

PLATANThERA PSYCODES (L.) Lindl.  
Small Purple Fringed Orchid

FAMILY: Orchidaceae

SYNONYM: *Habenaria psycodes* (L.) Spreng. var. *psycodes*

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial to 9 dm.; flowering June-August.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Very similar to, and often confused with, the very rare *Platanthera grandiflora* (Large Purple Fringed Orchid), but less robust, with smaller flowers, and also blooming about 2 weeks later. Large specimens of *P. psycodes* are about the same height as depauperate specimens of *P. grandiflora*. Occasional albino forms somewhat resemble *P. blephariglottis* (White Fringed Orchid) or *P. leucophaea* (Prairie Fringed Orchid). Rare forms with entire lips simulate *P. peramoena* (Purple Fringeless Orchid).

TOTAL RANGE: Newfoundland to Manitoba, s. to DE, MD, KY, IN, and NE, and along the mountains to NC and TN.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Ashtabula, Champaign, Geauga, Lucas, Mahoning, Morrow, Wayne, and Williams Counties. There are pre-1980 collections from Auglaize, Carroll, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Erie, Fairfield, Hocking, Lake, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Medina, Portage, Richland, and Summit counties.

HABITAT: A variety of wet situations in semi-shade in neutral or subacidic substrates; swamp woods; alder thickets; shrub borders of bogs, though not in sphagnum; tolerant of standing water.

HAZARDS: Alteration of water supply; opening of forest canopy; picking of the flowers; digging of plants by wildflower gardeners.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably poor. It does not transplant readily.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering material is needed for identification. Avoid over-collecting.

COMMENTS: Despite the large, brilliant-colored flowers, the species is not very conspicuous in the mottled semi-shade of the swamp woods where it grows. Its blooming peak occurs when botanical activity is not intense, so it might well be found more frequently by searching the habitat at that time.

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.

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Stoutamire, W.P. 1974. Relationships of the purple-fringed orchids *Platanthera psycodes* and *P. grandiflora*. Brittonia 26: 42-58.



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