

# Native Orchid News:

Vol. 3 Issue 2 April 2001

The Newsletter of Native Orchid Conservation Inc.



Native Orchid Conservation Inc.  
35 St. Michael Road, Winnipeg MB  
R2M 2K7

**Board Meetings:**

First Wednesday of every month  
7:30 PM  
Powerland Computers  
170 Marion Street  
(No meeting July and August)

**Orchid of the Month**

Small Purple Fringed Orchid  
(*Platanthera psycodes*)

**NOCI Website:**

[www.nativeorchid.com](http://www.nativeorchid.com)

For more information on NOCI  
please contact Bud Ewacha at 253-4741  
or e-mail <[bud\\_ge@escape.ca](mailto:bud_ge@escape.ca)>

## Annual General Meeting

NOCI held its Annual General Meeting on April 11, 2001. Peggy Bainard Acheson, John Neufeld and Bob Joyce were elected to the board by acclamation. After the election, Carla Zelmer, botanist and NOCI member, gave a talk on orchids and their relationship with fungi. We all learned a lot from her enjoyable presentation. Thank you to all the members who helped put the meeting together and came out for it. We are grateful to Wes Penner for allowing us to hold the meeting in his shop.

## News

We will be undertaking a new project this summer; a survey of the timber sales area in the southeast for native orchids and other rare plants. We secured funding from the Federal Department of the Environment, the Province of Manitoba and Premier Peat Moss. As well we have other partners to help us with it. Once identified, these areas can be set aside from clear cutting and the plants protected. You will be hearing more about this project when details are finalized.

**Orchid of the Month** (See cover photo)  
Small Purple Fringed Orchid(*Platanthera psycodes*)

This rare and lovely orchid is found in the extreme southeast corner of Manitoba. It grows there in deciduous woodlands and along roads that cut through them. It is usually found growing in sites that have a lot of rotted leaves or other organic material on the forest floor but it can grow in wet meadows or ditches. The plant is tall, up to 90cm. in open areas and 60cm in the woods. The leaves are linear, broader near the bottom and smaller towards the top, until finally there are only bracts between the flowers on the spike. There are many reddish-purple flowers near the top of the spike. The flowers have fringes at the edges of the petals with the prominent lip being fringed and three-parted. There is a short curved spur. This orchid has a long blooming period in July and August. Some people confuse it with Fireweed at a casual glance, leading to false reports. I've noticed that flowers found in the open are more colorful and larger than those in the shade. One of the pollinators is believed to be a small Skipper butterfly. Other experts think it may be a moth at night. The pods, when formed, are small and clustered close together near the top of the spike. It's hard to find pods; maybe partially because they are fragile but also because the plant seems to be a great favourite of deer and rabbits. One time Bud and I found some great specimens of this plant in Minnesota. It was late in the evening so we thought we would just mark them with survey tape and return to photograph them the next day when the light was better. When we came back early the next morning, the deer, which thrive in great abundance there, had bitten the flower spikes right off. Nothing like making life easy for Bambi! Although common enough in parts of the adjacent United States and Ontario, the Small Purple Fringed Orchid, like its relatives, the Western Prairie Fringed and the Ragged Fringed Orchids, is not common in Manitoba. **This orchid needs to be protected.** Please contact Bud Ewacha if you come across this orchid, so the location and number of plants can be recorded

### Displays

NOCI will have a display at Oak Hammock Marsh on June 9th and 10th.

### Activities

As a **member** of NOCI, you have the opportunity to participate in field trips. We have a number of interesting trips planned for this year. You can come out to our study areas where you will see many beautiful orchids and other rare plants. We all learn a lot on these trips as many of our members, besides the trip leaders, are very knowledgeable about native plants and their particular habitats. These outings are planned to allow time for photography and sketching.

Board member, Bob Joyce, is our field trip coordinator this year. Please contact Bob at 256-8113, if you would like to join us on any of these trips. We take a limited number of people, to many of the areas, as the plants are delicate and need protection. Register early to avoid disappointment. There is a charge of \$10.00 per trip, to cover costs associated with running them, and you will be required to sign a liability waiver. Children must be accompanied by their parents or other responsible adult. Please use your discretion as to whether you can participate in these trips depending on your health and the degree of difficulty walking. Most trips are suitable for a healthy adult. The leaders are all unpaid amateur naturalists with field experience.

Please dress suitably for the weather and the location (we intend to go rain or shine). If there is a cancellation for any reason, you will be contacted. Consult Bob Joyce or Bud Ewacha 253-4741 if you have further questions. Our field trips will be published on the NOCI website <[www.nativeorchid.com](http://www.nativeorchid.com)>

## Native Orchid Conservation Inc. Field Trips 2001

**Saturday, May 5th** - Forget that long winter! Come and celebrate spring with us on a field trip to the Richer, Sandilands, Hadashville and East Braintree areas. See the Prairie Crocus, Trailing Arbutus and Three Flowered Avens, among other wild flowers. With luck, the delicate and elusive Fairy Slipper Orchid will be blooming at this time, in our study area, and you will be able to see other wild orchids sprouting new leaves and getting ready to bloom.

**Saturday, June 16th**- Come with us to our study area in Woodridge. More than a dozen orchid species can be found there during the year, in this cedar bog. The lady's-slipper orchids are especially beautiful. This site has a large population of the smallest of the slipper orchids, the rare Ram's Head Lady's Slipper. The Small Round-leaf Orchid is also found there and is one of the most delicate and lovely of the wild orchids with its white and pink, polka - dotted petals. There are, of course, a number of other " Little Green Jobs", which Bud will be happy to show you.

**Saturday, June 23-** Come and see the beautiful Gull Lake Wetlands for yourself. This special fen contains dozens of native orchid species as well as carnivorous plants and other rare species. See, for yourself, why we think part of it should be declared an ecological reserve. We will also visit our study sites in the unusual Belair and Grand Beach areas. See the Moccasin Flowers and other interesting plants in the pine Forests there.

**Saturday, July 14-** We will be heading out into the southeast again to see a variety of wildflowers in Hadashville, East Braintree and the Whiteshell Forest Reserve. Of special interest, will be a side trip to see the rare Brittle Prickly Pear Cactus. These exotic little plants with their large, waxy, yellow blossoms and formidable spines, seem strangely out of place growing among the lichens and wild onions of the Precambrian Shield. This is also a good time to see Milkweed and Monarch Butterflies enjoying their happy relationship.

**Saturday, July 21-** Back to the Gull Lake Wetlands, to see the fen in all its midsummer glory. The delicate blossoms of the Rose Pogonia, Grass Pink and Dragon's Mouth Orchid should still be showing at both sites. The Carnivorous plants; Pitcher Plants, Sundews, Butterworts and Bladderworts, should be at their insect-eating best.

**Saturday, August 4th-** The last field trip of the summer is always fun and well attended. We will head into the Whiteshell again to see the rare and beautiful Vipers Bugloss, Vervain, White Waterlilies and the unusual and very old, Ironwood and White Pine Trees there. On the way we will see many other wildflowers, animals and birds. This trip will provide an occasion to share information over lunch, about the many interesting things we have seen over the summer and, for you to give us your suggestions for next years field trips.

This list will be posted on our website at <[www.nativeorchid.com](http://www.nativeorchid.com)>. Please contact Bob Joyce 256-8113 if you wish to participate in any one of them.