The Fringe

Newsletter of the Native Orchid Preservation and Education Society
https://nativeorchidpreservationeducationsociety.com
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Letter from the President

Hello everyone,

It's time for our annual NOPES business meeting! We will be meeting at the Farmhouse in Milford on Sunday, November 17, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern time. The address is 790 Garfield Ave. We've held our last two meetings there and we're fortunate that Valley View lets us use this unique setting for our meetings! We're going to meet there at 1:00 for a potluck lunch followed by our business meeting. At 2:30 p.m., Carson Whitlow, who is one of our advisors, will be speaking about Cypripediums. We will be Zooming for any of our members who are unable to attend.

Please contact me if you're planning on attending and have never been to the Farmhouse, so I can give you directions.

I look forward to seeing everyone!

Teresa Huesman

Carson E. Whitlow

Carson became interested in orchids in 1958 when he was a sophomore in college. The following years he worked on the weekends and summers repotting orchids for a firm in Springfield, Illinois. After graduating in 1960, Carson went to Santa Ana, California to work for the prestigious firm of B. O. Bracey and Company. A year later, he changed his direction and entered upon a career in government service with the Orange County (California) Health Department. Career-wise, he has been an administrator in public health since that time, changing in 1988 to highway safety from where he retired in 2005. Educationally, he has a Bachelor of Arts degree in education and mathematics (1960) from Blackburn College, Carlinville, Illinois, and a Master of Science of Public Health degree in biostatistics (1973) from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

After leaving the Bracey firm, Carson established his own collection, mostly of blue *Cattleyas,* with which he undertook hybridizing in association with Fred A. Stewart, Orchids, in San Gabriel, California. From 1964 thru 1969, he produced in excess of 60 blue cattleya hybrids, many of which are still in collections, arising from the original seedlings or as mericlones. Many are used as basic parents in today's blue Cattleya breeding.

In 1973, with his move to central Iowa, Carson took a distinct change in direction, working with the hardy terrestrial orchids, primarily the *Cypripediums* and *Calopogons.* His worked resulted in the first registered artificial hybrids of *Cypripedium* in 1987 and *Calopogon* in 1991. He continued to hybridize these genera and built a small business, Cyp. Haven, as retail outlet for his work. His business closed in 2009. However, he does continue to hybridize blue cattleyas and white paphs and provides the seed to other growers to offer.

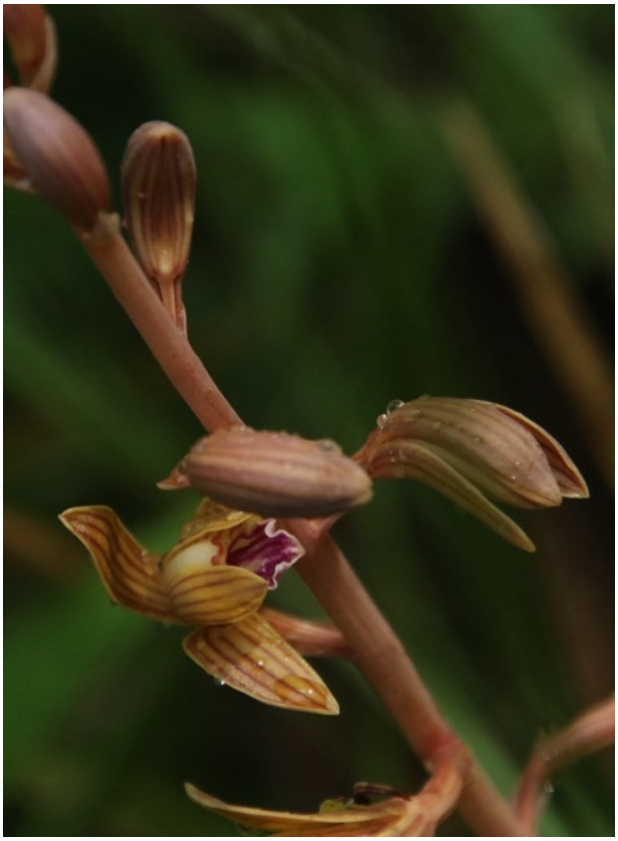
In 1995, Carson's interest in the internet and an easier means of finding orchid related sites on the world wide web brought about the birth of "The Orchid Mall," which today has become the definitive index site for orchids on the internet. In addition, the "unClassified Ads" offer everyone an opportunity to share their plants and/or find things they are looking for.

