

Native Orchid News:

The Newsletter of Native Orchid Conservation Inc.

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AGM Reminder

Friday, February 27, 2009

Plant of the Month

Broad-leaved Helleborine
(*Epipactis helleborine*)

President's Report

By Doris Ames

As our tenth anniversary year draws to a close my thoughts are of NOCI and its future. We have grown to be a hard-working environmental organization with several conservation projects on the go at any one time. Now, for instance, we are involved in the collection of native orchid seeds for the National Gene Bank, rare plant surveys for the Manitoba Model Forest and fundraising for boardwalks in the Brokenhead Wetlands.

Along with these projects we continue to make educational displays and presentations on orchid conservation for the general public. We have worked closely with other organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Manitoba Orchid Society, Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation, the Manitoba Model Forest and the Woodlot Association of Manitoba to achieve our goals and we need to continue to do this. We also work with students to help them attain their educational goals and to bring us new ideas.

In order to maintain momentum we need to recruit more members to serve on our board and to assist with our conservation work. Our membership remains stable at 150 but we need to continually recruit new members to keep it that way and we need even more members to make it grow.

If you can help us by serving on the NOCI board or by volunteering to assist with educational displays, survey work, fund raising or volunteer management please let us know and plan to attend our annual general meeting on Friday, February 27, 2009.

If you have enjoyed our field trips, educational displays or Member's nights please consider making a donation at this time to help us with our conservation work.

To all of you who have supported us over the past ten years and who have worked hard to make NOCI a success, my sincere thanks and warmest wishes for the holiday season.

Plant of the Month

Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*)

The First Report of Occurrence in Manitoba

By Lorne Heshka

Epipactis helleborine is an “Old World” orchid species native to the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. In North America, this orchid prefers moist riverbanks and roadside ditches, but has naturalized in a variety of habitats including dry evergreen woods.

Blooming in July and August, the stem can reach 90 cm with up to 10 leaves distinctly resembling those of the Genus *Cypripedium*, and a one sided raceme of up to 50 flowers. The flowers are small 1 - 2.5 cm; lateral sepals are greenish, 1 - 1.5cm long, ovate-lanceolate, often suffused with purple; petals, are pale green, pink, purple, or yellowish, ovate, 1 - 1.5cm long; lip indistinctly veined, constricted at the middle into 2 parts, proximal part dark purplish to brownish, deeply concave. As a result of colour variability, 5 different colour forms have been named.

In 1879 this orchid was first discovered in North America near Syracuse, New York. It is unknown how this orchid found its way to this continent, but it is speculated that the seeds arrived with plants or personal belongings brought by the settlers. Since that time it has spread extensively through Eastern North America, with a scattering of populations in the west. The Flora of North America notes that in Canada populations have been recorded from the provinces of British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Ontario and Quebec. Note the absence of Manitoba from this list.

While conducting a plant survey along the Seine River during the week of August 10, 2008, Paul Mutch, a Technical Assistant with the Naturalist Services Branch, City of Winnipeg; encountered an orchid that he was unable to identify. On August 18, he contacted the authour by e-mail and requested assistance in identifying this orchid. Arrangements were made to meet at the site on August 20 and this unknown orchid (actually seven plants of this orchid) was identified as *Epipactis helleborine* forma *viridens*, the green flowered form of the Broad-leaved Helleborine. The first known record for this species in Manitoba.

An intriguing question is - “when and how did this orchid arrive at Winnipeg?” The seeds of orchids are known to travel in a number of different ways; the most common being by wind, by water, or in soil. Itasca County, Minnesota, the nearest recorded location for *Epipactis helleborine*, is several hundred kilometers to the southeast. Use your imagination and think of the many scenarios which may have lead to the arrival of this orchid. We will probably never know for sure

Now that this species has arrived in Manitoba, it will be interesting to track the spread of this species within our province over the next few years. You can assist in this project by reporting any and all plants of this species that you encounter. As you travel in and around Winnipeg and other areas of the province during late July and August, watch for this “vagabond” species. I would welcome your documented observations as would any of the NOCI Board members.

