

# Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

Tall white northern bog orchid (*Platanthera dilatata* (Pursh) Lindley var. *dilatata*)



The name of this species is from the Latin *dilatatus* "broadened or expanded" in reference to the dilated base of the lip.

This orchid occurs widely across the southern two thirds of the province. Distribution is variable, sometimes being found locally in large numbers, while in other areas it is found only occasionally. Seldom will you find this orchid anywhere but in open sunlit areas of black spruce and tamarack bogs and fens, and on floating sphagnum mats and sedge meadows in undisturbed areas. The plant grows as a single stem to clumps of several stems up to 75 cm high. The inflorescence can have from 10 to 50 or more blossoms, forming a cylindrical cone shape that has led to the alternate common name "bog candles". The flowers have a strong clove-like fragrance. Pollinated by bees, moths and butterflies (Stoutamir, 1068). Kipping (1971) observed night flying moths in California pollinating *Platanthera dilatata* var. *leucostachys*. Variety *dilatata* has only a slightly shorter spur than *leucostachys*, thus it is likely that these types of moths also pollinate *P. dilatata* in our province.

This orchid has a long blooming period from mid-June to mid-August with the prime period in mid-July. Look for it in open fens and bogs or in moist sedge meadows. Companion orchids may include *Cypripedium reginae* and *Arethusa bulbosa*.