

NIGHT-SCENTED ORCHID

Epidendrum nocturnum Jacq.

Synonyms: *Amphiglottis nocturna* (Jacq.)

Britton

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G4G5/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Billy B. Boothe



Gil Nelson

Field Description: Orchid with erect, leafy **stems**, attached to tree trunks and branches by numerous thick, white **aerial roots**. **Leaves** to 6 inches long, elliptic, leathery, 4 - 10 per stem. **Inflorescence** at the top of the stem with 1 - 2 flowers open at a time. **Sepals and petals** similar in size and shape, about 2.5 inches long, greenish-yellow, narrow, widely spreading; lip white, deeply 3-lobed, 2 lobes spreading and oval, 1 lobe narrow, long, and pointed. Flower is strongly scented at night. **Fruit** is a green, drooping capsule.

Similar Species: No other orchid species in FL has similar flowers.

Related Rare Species: Five other species of *Epidendrum* are also state-endangered: Acuna's star orchid (*E. acunae*, syn.: *E. blancheanum*), dingy-flowered star orchid (*E. anceps*), umbrella star orchid (*E. floridense*), stiff-flowered star orchid (*E.*

night-scented orchid

Epidendrum nocturnum

rigidum), and Big Cypress star orchid (*E. strobiliferum*).

Habitat: Cypress swamps, moist hammocks, and mangroves; epiphytic.

Best Survey Season: All year.

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

Conservation Status: Historically known from many sites, including more than a dozen conservation areas in 5 counties, this species has been severely reduced by plant poaching and habitat destruction.

Protection and Management: Enforce plant protection laws and prosecute plant poachers. Preserve wetlands from logging and draining.

References: Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, IRC 1999, Luer 1972, McCartney 1985a, ?McCartney 1985b, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.