

## SPIKED CRESTED CORALROOT

*Hexalectris spicata* (Walt.) Barnh.

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Orchidaceae (orchid)

**FNAI Ranks:** G5/S3

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

**Wetland Status:** US-FACU+ FL-FAC



**Field Description:** Terrestrial orchid that is saprophytic (living on decaying organic matter) and has no leaves or chlorophyll. Plants consist of a stout yellowish brown stem up to 2 ft tall topped by a spike of showy yellowish-brown, purple-striped flowers with a red-violet lip.

**Similar Species:** In Florida, spiked crested coralroot is most similar to two other saprophytic orchids also known as coral-roots: *Corallorrhiza ordontorhiza* and *C. wisteriana*. It differs from both of these in having larger flowers (sepals and petals almost an inch long vs. one quarter inch long) with purple striping in the petals, as well as the upper petals being about the same size as the lip and bent back from it (vs. smaller than the lip and bent forward over it). The fruits of *Hexalectris* are also larger than those of *Corallorrhiza* (1.6-3 cm long vs. 0.5-1.4 cm long).

**Related Rare Species:** None in FL.

**spiked crested coralroot*****Hexalectris spicata***

**Habitat:** Calcareous hammocks and shell middens; with a well-developed duff layer, often with limestone outcropping near the surface. Often in the vicinity of red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), pines (*Pinus* spp.), or oaks (*Quercus* spp.).

**Best Survey Season:** Summer-fall; May to September

**Range-wide Distribution:** Southeastern U.S. west to Texas and northern Mexico. In Florida, from Okaloosa County south to Lee and Indian River counties.

**Conservation Status:** Listed state-endangered and tracked as vulnerable, this species is vouchered from Okaloosa County south to Lee and Indian River counties in Florida.

**Protection and Management:** Requires accumulation of leaf litter (i.e. protection from fire).

**References:** Luer 1972, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.