



Identification Guide for 11 of Southwest Florida's
Epiphytic Orchids

Identification Key

How to use an identification key: Begin by looking at both number ones (1): the plant has visible leaves, or the plant does NOT have visible leaves. Select the correct one. Then go to the next number under the one selected and repeat the process until there are no more choices left. You have identified the orchid. For example, a plant has leaves (1). The plant does NOT have a pseudobulb at the base (2). The inflorescence is many flowered (3), and it has a long stalk and long leaves (4). Therefore, the orchid is a Night-fragrant Epidendrum.

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|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | The plant has visible leaves | <i>page</i> |
| 2. | Plants have pseudobulbs at the base | |
| 3. | Inflorescence grows from the tip of the pseudobulb | |
| 4. | Single bloom on each spike | |
| 5. | Lip of bloom at top Prosthechea cochleata (Clamshell Orchid) | 2 |
| 5. | Lip of bloom at bottom Encyclia tampensis (Butterfly Orchid) | 2 |
| 4. | Many blooms on each spike Polystachya concreta (Yellow Helmut Orchid) | 2 |
| 3. | Inflorescence grows from bottom or side of pseudobulb | |
| 4. | large plant; blooms large, heavily spotted Cryptopodium punctatum (Cowhorn Orchid) | 2 |
| 4. | small plant; blooms small, clear Ionopsis utricularioides (Delicate Ionopsis) | 3 |
| 2. | Plants do NOT have pseudobulbs at the base | |
| 3. | Inflorescence is many-flowered | |
| 4. | Long stalk & long leaves Epidendrum amphistomum (Dingy-flowered Star Orchid) | 3 |
| 4. | Short stalk & small leaves Epidendrum floridense (Florida Star Orchid) | 3 |
| 3. | Inflorescence is NOT many-flowered | |
| 4. | Flowers large, white, long thin petals Epidendrum nocturnum (Night-fragrant Orchid) | 3 |
| 4. | Flowers small, yellow; leaves small Epidendrum rigidum (Rigid Epidendrum) | 4 |
| 1. | The plant does NOT have leaves | |
| 2. | Roots very tiny; white; wire-like Harrisella porrecta (Jingle Bell Orchid) | 4 |
| 2. | Roots large, flat, grayish Dendrophylax lindenii (Ghost Orchid) | 4 |

Bloom Chart

KEY: x = typical bloom period, **X** = heaviest blooming month:

month:	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
C. punctatum	-	-	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D. lindenii	-	-	-	x	x	X	X	x	-	-	-	-
E. amphistomum	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	-	-
E. floridense	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	x	x	x	-
E. nocturnum	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x
E. rigidum	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	x	x	x	x
E. tampensis	x	x	-	-	x	x	x	-	-	-	x	-
H. porrecta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	x	x	x	-
I. utricularioides	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x
P. cochleata	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	X	X	x	x
P. concreta	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	X	X	x

Note: Just because a plant typically blooms in a given month doesn't mean it always will, and just because a plant doesn't usually doesn't bloom in a given month doesn't mean it won't.

Glossary

EPIPHYTE: a non-parasitic plant that grows on other plants; the roots are used for attaching the plant to a surface but do not harm the host plant

INFLORESCENCE: the flowering part of the plant.

LIP or LABELLUM: a modified petal; in orchids it is usually different than the other two petals

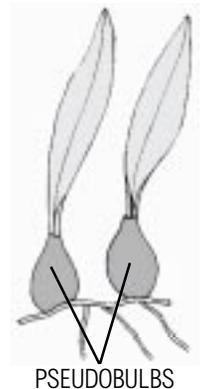
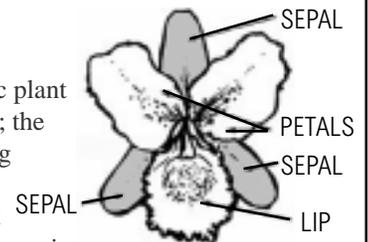
PETAL: the flower parts that are inside the sepals, often brightly colored

PSEUDOBLUB: the thickened bulb-like part of the stalk at the base of the plant

SEPAL: part of the flower envelope; the outside of the bloom

SPIKE: an unbranched inflorescence that has the youngest blooms at the end

STALK: a stem-like support of any organ



Prosthechea cochleata

Clamshell Orchid

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs yes
Inflorescence from tip of pseudobulb
Blooms one per spike

Leaves: 1-3 lance-shaped leaves grow from the tip of the pseudobulb; frequently to 12"; all grow from pseudobulb rather than from separate flower stalk



Blooms: grow on stalk from tip of pseudobulb; single blooms per stalk although multiple stalks; concave lip at top of flower with fine yellow lines radiating from base of purple petal; other petals (usually 5) thin, creamy to yellowish-green; hanging down

Habitat: low, often on more horizontal trunks and branches of trees; frequently pop ash and red maple; often found growing amid Resurrecton Fern

Encyclia tampensis

Butterfly Orchid

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs yes
Inflorescence from tip of pseudobulb
Blooms one per spike

Leaves: grow from tip of pseudobulb; very narrow and leathery



Pseudobulbs: brownish-red to brownish-green; shaped likerounded Hershey Kiss; sizevaries from plant to plant

Blooms: grow on stalk from tipof pseudobulb; single bloomfrom each branch of stalk; multiple stalks; lip white with purple edges at bottom; colors of petals vary from green to yellow to bronze

