

LEAFLESS BENTSPUR ORCHID

Campylocentrum pachyrrhizum (Rchb. f.) Rolfe

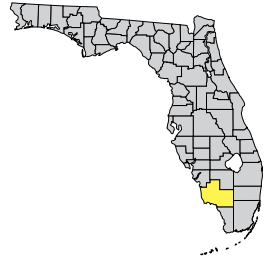
Synonym: *Aeranthus pachyrrhizus* Rchb. f.

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G4?/S1

Legal Status: US—none FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—none FL—UPL



Gil Nelson

Field Description: **Orchid** attached to trunks of trees. **Stems and leaves** hidden or absent. **Roots** up to 20 inches long, gray-green, photosynthetic, flattened with sharp edges, and spreading spider-like over trunks. **Flowers** tiny, funnel-shaped, up to 25 per spike, as many as 6 spikes present during flowering. **Sepals** pale yellow; **petals** pinkish-white, **lip** 3-lobed, whitish pink, **bracts** reddish-brown. **Fruit** 0.3 inch long, oval, 6-ribbed, hairy, orange-brown.

Similar and Related Rare Species: Ghost orchid (*Polyrrhiza lindenii*, syn. *Polyradicion lindenii*), state-endangered, also lacks obvious stems and leaves and is attached to trees by a network of green roots. It has striking white flowers and occurs in cypress swamps and hammocks in Collier, Lee, and Monroe counties. Needleroot orchid (*Harrisella porrecta*), state-threatened, is a leafless and stemless tree-dwelling orchid found throughout south and central FL; its roots are silvery, very slender, round, and not flattened against the trunk; flowers are minute, bell-shaped, and pale green.

Leafless bentspur orchid *Campylocentrum pachyrrhizum*

Habitat: Trunks and branches of trees in cypress swamps.

Best Survey Season: Flowers September–October, but may be recognized by gray-green, flattened, tree-hugging roots all year.

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

Conservation Status: Plants are known in only 1 conservation area. As with many of FL's epiphytic orchids, plant poachers have decimated this species.

Protection & Management: Enforce plant protection laws and prosecute plant poachers. Protect cypress strands and swamps from logging and hydrologic alterations.

References: Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Luer 1972, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

