

Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

Large Yellow Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*)



The large yellow lady's-slipper begins blooming in late May to early June and can still be found in blossom as late as mid-July in cool wet sphagnum bogs of the North. In 2001, visits to Long Point road in the Grand Rapids area on 1 June and again on 10 July found this orchid in bloom. Preferred habitats are forest openings and forest edges including roadside ditches throughout much of the southern half of Manitoba.

The flowers of this species vary tremendously. The petals and sepals can range in colour from a pale yellow, to greenish yellow with red streaks or spots, to a deep burgundy red. Petals may vary in length, and in the degree of twist, with some completely flat (formerly thought to be a separate variety). Plants range in size from a paltry 10cms to others with double flowered stems that stand up to 60cms high. The popularity of this orchid has contributed to a serious decline in numbers over the years as this flower has been over-picked and moved from its natural habitat to the flower beds of many gardeners.

Ask any Manitoban to name a native orchid and they will most often name the yellow lady's-slipper. The wide distribution of this orchid and its bright, showy flower has contributed to this familiarity. In our province we have two varieties of the yellow lady's-slipper; the large yellow lady's-slipper (var. *pubescens*) and the small yellow lady's-slipper (var. *makasin*).