

Native Orchid News:

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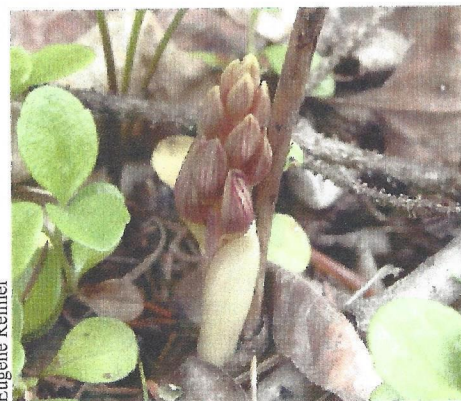
Striped coral-root
(*Corallorhiza striata*)



Richard Reeves



Eugene Reimer



Eugene Reimer



Richard Reeves

President's Report

By Doris Ames

Spring is here at last and this issue contains our 2007 fieldtrip schedule. I hope you will be able to come with us on some of these outings.

The Manitoba Orchid Society orchid show was a great success. We met many interesting orchid-lovers over the three days and our display on our Seed-bank initiative won first prize in the Educational-Display category. Thanks very much to the volunteers who came out to help.

We have an upcoming presentation at the new Millennium Library on Thursday April 26 at 7pm in the Buchwald Room. We will show our slide-show "Orchids: Beauty in Diversity".

We are holding an extra special fieldtrip as part of our Orchid Festival on Sunday June 17 at Senkiw, Manitoba. Please be sure to attend and a special welcome to all fathers and grandfathers on their special day.

Plant of the Month

Striped coral-root (*Corallorhiza striata*)

by Doris Ames

The botanical name for this genus comes from the Greek words korallion meaning “coral” and rhiza meaning “root” and refers to the branched underground rhizome that resembles coral. The species name comes from the Latin word striatus meaning “striped” in reference to the markings on the floral parts.

This uncommon orchid is found in clearings in upland coniferous or mixed forests. It prefers dry to moist soils with a weakly acidic to neutral pH. Striped coral-root is found in the south-east part of the province and through the Parklands region to the Saskatchewan border.

The fleshy, leafless flowering stems, 15-45cm tall, emerge from the underground rhizome, often appearing in large, showy clumps. The raceme consists of ten or fewer striped flowers that are best viewed from ground level. Their drooping sepals and petals are off-white in colour with purplish-red stripes, which gives the plant its characteristic candy-cane appearance. The swollen, elongated lip is purplish-red with dark purple stripes. The compressed column curves over the lip showing its terminal yellow pollinia.

Striped coral-root blooms from late May to early July and prefers cool soils. Parasitic wasps are believed to be the pollinators. The large, ribbed, pendant (blossom-end down) seed capsules are initially light pink with white stripes but turn dark brown as they ripen.

Coral-roots have interesting growth habits. They spend most of their lives underground only periodically emerging to flower on stems with very tiny scale-like leaves. This kind of lifestyle does not allow them to produce much sugar by photosynthesis so they have learned how to tap into the mutualistic relationships between trees and their specific mycorrhizal fungal partners. They host these same mycorrhizal fungi in their roots and thereby share in the sugars produced by the trees. Their underground rootstocks can remain dormant for many years and that means flowers may not appear every year in the same location.

The unusual lifestyle and the habit of the dorsal sepal to hang downward obscuring part of the flower makes striped coral-root a challenge to photograph, but if one is lucky enough to find a large clump of flowering stems glowing like rubies in a beam of sunshine then the rewards can be very great.

NOCI Field-Trip Schedule - 2007

Saturday, May 5 - Old Dawson Road, East Braintree, and Hadashville. We expect to see spring flowers in the pine forests and in a riparian area along the Whitemouth River. These will include crocus, coltsfoot, and marigolds, as well as the rare eastern bloodroot along the Whitemouth River, and trailing arbutus in the pines. We will have lunch in the Manitoba Forestry Association's Sandilands Forest Interpretive Centre near Hadashville and have time to view their graceful suspension bridge over the river and other attractions. Come out and celebrate spring!

Saturday, June 9 - Cedar Bog near Woodridge - more than a dozen native orchid species can be found in this very special area including the rare Ram's-head lady's-slipper, Hooker's orchid, and the exquisite Small round-leaved orchid. There are many other unusual plants in the immediate area including New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus herbaceus*).

Saturday, June 16 - The Brokenhead Wetlands near Scanterbury - this rare wetland contains 28 species of native orchids including Dragon's-mouth and Grass-pink as well as many other rare plants. Sign up early because this is a favourite destination and we have to limit the number of participants to reduce damage to this fragile wetland.

Sunday, June 17 - SPECIAL EVENT - Join us for a hike on the Franklin part of the Crow Wing Trail near Senkiw in summer. We will see lady's-slippers and other species of orchids along this trail that includes upland sandy areas as well as a riparian portion near the Roseau River. There are many species of violets, vines, and shrubs. This fieldtrip is part of an **Orchid Festival** that we are holding in conjunction with the Franklin branch of the Crow Wing Trail Association and the Parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Nativity of St. Mary in Senkiw. Admission includes the interpreted fieldtrip, displays, a slide-show on orchids, a talk on the pioneer history of the area including a look inside the beautiful old church, BBQ hotdogs and drinks for lunch at the old town hall, and a lot of fun! An additional attraction is the historic suspension bridge built across the beautiful Roseau River many years ago by area residents so their children could go to school and recently restored by the Franklin branch of the CWT-Association. Register early to avoid disappointment.

Saturday, June 23 - for those who missed the first trip another chance to visit the Brokenhead Wetlands. Later-blooming orchids like White bog-orchid (*P. dilatata*) and Showy lady's-slippers should be in full flower along with 8 or more species of carnivorous plants including pitcher plants and the exotic sundews.

To register for a trip, please contact our fieldtrip-coordinator Iris Reimer at 475-9878 or irhymer@shaw.ca. Please register early because we take a limited number of participants in order to minimize damage to some of the sensitive habitats. There is a charge of \$10.00 per adult, or \$5.00 per child under 18 to cover costs and you will be required to sign a liability waiver. You must be a member of NOCI to join us on these trips. Please use your discretion as to whether you are able to participate depending on the degree of difficulty but most of our trips are suitable for any healthy adult. Iris can advise you. Our fieldtrip-leaders are all amateur naturalists with field experience. We can't guarantee that you will see every plant we mention but you will see many different plants and animals and meet interesting people. Please dress suitably for the weather as we intend to go rain or shine. Hats, drinking water, a bag lunch, sunscreen, and insect repellent are strongly recommended. Please let Iris know if you have room for extra passengers in your car as we encourage car-pooling. We will arrange to meet at a place in the city that is on a bus route before we set off on the fieldtrip. You will be notified if we have to cancel the trip for any reason. Suggested field-guides: *Orchids of Manitoba* and *Plants of the Western Boreal Forest and Aspen Parkland*.

Volunteers are needed to assist with leading trips. As such a volunteer you could learn about native orchids and other rare plants. You won't get paid but you will get free transportation or mileage if your vehicle is needed. If you would like to help, please contact Iris at 475-9878.