

FROST-FLOWER ORCHID

Pleurothallis gelida Lindl.

Synonyms: *Pleurothallis tenuispica* Schltr.

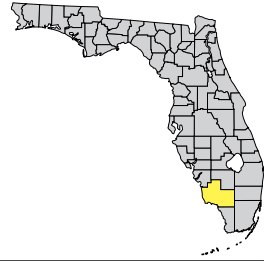
Humboldtia gelida (Lindl.) Kuntze

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G4/S2

Legal Status: US—none FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—none FL—UPL



Roger Hammer

Field Description: Orchid growing on trunks and branches in large masses of roots and leaves. **Stem** to 8 inches long, covered with papery sheaths and topped with a single leaf. **Leaves** to 10 inches long and 2.5 inches wide, oblong with rounded tips, leathery, with a central rib. **Flowers** small, nodding, pale yellow with glistening white hairs, 5 - 25 flowers loosely arranged in 2 rows in a slender, spike-like cluster emerging from the end of a stem, with 1 to several clusters per stem. **Fruit** an oval capsule to 0.4 inch long.

Similar Species: No other FL orchid resembles this species in flower. A clump of flowering plants resembles a clump of lily-of-the-valley in bloom.

Related Rare Species: Over 70 other species of native orchids are listed as threatened or endangered in FL.

Frost-flower orchid

Pleurothallis gelida

Habitat: Trunks and branches of pop-ash and pond apple trees in cypress strands and swamps.

Best Survey Season: Flowers December–April.

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

Conservation Status: Only a few populations are known from 1 conservation area.

Protection & Management: Enforce plant protection laws and prosecute plant poachers. Protect swamps from draining and other hydrological alterations.

References: Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Luer 1972, Small 1933, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

