

PLATANThERA CILIARIS (L.) Lindl.
Yellow Fringed Orchid

FAMILY: Orchidaceae

SYNONYM: *Habenaria ciliaris* (L.) R. Br.

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial, 3-9 dm.; flowering late July, August.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Flowering plants unmistakable; in color and overall appearance unlike any other Ohio wildflower; non-flowering material cannot be identified with certainty.

TOTAL RANGE: MA to MI, WI, and MO, s. FL and TX.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams, Hocking, Lucas, Scioto, and Washington counties. Pre-1980 records exist from Fulton, Lake, and Ross counties.

HABITAT: A variety of sunny, wet situations in acidic, often sandy substrates; pastures, wet fields, depressions, seepage areas, and roadbanks; requires a constant water supply.

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

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably good, as it is tolerant of moderate disturbance. However, the species is quite difficult to transplant.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Avoid over-collecting.

COMMENTS: This is such a conspicuous and striking plant, that its range probably is accurately known. Many people consider it the most brilliant-colored of all Ohio wildflowers. Some of the populations in Scioto County are quite large, but are easily found and subject to picking and other abuse. Most Ohio populations consist of very few individuals.

Smith and Snow (1976) report that the number of *P. ciliaris* flowers pollinated from open habitats was approximately double the number pollinated from semi-shaded habitats. This is probably due to the fact that *P. ciliaris* is largely pollinated by day-flying butterflies, which are initially attracted by the brightly colored flowers. Thus, maintaining open habitats appears critical to maintaining healthy populations of this orchid.

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