

CLAMSHELL ORCHID

Prosthechea cochleata var. *triandra* (L.) W.E.

Higgins

Synonyms: *Anacheilium cochleatum* (L.)

Hoffmanns.; *Encyclia cochleata* (L.) Lemee var.

triandra (Ames) Dressler; *Encyclia cochleata*

(L.) Lemee; *Prosthechea cochleata* (L.) W.E.

Higgins

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G4G5T2/S2

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Billy B. Boothe

Gil Nelson

Field Description: Orchid with pear-shaped, somewhat flattened stem (**pseudobulb**) attached to tree trunks and branches by numerous white **aerial roots**. **Leaves** to 30 cm long, strap-like. **Flowering stem** to 40 cm long, with up to 10 flowers. **Flower** with drooping, narrow, twisted, yellow-green **sepals** to 3 - 6 mm long, 2 **petals** similar to sepals, and an erect, purple-brown, shell-like **lip** marked with yellow. **Fruit** with 3 wings.

Similar Species: No other species resembles clamshell orchid, with its purple, erect lip and flattened pseudobulb.

Related Rare Species: See also dollar orchid (*Prosthechea boothiana* var. *erythronioides*) in this guide.

Habitat: Swamps, mangroves, and hammocks; epiphytic.

Best Survey Season: All year.

clamshell orchid

Prosthechea cochleata var. *triandra*

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

Conservation Status: This orchid has been decimated by plant poachers and by destruction of habitat. A few populations are known from inaccessible areas of several parks and preserves.

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

References: Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, IRC 1999, Luer 1972, McCartney 1985a, McCartney 1985c, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

