

## COWHORN ORCHID

*Cyrtopodium punctatum* (L.) Lindl.

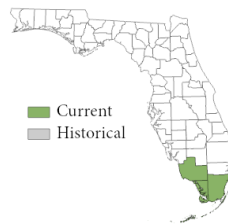
**Synonyms:** *Epidendrum punctatum* L.

**Family:** Orchidaceae (orchid)

**FNAI Ranks:** G5?/S1

**Legal Status:** US-none FL-Endangered

**Wetland Status:** US-none+ 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

## cowhorn orchid

*Cyrtopodium punctatum*

threatened in Florida.

**Habitat:** Trunks and stumps of cypress trees in swamps and scrub cypress stands, branches of buttonwood trees in coastal hammocks, and occasionally pine rocklands and marl prairies; epiphytic, rarely terrestrial.

**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 and 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.