

PLATANThERA BLEPHARIGLOTTIS
(Willd.) Lindl.
White Fringed Orchid

FAMILY: Orchidaceae

SYNONYM: *Habenaria blephariglottis* (Willd.) Hook.

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial, 1-9 dm; flowering mid July-mid August.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Somewhat similar to *P. leucophaea* (Prairie Fringed Orchid), but differing in habitat and blooming period. The Large and Small Purple Fringed Orchids (*P. grandiflora* and *P. psycodes*) occasionally have white color forms that resemble *P. blephariglottis*.

TOTAL RANGE: Nfld. and Ontario to MI, s. to FL and TX, but missing from most of the Ohio drainage.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): There is a post-1980 record from Portage County. There are pre-1960 records from 5 other counties of northern Ohio: Ashtabula, Geauga, Lorain, Lucas, and Summit.

HABITAT: In full sun or semi-shade in damp, acidic situations, especially in cranberry or tamarack bogs.

HAZARDS: Alteration of water supply; over-shading by growth of woody species; picking of the attractive flowers.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably very poor.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering material is needed for identification.

COMMENTS: The 1983 rediscovery of this plant marks its first documented report for the state in more than 45 years. It was found at a site that has been periodically botanized since the late 1970's with no trace of the orchid prior to 1983. It apparently flowers very erratically. Research is needed into what triggers flowering. It may unexpectedly appear at other sites of appropriate habitat in northern Ohio.

Smith and Snow (1976) state that *P. blephariglottis* is pollinated mainly by night-flying moths. It appears these moths become inactive when night-time temperatures fall below 15°C. This is probably an important limiting factor in this orchid's distribution in the northern portion of its total range. Its pollination by night-flying moths also makes shade a less important limiting factor than for some other similar species of *Platanthera*, such as *P. ciliaris*.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Case, F.W., Jr. 1964. Orchids of the western Great Lakes region. Cranbrook Institute of Science Bull. No. 48, Bloomfield Hills, MI. 147 p.

Gleason, H.A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York. 910 pp.

Luer, C.A. 1975. The native orchids of the United States and Canada excluding Florida. New York Botanical Garden, New York, NY. 361 p.

Smith, G.R. and G.E. Snow. 1976. Pollination ecology of *Platanthera (Habenaria) ciliaris* and *P. blephariglottis* (Orchidaceae). Bot. Gaz. 137: 133-140.



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