



# Small Northern Bog Orchid

This is the smallest of the bog orchid variety. It is also the widest-ranging with a coverage that extends over most of Canada, including mainland arctic zones.

The Small Northern Bog Orchid can reach a height of 30 cm. Its roots are succulent. The (normally) one smooth basal leaf (up to 15 cm long) may be egg or lance-shaped, but always blunt at the end. (*Platanthera clavellata* appears to be identical except for its leaf being positioned much higher from the plant's base.) Bracts on the stalk are rare.

The inflorescence (2 - 10 cm long) has 4 to 15 light-green to yellowish random flowers, supported by bracts. The dorsal sepal (2 - 4 mm long, 2 - 3.6 mm wide) is widely ovate; lateral sepals (2.8 - 5 mm long, 1.5 - 2.2 mm wide) are broadly lance-shaped; petals (2.2 - 4 mm long, 0.7 - 1.2 mm wide) are almost triangular, widening at mid-point. The tapered lip is 3.5 - 6 mm long and 0.3 - 0.8 mm wide at mid-section, and the curved, pointed spur, where nectar is stored, is 4.5 - 7 mm in length.

Elliptical pods (up to 1 cm long) house many seeds, which ripen in the late summer.

It frequently colonizes in its preferred habitat of sphagnum bogs, but thrives heartily in a diverse range of locations where damp conditions support it.

Flowers emerge from mid-June to mid-July.

Primary pollinators are mosquitoes (proving useful for something, after all), as well as a small moth, *anageshna primordialis*.



Small Northern Bog Orchid  
*Platanthera obtusata*  
Photo by Bud Ewacha

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

[www.conservenativeplants.ca](http://www.conservenativeplants.ca)

Bud Ewacha, President  
35 St. Michael Road  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2M 2K7  
Telephone (204) 253-4741  
Cell: (204) 299-6320  
Fax (204) 253-7241  
E-mail: [bud\\_ge@escape.ca](mailto:bud_ge@escape.ca)

**Please remember to renew  
your membership.**



## 2008, A Bad Year for the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

Although flowers were apparent earlier in the season, no seed pods were found on a monitored patch of the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid this spring. Poor climatic conditions were a significant factor, as was a second consecutive year of the clearcutting of this particular area in 2006 and 2007. Hopes of a successful rate of propagation appear diminished for the next season to come, as a result.

## Spring Weather Conditions Play Havoc on Native Plants

A dry, cool spring brought disappointing results for many native plant species, CNPS members have been reporting this year. President Bud Ewacha tells that many stands of native orchids, for example, have flowered in substantially reduced numbers. Even in urban areas, 'citified' plants cultivated by wildflower growers were said to have fewer blooms, if any.

This phenomenon has been fairly consistent throughout the southern portion of the province. It is not known, however, if a possible cause might be the effect of the same climate conditions on the pollinating insects for many plant species that are dependant on them.



## Monarch Butterfly Sightings Scarce in 2008

Some CNPS members have noted a marked decline in the number of Monarch Butterfly sightings this year. Bud Ewacha found a small population of them in the Sandilands area during the summer. Another member, however, reported differently when she noticed that her chemical-free acreage in the Sprague area was completely devoid of Monarchs in mid August - this in spite of an abundance of Milkweed, a favoured plant of the Monarch.

It is possible that poor weather conditions have been a contributing factor for the reduction of these butterflies, as well.