

FROST-FLOWER ORCHID

Stelis gelida (Lindley) A.M. Pridgeon & M.W. Chase

Synonyms: *Pleurothallis tenuispica* Schlechter;
Humboldtia gelida (Lindl.) Kuntze; *Pleurothallis gelida* Lindl.

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S1

Legal Status: US-none; FL-none



Roger Hammer

Field Description: Orchid growing on trunks and branches in large masses of roots and leaves. **Stem** to 10 - 25 cm long, covered with papery sheaths and topped with a single leaf. **Leaves** to 10 - 20 cm long and 2.5 - 10 cm 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 10 mm 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.

Habitat: Cypress swamps and hammocks; epiphytic on trunks and branches of pop-ash and pond apple trees.

Best Survey Season: Winter-spring; 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 and 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.

