

BRITTON'S SHADOW-WITCH

Ponthieva brittoniae Ames

Synonyms: *Ponthieva racemosa* (Walt.) C. Mohr

var. *brittoniae* (Ames) Luer

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G2G4/S1

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Chuck McCartney

Field Description: **Herb** to 20 inches tall. **Leaves** to 3.2 inches long, 3 - 5 per rosette, usually withered before flowering. **Flower stalk** with a few bracts. **Flowers** in a spike with up to 20 flowers held at a sharp angle to the stalk. **Lip** erect, pointed, white with 2 green spots; lateral **sepals** green, tapered, spreading; **petals** white, strongly curved under and pressed against the middle sepal; each flower part less than 0.2 inch long. **Fruit** erect.

Similar Species: Shadow-witch (*Ponthieva racemosa*) petals and sepals have green stripes, lip has green center, individual flower parts (especially petals) longer than 0.2 inch, flowers held at a wide angle to the stalk, fruit held horizontally. Shadow-witch occurs in hardwood hammocks and swamps.

Related Rare Species: More than 70 other species of native orchids are listed as

Britton's shadow-witch

Ponthieva brittoniae

threatened or endangered in FL.

Habitat: Open, pine rocklands and hammocks.

Best Survey Season: Winter-spring; January - February.

Range-wide Distribution: FL, Bahamas, Cuba.

Conservation Status: This species was last seen in FL in 1987 in Everglades Natl. Park. Most of its habitat has been lost to development and agriculture.

Protection and Management: Survey for more populations. Monitor all plants and protect sites from accidental mechanical disturbance. Burn pine rocklands every 3 - 7 years.

References: Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, IRC 1999, Luer 1972, McCartney 1985b, McCartney 1992a, McCartney 1997, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.