Carson's hybrid work is recognized throughout the world. He has published over 30 articles in U.S. and European journals. He has been giving presentations on his breeding and propagation for over 30 years, throughout the United States, Canada, and in Scotland at the 14th World Orchid Congress in 1993. He is truly a world-class hybridizer, author and speaker.

A Great Year for *Bletia spicata* at E. Lucy Braun Lynx Prairie Preserve

Jeanne Rhinehart

Bletia spicata puts on a spectacular show at the E. Lucy Braun Lynx Prairie Nature Preserve this July. We counted over 20 plants and with the weather conditions this year was quite unexpected.



The Longleaf Pine Woodlands of East Texas and West Central Louisiana

By Jan Yates

Cyp. kentuckiense from location in northern Kentucky

Today, less than three percent of the original range of the longleaf pine is intact, some of it protected in west central Louisiana and in east Texas. The town of Nacogdoches, Texas was the launch site for the Native Orchid Conference Symposium this year, timed to coincide with the blooming of an orchid on nearly everyone's bucket list – *Cyp. kentuckiense.* the Kentucky Ladies' Slipper. It is hard to find there but has been the subject of an extensive restoration project in the Kisatchie National Forest, in Texas. Sadly, this slipper's blooming was greatly affected by the heat dome and drought that hovered over Texas and Louisiana last year and the plants bloomed early or not at all.

Longleaf pine savannas occur on sandy, dry acidic soil, and where they meet woodlands, hillside seepage bogs and swamps, there is high plant diversity, including such native orchids as *Calopogon oklahomensis, C. tuberosus, P. cristata, P. integra, P. nivea,* and numerous *Spiranthes* and companion plants such as pitcher plants, sundews, and gentians. With earlier and earlier bloomings last year and this, not every plant in this list was found; but there were pleasant surprises: a patch of *Spiranthes vernalis,* the Spring Ladies' Tresses, located along the roadside at an intersection where NOC members were headed for private property to see *Spiranthes longilabris,* the Long-Lipped Ladies' Tresses. One species was in prime condition: the other we just missed by a week.

Sp. vernalis, part of roadside population near Huntsville, Tx.

Spiranthes longilabris, Huntsville, Tx, we were so close, missed primetime by a week.

A well-cared for longleaf pine forest on private property near Wiergate, Tx. White bands mark trees with nests for red-cockaded woodpeckers.

One such hillside bog (as hard as that might be to believe), near Wiergate, Texas, was thriving because the family who owns it follows what nature once did routinely. Historically lightning strikes ignited natural fires which are essential to longleaf pine seeds sprouting as well as suppressing the encroachment of groundcover and dense brush. The forest was quietly renewed every three or four years, benefitting native orchids, and endangered plants/animals such as the Red-cockaded woodpecker, Gopher tortoise and Henslow's sparrows.

A juvenile longleaf pine with candle.

The red-cockaded woodpecker is the only woodpecker to make its nest in living pine trees, usually older trees infected with a fungus that softens the heartwood to make creating the nest cavity easier. On this property, the pines marked with a white band hold man-made birdhouses for the red-cockaded woodpecker to use; some NOC members who were also birders could hear the woodpeckers and, with binoculars, see them in the treetops.

The red-cockaded woodpecker, typically about seven inches long with a wingspan of about 15 inches.

On the forest floor, *Spiranthes praecox* was here and there. Also known as the Grass Leaved Ladies' Tresses, it is distributed in the southeastern United States and around the Gulf coast, easily identified by the distinct green stripes on its lip.

Hillside bog within longleaf pine forest, the steep ground is actually spongy underfoot with many, many pitcher plants.

And close to the pitcher plants, the occasional *Calopogon tuberosus.*

Gopher tortoise, this one was crossing the tire-track road oblivious to the Tahoe bearing down on it. I stopped and it survived.

Spiranthes praecox found in the drier, flatter areas of the same forest; wide height variation between clumps of plants.

Entering the Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve: we are only in the leaf stage, it was great to know that these survived last year's heat dome and to see the longleaf pines that founder Geraldine Watson planted many years ago to restore the property.

