

COWHORN ORCHID

Cyrtopodium punctatum (L.) Lindl.

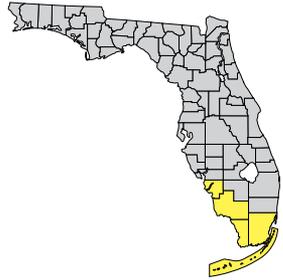
Synonyms: *Epidendrum punctatum* L.

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S1

Legal Status: US—none FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—UPL FL—UPL



Billy B. Boothe



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Field Description: Orchid attached to tree trunks by many white aerial roots. **Stems** (pseudobulbs) 12 - 14 inches long and 2 inches thick at base, pointed, with papery sheaths or rings left from old leaf bases. **Leaves** to 28 inches long, narrowly lance-shaped with parallel veins, rising from tips of pseudobulbs. **Flowers** to 3 inches across, in showy, much-branched clusters up to 3 feet long with 30 - 40 flowers; **sepals** 3, pale yellow with large purple-brown spots; **petals** 2, bright yellow with small purplish-brown spots; **lip** 3-lobed with 2 brownish-red lobes curving strongly upward, and middle lobe bright yellow. **Fruit** to 3.5 inches long and 2 inches wide, green, nodding.

Similar Species: An exotic terrestrial species, *Cyrtopodium paranaense*, has yellow-green flowers with no spots; it has escaped into pine rocklands in Dade County.

Related Rare Species: More than 70 other native orchid species are endangered or threatened in Florida.

Cowhorn orchid

Cyrtopodium punctatum

Habitat: Trunks and stumps of cypress trees in swamps, branches of buttonwood trees in coastal hammocks, and occasionally pine rocklands and marl prairies.

Best Survey Season: Flowers March–May but pseudobulbs and leaves are distinctive all year.

Range-wide Distribution: FL, Mexico, West Indies, Central and South America.

Conservation Status: This orchid was removed “wagonload upon wagonload” by plant collectors, and is now found in only the most remote areas in a few preserves.

Protection & Management:

Enforce plant protection laws and prosecute plant poachers. Protect wetlands from draining and logging.

References: Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Langdon 1981b, Luer 1972, McCartney 1985a, McCartney 1985b, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

