i>Cypripedium reginae</i> (Walt)	Showy Lady's-Slipper
<i>Goodyera repens</i> (L.) R.Br. var. <i>ophiodes</i>	Lesser Rattlesnake Plantain
<i>Goodyera tessellata</i> Lodd.	Tesselated Rattlesnake Plantain
<i>Liparis loeselli</i> (L.) Richard	Loesel's Twayblade
<i>Listera cordata</i>	Heart-leaved twayblade
<i>Malaxis monophylla</i> L. var. <i>brachypoda</i>	White Adder's-mouth
<i>Malaxis paludosa</i> (L.) Sw.	Bog Adder's-mouth
<i>Malaxis unifolia</i> Michx.	Green Adder's-mouth
<i>Platanthera dilatata</i> (Pursh) Lindl. ex Beck	Tall Leafy White Orchid
<i>Platanthera hookeri</i> (Torr) Lindl.	Hooker's orchid
<i>Platanthera hyperborea</i> (L.) Lindl	Tall leafy green orchid
<i>Platanthera obtusata</i> (Pursh) Lindl(L) R. Br.	Blunt -leaf orchid
<i>Platanthera orbiculata</i> Torr. Lindl	Large round leaf orchid
<i>Pogonia ophioglossoides</i>	Rose pogonia
<i>Spiranthes lacera</i>	Slender Ladies'-tresses
<i>Spiranthes romanzoffiana</i>	Hooded Ladies'-tresses

Native Orchid Conservation Inc. is very proud to be taking such an active role in such worthwhile ecological studies so early in our existence and feel that there is a significant role to play in habitat preservation in the Province of Manitoba.

We are currently in the proposal stage for several other significant projects related to the preservation of prairie orchids native to both the mixed grass and tall grass prairie. Much needs to be learned to save a single orchid species. For example: What is the plant's pollinator? Why are they not producing enough seed pods (if any) to survive and distribute? Can the plant be propagated and then re-introduced into appropriate and sustainable locations? We are optimistic that these questions can be answered and that in many cases species can be protected in their current locations and reintroduced into similar habitats. This will take disciplined research, patience and a regimented monitoring program to ensure success. Two species that we are currently considering for such research are the endangered Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Plantanthera praeclara*) which is native to the tall grass prairie of south eastern Manitoba and the Small White Ladyslipper (*Cypripedium candidum*) which is native to the mixed grass prairie and listed as endangered in Manitoba (now extirpated from Saskatchewan).

Our Featured Orchid for April (see photo on page 1):
(contributed by Doris Ames)

GRASS PINK (*Calopogon tuberosus*)

The botanical name for this orchid comes from the Greek words for "beautiful beard", referring to the yellow bristles on the lip.

This 4-20" plant is usually found in coniferous bogs among spruce or cedar. It can also be found on mats in sunny sphagnum bogs or wet marshes. The single leaf is grass-like and a raceme of 2-12 flowers appears June 18-August 3rd. The large, purplish-pink flowers lie on their backs facing the sun with their lip **uppermost**, unlike other orchids.

The yellowish bristles on the lip look like pollen filled anthers to a bee. The lip is hinged at the base and when a bee lands on it, it suddenly bends downward and throws the bee onto the column. This forces the bee to make contact with the stigma and deposit any pollen it might have picked up from other flowers. As the confused bee leaves, it picks up more pollen to be deposited on the next flower.

When I first saw these flowers I wanted to see the weird pollination mechanism in action. I tried gently pressing on the lip to make it snap downward but couldn't get any of the flowers to perform. It may be that the bee has to land on the lip when the flower is exactly at the right stage of development for the hinge to work. If anyone knows more about this please let us know.

This unusual orchid is considered rare in our area and needs our protection. It does occur in the Gull Lake Wetlands study area. Some members of our group would like to try growing this orchid from seed with a view to re-introducing it into suitable habitat in the wild.

The 1999 Native Orchid Conservation Inc. Board members were elected at the January Annual General Meeting. For your information, they are as follows:

Bud Ewacha	President
Doris Ames	Vice-President
Alice Warren	Secretary
Richard Reeves	Treasurer
Peggy Johannesen	Membership
Paul Buchanan	Newsletter
John Neufeld	Member-at-Large

The Native Orchid Conservation Web Site will soon be making its appearance. Stay tuned!

If you would like to get involved in Native Orchid Conservation, please contact Bud Ewacha at 253-4741.