ARETHUSA BULBOSA L.
Dragon's-mouth

FAMILY: Orchidaceae

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial, 0.5-4.0 dm.; arising from a small corm loosely attached to the substrate; blooming, in Ohio, late May-mid June.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Pogonia ophioglossoides (Rose Pogonia) grows in the same habitat and also has solitary flowers; no other Ohio orchid even remotely resembles Arethusa, one of our most striking and distinctive wildflowers.

TOTAL RANGE: Nfld. to MN, s. to NJ, and n. IN; local in s. Appalachians to SC. Apparently absent from large portions of this total range.

STATE RANGE: There are pre-1960 records from Licking and Lorain counties. There are post-1980 records from a single small population in Portage County.

HABITAT: In full sun in sphagnum bogs, often in the wettest part of the bog. At the Ohio station, it occupies sphagnum hummocks that have developed over a marly substrate, but the corms are shallowly rooted only in the sphagnum moss itself.

HAZARDS: Drying of the bog; overshading by woody species; trampling of loose moss; over-collecting; the flowers also are sensitive to late frosts.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Probably very poor. Case (1964) suggests that the plants are short-lived and depend upon seed production for continued existence. No or few seeds probably are produced in years with late frosts.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collecting should be discouraged. Information on this species should not be released to curiosity-seekers.

COMMENTS: The Ohio range appears to be accurately known. The number of flowers in this population varies greatly from year to year, as does the blooming time.

SELECTED REFERENCES:


Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

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