

AUTUMN CORALROOT

Corallorhiza odontorhiza (Willd.) Nutt.

Synonyms: *Cymbidium odontorhizon* Willd.;

Corallorhiza micrantha Chapm.

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S1

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Field Description: Perennial **herb**, saprophytic (draws nutrients from decaying material in the soil) and lacking chlorophyll. **Stem** to 40 cm tall, slender, fragile, yellow to purplish-brown. **Leaves** reduced to a few sheaths clasping the stem. **Flowers** small, in a loose spike of 5 - 15 flowers at the top of the stem. **Sepals and petals** fused into a small, slender, purple and green tube; **lip** white, spotted with purple, with wavy margin. **Fruit** oval, nodding.

Similar Species: Spring coral-root (*Corallorhiza wisteriana*) is very similar, but blooms only in April and May.

Related Rare Species: Crested coral-root (*Hexalectris spicata*), state-endangered, is a saprophytic orchid with rusty-purple stems to 0.8 m tall. Flowers are purple and yellow with dark purple stripes and a conspicuous white column. This species occurs in dry hardwood forests in north and central FL, flowering April - June.

Habitat: Upland mixed-hardwood forests.

Best Survey Season: Fall; August - October, but is always difficult to see.

Range-wide Distribution: Canada south to TX and FL, also Mexico.

Conservation Status: Only 2 populations are known in FL, neither on conservation lands.

Protection and Management: Protect hardwood forests from clearcutting and development. Control invasive exotic plant species such as Chinese privet and Japanese honeysuckle.

References: Coile 2000, Gupton and Swope 1986, Luer 1972, Radford et al. 1968, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

