



Small White Lady's-slipper

This orchid is provincially and nationally endangered. Although rare, it is believed to be still occurring in Manitoba, Ontario, and fifteen states. It was last seen in Saskatchewan in 1895.

This lady's-slipper is a herbaceous perennial that can grow up to a height of 10 to 15 cm (4 to 5 inches). Plants grow in clumps, with each flowering stem surrounded by two to four leaves. One flower is found at the tip of a flowering stem and consists of a white, pouch-shaped slipper, streaked with a rose-purple colour, and two twisted greenish-yellow side petals that can be spotted or streaked with purple.

This species is very slow growing and it is estimated to take at least 12 years to reach maturity. The plant is about the size of some Yellow Lady's-slippers. Hybrids have been produced when these two plants are growing close to each other.

In Manitoba, the Small White Lady's-slipper can be found in calcium rich or alkaline prairie; openings in wooded grasslands; on open south-facing slopes or in undisturbed areas such as grasslands and roadside ditches.

Flowers typically open in late May or early June and are insect-pollinated, ... usually small bees. The seed capsules mature and seeds are shed by late July, releasing thousands of tiny seeds. These tiny seeds can remain viable for at least eight years.

If you have these plants on your property or know of any, please contact Bud Ewacha at bud_ge@escape.ca or 253-4741, or contact Manitoba Conservation Wildlife Branch (Winnipeg: 945-7755) so that every effort can be made to conserve this plant.



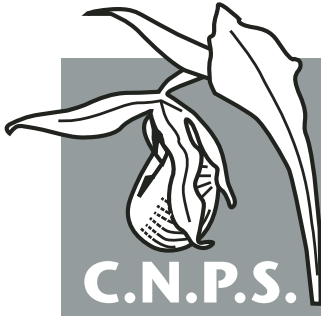
Small White Lady's-slipper
Cypripedium candidum
Photo by Bud Ewacha

**(C.N.P.S.) Conserve Native
Plants Society Inc.**

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**Please remember to renew
your membership.**



It's Time to Renew Your CNPS Membership

Please note that our calendar year begins on January 1 and ends December 31, 2010. Please remember to renew your Conserve Native Plants Society membership for the coming year. Your memberships help ensure that valuable research continues for the preservation of our natural heritage!

Tall Grass Prairie Close to Extinction?

There have been reports recently by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as well as other notable sources, that a mere one per cent of Canada's original 6,000 square kilometres of tall-grass prairie is all that exists today. This finding is based upon the study of University of Manitoba ecologist, Nicola Koper, which updates research done since the last survey in the 1980s. What remains is located mostly in Manitoba, and even that is disappearing at an alarming rate.

The study, published this month in the journal *Biological Conservation*, gives the following quote by Koper, "Most of it has been heavily impacted by humans and is getting worse. — Even though we knew that it was extraordinarily endangered in the late 1980s and took steps to try to conserve it, in fact, in general the ecosystem has declined even further from this previously seriously endangered state."

There are a number of government and environmental groups, including Nature Conservancy of Canada, that are involved in the preservation of an area in south-eastern Manitoba. Management, however, is a demanding process that involves controlled burning to stave off invasive woodland species. It will take more than the dedication of a small number of special interest groups to retain the varieties of majestic grasses and flowers that once spanned the Red River Valley.

As Koper further states, "Do we as a society want to retain this component of our heritage and have tall-grass prairies where we can bring our own children and allow them to pick flowers that are taller than themselves?" she said. "We have to decide as a society what's important for us."

CNPS would like to note that sightings of the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid were not reported during the summer of 2009. The WPFO's favoured habitat is that of the tall grass prairie, but last year's erratic weather was not favourable for the growing conditions of a number of native plants. Hopefully, 2010 will be more promising.