

Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

Hooker's orchid (*Platanthera hookeri* (Torrey) Lindley)



The seemingly unusual species name for this orchid, was actually given in honour of William Jackson Hooker, an 18th century English botanist who wrote about North American plants.

Restricted to the south eastern part of the province, Hooker's orchid is equally at home in dry upland pine forests and moist but not wet coniferous forests. In appropriate habitat it will form colonies of 20 or more loosely associated plants. The growth habit can be confused with *Platanthera orbiculata*, both having two large rounded flat leaves lying directly on the ground and producing a tall erect inflorescence. Floral characteristics are however quite distinct. Non blooming stems of *Platanthera hookeri* do not have bracts on the stem as are found on *Platanthera orbiculata*.

This early blooming orchid is often difficult to find not only because it is uncommon, but also because the plant and flowers are green and blend into the surrounding vegetation. In late May to early June look for it in dry upland pine forests, similar to the habitat of *Cypridium acaule* where these orchids may be blooming together. In early to mid-July, look for this species in drier portions of black spruce and tamarack bogs.