On this particular trip, heavy rains and an occasional tornado impacted travel plans – especially as we headed for the Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve near Warren, Texas. It was the afternoon stop on the last day of hiking and because of extraordinarily heavy rains, all the roads in its county were closed due to high water. We chose to wait, flipping other stops to allow the sun to work its magic. At last, the roads opened, and the only high water was literally at the entrance to the preserve. We drove through it anyway. Even though its highlight plant, *Plat. chapmanii,* Chapman's Fringed Orchid, was

View from Geraldine Watson's house at the preserve she founded. The lake was flooded and from the boardwalk in front of the bench, you could see the leaves of *Platanthera nivea* under water.

Leaves of *Platanthera chapmanii,* which ultimately bloomed a few weeks ago; one of the few *Platanthera* handling the Texas heat.

Also at the preserve, large patches of thriving *Calopogon tuberosus.*

As we were enroute home, we drove due east for a brief stopover at Abita Creek Flatwoods Preserve near Baton Rouge, Louisiana for one final spring bloomer and one not seen here – *Cleistesiopsis oricamporum*, the Coastal Plain Pogonia. Only recently described, it looks similar to *C. bifaria*, the mountain species but is slightly larger and has a faint vanilla fragrance. It loves the preserve and we found it along the boardwalk, in and along the mowed paths through the preserve. Even at the preserve sign, we found orchids, more *Sp. praecox*, almost literally at our feet.

At Abita Creek Flatwoods Preserve, the *Cleistesiopsis oricamporum*, Coastal Plain Pogonia, is SO, SO happy.

It also pays to look over, under, and around the signs. *Spiranthes praecox was* hiding in the weeds here.

Plans are progressing for next year's Native Orchid Conference symposium in the beautiful province of Newfoundland, Canada, July 3 - 7, 2025, on the campus of the Memorial University of Newfoundland in Corner Brook. An abundance of native orchids, possibly up to 20 species, spectacular landscapes, optional birding and marine life make this a bucket list destination. Details are on the NOC website, http://nativeorchidconference.org

Betsch Fen – Revisiting *Spiranthes incurva*

Angela Carter

When NOPES last visited Betsch Fen, a permit only state nature preserve, it was 2018 and we had not moved to thinking of *Spiranthes incurva* in Ohio; *Spiranthes cernua* had long been the nomenclature and belief at numerous fen sites. The following article is an amazing resource that is easily accessible online: Matthew C. Pace, Kenneth M. Cameron (2017) The Systematics of the *Spiranthes cernua* Species Complex (Orchidaceae): Untangling the Gordian Knot, *Systematic Botany, 42(4):1-30.*

The Nature Conservancy manages this state nature preserve and has not had any active management since my last visit; this knowledge had me wondering what the fen would look like after 6 years and this summer's drought conditions. The lesser fringed gentians (*Gentianopsis virgata*) were impacted by the drought and lack of management while the orchids were doing well with some signs of heat stress. Since it was a cloudy and rainy day on September 29, 2024, the gentians remained closed; and as we had on our last visit, we encountered some cleistogamous *Spiranthes* among the dozens of plants spotted amidst the tall grass.

The marl area continues to be my favorite spot in Betsch Fen due to the Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia glauca*). Hopefully TNC will find time to burn the special place now that their burn unit has been reestablished and ONAPA can partner in assisting with land management. If you get the opportunity to visit at the end of September, it is a treat and quite different from Gallagher Fen.

Spiranthes Field Trip

Jeanne Rhinehart

On October 5 members of Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society, Native Orchid Preservation and Education Society and Cincinnati Wild Flower Society traveled to see the fall blooming *Spiranthes magnicamporum* at the E. Lucy Braun Lynx Prairie Nature Preserve.

The drought in the area inhibited the usual showy blooms but a few fragrant specimens managed to put on a show

Bletia (Hexalectris) spicata (Walter) Barnhart - Crested Coral Root

Jeanne Rhinehart

Bletia spicata formerly known *Hexalectris* spicata has been moved to the genus *Bletia*. The genus *Bletia* is found in southern United States, Mexico, West Indies, Central and South America. It contains 30 species mostly terrestrial although some are lithophytic or epiphytic.
It is named after a Spanish botanist Luis Blet.