The North is Celebrated at Members' Night

By Peggy Bainard Acheson

Our eighth annual Members' Night, held Friday, October 24, 2008 at the Dakota Lawn Bowls Club, was another fabulous evening with 51 of our members and friends in attendance. As MC I was overwhelmed by the friendly and expectant faces that I saw looking back at me from audience. Thank you all for supporting us over the years and continuing to come out and be a part of our Members' Night.

Doris Ames, our feisty leader, set the tone of the evening by reading "The Cremation of Sam McGee" by Robert Service, the "bard of the Klondike" who wrote so much classic Canadian poetry about the North and its people. Then, Bill Blight presented a slide show on the western Arctic from his time in the 1950s when he worked on a survey crew during his university days. The slides are a fascinating and marvelous record of the area in its pristine state prior to development. Great job, Bill!

Continuing our theme of the north in honour of International Polar Year, Eugene, Doris and Peggy presented pictures from their recent trip to the Yukon and North West Territories. In sharp contrast to Bill's pictures, the towns and roads revealed the rapid development of the area over the last 50-60 years. However, I would also say that the pictures also revealed the abundance of plant life, birds and other animals still in their natural habitat and available for posing. If you haven't yet had a chance to travel to that part of the north, it is still well worth it. You can access more information such as our itinerary, a map, and (for the morbidly curious) the horrible "gas" prices we paid, which were at their peak, at Eugene's website: <http://ereimer.net/20080717-InuvikTrip/index.htm>.

I would like to thank everyone who provided door prizes including a hand-made wooden bowl by Bill Belcher, hand-made cards by Rose Kuzina, hand-made wooden coasters by Lorne Heshka, and a tea package in a birchbark container by Doris. Door prize winners were Joan Heshka, Debbie Morrison, Chris Neufeld, and Doris Ames. Thanks also to Manitoba Conservation for donating The Birds of Manitoba for the raffle. The winner was Debbie Morrison. I would also like to thank Bep Vanderwoude and Richard Reeves for donating the proceeds of their card sales to NOCI. These and other donations, as well as the raffle, help tremendously to offset the evening's expenses. Thanks for the support.

Following the presentations and the door prizes, members and guests were able to enjoy the wonderful refreshments put together by Iris Reimer and Mary Wiebe. Thanks also to Marie Anne Reeves and Joan Heshka for the wonderful dainties and cookies.

Finally, thank you to all the board members, their spouses, friends and family who pitched in to help with set up and take-down including Al Ames, Mary Wiebe, Marie Anne Reeves, and John Dyck. Not least, thanks also to Eugene Reimer, our indispensable "techy guy", who was able to get our new microphone and big screen in time for the meeting.

2009 Membership Renewal/Donation Time!

Dear NOCI Members:

Thanks for your ongoing support in this our tenth year. Already it's time to renew memberships for 2009. Our membership fees will remain at \$10 for individuals and \$25 for groups. Consider a donation along with your renewal. Donations can also be made in a secure manner through our website <http://www.nativeorchid.org>. Tax-deductible receipts will be issued in February 2009 for donations \$10 or more and made prior to December 31, 2008.

If you have already paid your 2009 renewal dues please ignore this message! Also, please indicate any address or email changes. For further information about memberships, renewals or donations, please call me at 261-9179 or send an email to bainardp@mts.net. Please fill out the form and return with your cheque to the following address:

Peggy Bainard Acheson, NOCI Membership Chair
P.O. Box 56025
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0G9

Membership Renewal/Donation Form 2008

Yes! I wish to continue my membership in NOCI.

Individual _____ @ \$10.00 _____
Junior _____ @ \$0.00 _____
Group _____ @ \$25.00 _____

Membership Amount _____

Note: junior members must reside in Canada and show proof of age (under 18 years).

Yes! I wish to donate to help save endangered plants and habitat.

___ \$10.00 ___ \$25.00 ___ \$50.00 ___ Other
Donation Amount _____
TOTAL _____

Please make cheques out to Native Orchid Conservation Inc. and send to above address. A Receipt for donations will be issued in February 2009. Tax No. is **86816 7198 RR0001**.

Name(s) (please print):

Signature:

If changed in the last year, please include:

Address:

City/Province/Postal Code:

Phone No.: _____ Email: _____

I am receiving electronic notifications, and wish to forgo receiving paper newsletters; I understand this will mean receiving only electronic notifications of meetings. []

Date received: _____ (Office use)