

Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

Heart-leaved Twayblade (*Listera cordata* (Linnaeus) R. Brown var *cordata*)



A circumpolar orchid, this widespread species has been reported from south-eastern Manitoba across to the Saskatchewan border and as far north as Churchill. Preferred habitat is the cool moist sphagnum bed of a black spruce and tamarack bog. Difficult to find because of its small size and dimly lit environment, it is most often found in small colonies of 8 to 20 plants. Non-blooming plants, possibly seedlings, are often observed within these colonies. The pair of small heart-shaped leaves is distinctive and it is these leaves which give this species the name *cordata* from Latin "cordatus" meaning heart shaped.

Two flower colour forms occur in Manitoba, one red and the other green. Occasionally both can be found within the same colony. At Churchill, the flowers are smaller and are a dark reddish brown. The flower parts, including a long forked lip, remain fresh until the ovary swells and dispels its seeds. The blossoms are tiny but most interesting and to be appreciated these flowers must be examined under a magnifying lense. Expect to find this species in bloom from mid-June to early July.