The original genus name *Hexalectris"* is Greek and means, "six cock combs," referring to the six raised ridges on the lip that resemble a rooster's crest. Spicata is Latin for "spiked"

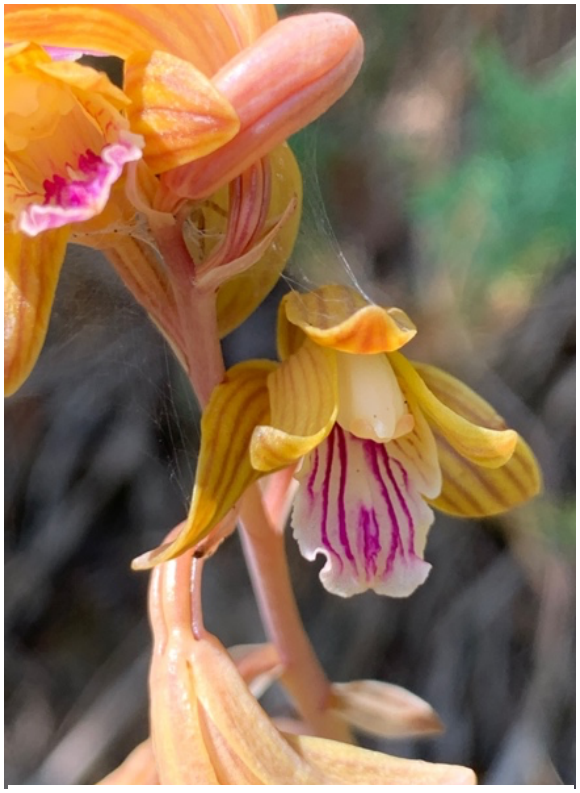
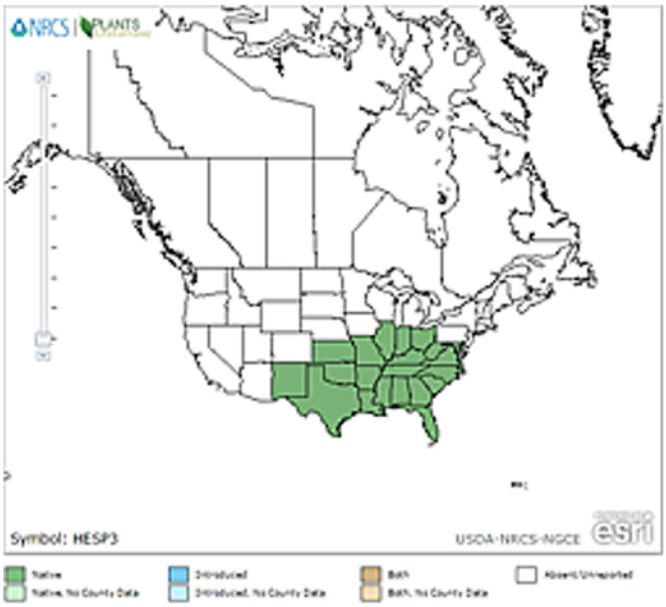


Photo by Teresa Huesman

Bletia spicata is a *Corallorhiza* or Coral Root orchid. *Corallorhiza* orchids do not photosynthesize having no chlorophyll but obtain the nutrients, minerals and water by parasitizing a mycorrhizal fungus.



Hexalectris spicata range map. USDA PLANTS Database.

There are 12 species found from North America through Central America.

"Plant glabrous throughout, leafless with a tan to yellowish-purplish, fleshy stem, 25-35 cm tall. Roots absent. Rhizome thick with concentric rings, as if jointed. Inflorescence a raceme of 8-15 flowers, each subtended by an ovate to ovate-lanceolate floral bract 5-7 mm long x 3-4 mm wide. Lip 13-16 mm long x 8-11 mm wide, shallowly 3-lobed, ovate to obovate, white to yellowish-white with purple ridges. Petals oblong to oblanceolate, yellowish-purple to tan, with purple veins, 15-17 mm long x 4-6 mm wide. Dorsal sepal is like petals, 18-20 mm long x 5-6 mm wide. Lateral sepals ovate to oblanceolate, oblique, 15-16 mm long x 6-8 mm wide." [1]

Bletia spicata blooms from early July to late August. It is thought to be pollinated by bumblebees. It grows in calcareous well-drained lands. While it occurs widely in the southern United States it is threatened or endangered in most.

References

1. *Orchids of Indiana,* Michael Al Homoya, Indiana Academy of Science, 1993, p. 124-127.

Native Orchids of North America, Donovan Stewart Correll, Stanford University Press, 1978, p. 318-320.

Go Orchids https://goorchids.northamericanorchidcenter.org/species/bletia/spicata/

US Forestry Service
https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/hexalectris_spicata.shtml

https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/beauty/corallorhiza/about.shtml