

PURPLE TIGER ORCHID

Camaridium micranthum M.A. Blanco

Synonyms: *Maxillaria parviflora* (Poepp. & Endl.) Garay

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G3G5/SX

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-OBL



Camaridium micranthum growing epiphytically on a tree of *Fraxinus cubensis*.

Field Description: **Plants** epiphytic, climbing. **Stems** with pseudobulbs distributed 2–8 cm along conspicuous rhizome; pseudobulbs nearly cylindrical to ovoid, 1.5–3 cm. **Leaves** 1 per shoot; blade lanceolate, 9–20 × 0.9–2 cm, almost leathery, apex acute. **Inflorescences** several, at base of mature shoots, less than 1 cm. **Flowers** white to light yellow with yellow-orange lip; sepals ovate, 6–7 × 3–3.5 mm, leathery, apex acute; lateral sepals 1/3 connate; **petals** ovate-elliptic, 4.5–5 × 2–2.5 mm, apex keeled, acute; lip continuous with column foot, deltate to 3-lobate, 2.5–4 × 3 mm when spread, lateral lobes somewhat erect; callus a simple transverse ridge connecting lateral lobes; column cylindrical, stout, less than 2.5 mm, foot less than 1 mm. **Capsules** 7–8 mm. (FNA 2023)

Similar Species: Hidden orchid (*Heterotaxis sessilis*) has pseudobulbs that are enveloped by leaves, flower pedicels not originating from the leaf axis, and fruits

purple tiger orchid

Camaridium micranthum

that laterally dehisce while *Camaridium micranthum* has pseudobulbs enveloped in leaf sheaths, flower pedicels originating from the leaf axis, and fruits that apically dehisce.

Related Rare Species: This is the only species in the *Camaridium* genus to have occurred in Florida. The most closely related species, hidden orchid (*Heterotaxis sessilis*), also has previously been considered as a species within the *Maxillaria* genus and occurs in the same region of Florida that *Camaridium micranthum* did prior to extirpation.

Habitat: Cypress strand swamps; epiphytic on Florida water ash (*Fraxinus cubensis*).

Best Survey Season: Flowered in September in Florida.

Range-wide Distribution: While *Camaridium micranthum* no longer occurs in Florida, it does occur in Mexico, many countries in northern South America, and the West Indies.

Conservation Status: This species has only ever been known from one occurrence located in Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park. It is now presumed extirpated because plants have not been seen since the host tree was severely damaged in 1990.

Protection and Management: If ever found again in Florida, in Fakatchee or otherwise, plants would likely need species-specific actions to help ensure the viability of the population.

References: Flora of North America (FNA) 2003, Pridgeon et al 2009, Weakley 2023, Whitten et al 2007.