

Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

Early coralroot (*Corallorhiza trifida* Chatelain)



This species has the widest range of the three coralroots in Manitoba. Expect to find it throughout the Province and is one of several orchids found on the open tundra around Churchill. As the common name implies, this is the earliest coralroot to bloom, often beginning to bloom in late May. In contrast to other species of this Genus the stems and flowers contain some chlorophyll and may not depend entirely on the mycorrhizal fungus for nutrition. Not as showy as the other two species, and smaller in stature, it is not always easy to find even though it is considered to be fairly common. Clumps of its distinctive seed pods remaining from the previous year may assist you in your search. Look for it in moist shaded locations.

Flower colour varies in the south from green with a white lip that has fine red spots, to pale green with a pure white unspotted lip (previously considered as variety *verna*). On the open Tundra near Churchill the blossoms are a light reddish brown with a white lip. The name *trifida* is from Latin "cleft into three parts" in reference to the three lobed lip.