



Photo by Bud Ewacha

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

**Board Meetings:**

First Wednesday of every month  
7:30 P.M.

Location: Powerland Computers  
170 Marion Street  
(No meeting July and August)

**Rare Plant of the Month**

Ragged-Fringed Orchid  
(*Platanthera lacera*)

**NOCI Website:**

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

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

**Projects**

The summer has gone by very quickly and we still have much work to do on the Survey of SE Timber Sales project. Hopefully, we will have another long fall and be able to get into those bogs that were too wet to access earlier on. We have secured funding from Environment Canada and the Provincial Sustainable Development Initiatives Fund, The C.P. Loewen Family Foundation, and Brokenhead and Buffalo Point First Nations to carry on with this project for another year. Carla and Bud have expanded this project to include seeding Moccasin Flowers directly into protected areas with suitable habitat. They want to see if direct seeding is more successful than lab propagation of these orchids.

Mountain Equipment Co-op and SunGro Horticulture have also given us grants to fund our work in native orchid conservation.

The Effects of Selective Cutting on the Understory project in Sandilands, funded by the Sustainable Development Initiatives Fund, is ongoing as well. We had very wet June for the second year in a row and the total orchid count is down again.

Carla and Bud are carrying on with the Pathology in *Cypripediums* project and they have received funding from the Manitoba Model Forest to go on with the work.

More detailed information on the projects is available on our website: [www.nativeorchid.com](http://www.nativeorchid.com)

## Activities

We conducted seven field trips this summer and our members enjoyed them. Thanks to Bob Joyce, our field trip coordinator, for a job well done. Thanks, as well, to the board members who helped with interpretation and with being the field trip leaders.

Also, Bud Ewacha did a special 2-day trip to Gull Lake with members of the Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Garden in Burlington, Ontario.

## Interesting Fungi

On a recent survey trip for the Southeast Timber Sales Project, we found an interesting and uncommon fungus called Blue Stain Fungus (*Chlorociboria aeruginascens*). This beautiful mushroom is a gorgeous blue-green colour. We found it growing on a rotting log in a mixed hardwood forest near Middleboro. Apparently it is more common to find the old wood stained with the mycelium than to find the fruiting bodies themselves. They only appear after prolonged wet periods in summer or fall. An interesting thing about these blue stain fungi is that the stained blue and green wood called "green oak" was used since the 1600's by cabinet makers in England to make boxes inlaid with a kind of marquetry called Tunbridge Ware. They were very popular in Victorian times, especially for small boxes and elaborate tea caddies. Only the very rich could afford cabinets decorated with this rare wood.

Unfortunately they are no longer being manufactured and now must be purchased as expensive antiques. There was no comment on the edibility of these mushrooms, so if you find one please don't try it! Modern day lumber companies aren't fond of some species of these blue stain fungi because, although they usually only inhabit the sapwood and have no effect on the strength of the wood, they do cause heavy discolouration in pine that lowers the value of the lumber.

On this same trip, we found another pretty mushroom called Hedgehog or Spiny Puffball (*Lycoperdon echinatum*). It is edible according to my books, but I could not recommend it, having had no experience with this species. Anyway, with its stick-out spines, it is far too pretty to eat, smoke, or whatever!

Every year, with its particular weather conditions, seems to bring out something new and wonderful to see in the forest. This wetter than normal year is no exception and the wonderful mushrooms thriving as a result are another reason to get out into the woods and enjoy nature. Mushrooms can be a photographer's delight.

## Members-Volunteers

Welcome to all our new members. Peggy, our membership chair tells me that we now have 207 paid up members. We hope to see all of you out at the Members Meetings we hold throughout the winter. Please stop to see our displays at the shopping centres in the spring and attend our field trips in the summer. You are also welcome to attend our monthly board meetings but please phone Bud at 253-4741 to check if there has been any change in the date or meeting location.

If you have any questions or comments about native orchids or about our organization, please don't hesitate to contact us.

**Rare Plant of the Month** (see cover photo)  
**Ragged-fringed Orchid (*Platanthera lacera*)**

The name comes from the Greek word "platanthera" meaning wide-anthered and "lacera" meaning torn, referring to the ragged lip. (For many years, it was referred to as *Habenaria lacera* and can still be found under this name in some books.) The rare Ragged-fringed Orchid is often found in acidic, wet meadows and swamps or floating coniferous bogs, usually in full sun. These places are often difficult to access, and because of its greenish colour, you almost have to step on this orchid before you see it. Other dangers await; one of the last times I went to see this orchid I fell into a water and peat filled ditch and emerged black and wet from head to toe! The plant is usually 6-15' tall with 5 or 6 lanceolate leaves per stem. The leaves get smaller towards the top, getting like bracts before the flower spike begins. The flower spike is 2-10" long with 5-15 or more greenish-white flowers per stem. The flowers, which bloom in July, have a heavily fringed and deeply split 3-lobed lip, with a small curved spur. The fringes are long and untidy, unlike the orderly short fringes of the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid. We have noticed that some plants are tall and have very white flowers, for example, in the Lewis Ecological Reserve, but in other areas they are short and greenish. Some books say the flower is scented at night. Hawkmoths are thought to be the pollinators. The skinny pods are clustered together near the top of the spike and hug the stem. Supposedly hybrids can occur between the Ragged-fringed and Purple-fringed orchids when their habitats overlap, but we have so few Purple-fringed Orchids in Manitoba that this is unlikely to happen.

**Editors Note:**

If you have any comments or questions about anything in this newsletter or suggestions for future articles, please contact Doris Ames, 117 Morier Avenue, Winnipeg MB R2M 0C8 or e-mail <adames@mb.sympatico.ca>