Habitat: grows on branches of rough-barked trees; usually found within 20' of ground but can grow higher

Polystachya concreta

Yellow Helmut Orchid

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs yes
Inflorescence from tip of pseudobulb
Blooms many per spike

Leaves: thin, lance-shaped, grow from tip of pseudo-bulb; darker green in shaded areas and lighter in sunnier; closeto pseudo-bulb (not onextended stalk)



Pseudobulbs: cylindrical and tapered, usually hidden byleaves

Blooms: multiple flowers on drooping stalks; creamy-white to yellow-white; lip three-lobed; open bloom faces down

Habitat: can form large masses; strongest colonies on leaning or fallen trunks where they get more moisture, but many found on cypress 30' or higher from ground

Cyrtopodium punctatum

Cowhorn/Cigar Orchid

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs yes
Inflorescence from base of pseudobulb
Blooms several per stalk

Leaves: grow from side or bottom of pseudobulb large and erect (over 2' long and up to 5" wide at widest point)



Pseudobulbs: long spindle-shaped to 12"; often hidden by leaves

Blooms: grow on branches at end of semi-erect inflorescence; petals yellow with bright orange-red edges; sepals (look like petals but a covering for male petals) yellow-green with darker spots; blooms to about 2"; masses of blooms

Habitat: open swamps and hardwood hammocks; typically grows low but can be in tops of cypress trees

Ionopsis utricularioides

Delicate Ionopsis

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs yes
Inflorescence from base of pseudobulb
Blooms many branch from single stalk

Leaves: grow in pairs around pseudobulb; to 7.5-8 inches long; thin

Pseudobulbs: usually hidden in leaf pairs

Blooms: many branched; white-pink with lilac veins; prominent two-lobed lip at bottom

Habitat: hardwood hammocks sloughs, cypress comes; almost always occur over or near standing water; prefer to grow on slender twigs

Note: endangered



Epidendrum amphistomum

Dingy-flowered Star Orchid

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs no
Inflorescence from leaf base
Blooms clustered at tip

Leaves: elliptical; wider near tip than at base; to 7" long; each leaf arches along long stalks which can grow to 4' but are commonly closer to 2' in length

Blooms: grow in hanging clusters at tip of inflorescence; mature blooms yellowish-green with trace of orange while immature blooms more greenish; individual flowers to about 1"

Habitat: found in swamps and hammocks on a variety of trees but usually close to the ground; found most often in trees over water

Note: formerly *Epidendrum anceps*



Epidendrum floridense

Florida Star Orchid

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs no
Inflorescence from leaf base
Blooms in clusters

Leaves: glossy; dark green; elliptical but reasonably wide; grow along length of stalk; alternating; relatively thick (almost succulent-looking); whole plant short and stocky

Blooms: grow in clusters; each bloom small to 1"; a pale watery yellow-green in color

Habitat: swamps; grows mostly on pop ash and pond apple in areas over water; susceptible to cold so usually close to water level

Note: formerly *Epidendrum difforme*



Epidendrum nocturnum

Night-fragrant Epidendrum

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs no
Inflorescence from leaf base
Blooms one per stalk

Leaves: dark green; elliptical; alternating on stalks; long

Blooms: single bloom at tip of stalk but several stalks; long, slender yellowish sepals and petals; lip white, strongly three-lobed with middle lobe thin and longer than the ones to either side; relatively large bloom to 5"; self-pollinating; fragrance strongest at night

Habitat: grows on variety of trees, usually close to ground and near water



Epidendrum rigidum

Rigid Epidendrum

Leaves yes
Pseudobulbs no
Inflorescence from leaf base
Blooms several per stalk

Leaves: light green; elliptical; alternating along stalk; to 2" long and from 1/2-3/4" at widest point

Blooms: in terminal spikes; greenish-yellow; small (to 1/4"); lip at top and rounded; alternate toward tip of spike

Habitat: found on a variety of rough-barked trees including cypress, pop ash, pond apple, red maple; will grow high; may form dense colonies

Note: one of the most commonly observed of the epiphytic orchids



Harrisella porrecta

Jingle Bell Orchid

Leaves no
Pseudobulbs no
Inflorescence from base of roots
Blooms one per spike

Roots: hairless, whitish; wire-like; orchid most often found by seeing roots; tip of roots often greenish (photosynthesis there because no leaves)

Blooms: up to half dozen pale yellow blooms but usually less; very small to 1/8" (about the size of a #2 pencil eraser)

Habitat: on a variety of twigs and small branches of rough barked trees in hammocks, sloughs, swamps; grows high or mid-level but rarely low

Note: common name "Jingle Bell" from small round fruit after blooming that hangs like a jingle bell



Dendrophylax lindenii

Ghost Orchid

Leaves no
Pseudobulbs no
Inflorescence from center of root base
Blooms one per stem

Roots: hairless, flattened, fleshy; grayish-white; tips of root growth often greenish (photosynthesis there because no leaves)

Blooms: large to 5"; doesn't flower every year; sepals and petals similar, white; lip three-lobed; middle lobe tapers to two long recurving lobes; long thin single flower stalk grows from center of root mass

Habitat: on rough barked trees in hammocks, sloughs, cypress swamps



Notes & Observations

Booklet compiled by Dick Brewer

Good reference: *Wild Orchids of Florida* by Paul Martin Brown