

Chapman's fringed orchid

(*Platanthera chapmanii*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Chapman's fringed orchid is an endangered terrestrial orchid found in wet prairies, pine savannas and along wet roadsides and ditches. Its showy flowers typically bloom in summer and peak in August. Although this species is rare, Chapman's fringed orchids tend to grow in small colonies resulting in patches of bright color. Butterflies are its primary pollinator and use their long tongues to access the nectar. The pollen attaches to the insect's eyes and is carried to the next flower.

The brilliant flowers of Chapman's fringed orchid are orange to bright yellow with a heavily fringed lower lip. A spur extending behind the lip is filled with nectar. Anthers are split and obvious. Flowers are born in terminal racemes atop stout, rigid stems. Racemes may grow to 5 inches long and contain 50 or more individual flowers. The bright green to bluish-green leaves may be lanceolate, ovoid or triangular and decrease in size as they ascend the stem. The fruit is a capsule.

Many botanists believe Chapman's fringed orchid is a natural hybrid of Yellow fringed orchid (*P. ciliaris*) and Crested fringed orchid (*P. cristata*).

According to Paul Martin Brown in his book, *Wild Orchids of Florida*, Chapman's fringed orchid is on the rarest orchids in the United States, with 90 percent of its population occurring in 12 Florida counties.

The genus name *Platanthera* is from the Greek for "broad or wide anther."

Family: Orchidaceae (Orchid family)

Native range: Franklin, Liberty, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor counties in the Panhandle; Marion, Columbia, Union, Baker, Clay, Duval and Nassau counties in the northern peninsula

To see where natural populations of Chapman's fringed orchid have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8–9A

Soil: Moist to wet acidic soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: up to 3' tall

Note: Chapman's fringed orchids may not be harvested or sold in Florida without a permit.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo