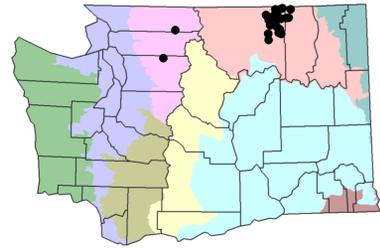


Platanthera obtusata* (Banks ex Pursh) Lindl. ssp. *obtusata

synonym: *Habenaria obtusata* (Banks ex Pursh) Richardson
small northern bog-orchid
Orchidaceae - orchid family
status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive
rank: G5 / S2



General Description: Hairless perennial with stems 5-35 cm tall. Stems leafless except for a single basal leaf; occasionally with a single small bract near midlength. Leaves solitary (rarely 2), basal, the blade elliptic-oblancheolate to oblong-oblancheolate with a rounded tip, 3-15 cm long and 1/3 to 1/4 as broad, gradually tapered to a winged petiole.

Floral Characteristics: Raceme with 3-15 flowers. Floral bracts green to yellow, up to 15 mm long below, scarcely 2 mm above. Flowers pale greenish or yellowish green, the lip and sometimes the petals whitish. Upper sepal triangular to suborbicular, 3-4 mm long, nearly erect. Lateral sepals triangular-ovate, 4-6 mm long, reflexed. Petals broadly lanceolate, curving inward. Lip narrowly strap-shaped, (4) 5-9 mm long, scarcely 1.5 mm wide, pendent but with a slightly upturned tip, unlobed, margins entire. Spur tapered from the base, slightly curved, 3-8 (10) mm long. Ovary 3-10 mm. Flowers June to July.

Fruits: Capsules.

Identification Tips: Distinguished by the 1 semierect, hairless leaf at the base of the plant, and yellowish to whitish green flowers. Most easily confused with seedlings of other orchids and lilies, but these do not have the characteristic leaf shape of *P. obtusata*.

Range: Circumpolar: throughout Canada, AK, south to CO, MN, MI, NY, OR, and UT.

Habitat/Ecology: Damp or wet places in forests, marshes, bogs, meadows, and stream banks. Most occurrences in WA are in moist to wet forests dominated by Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*). Other associates include western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), alder (*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*, *A. viridis* ssp. *sinuata*), subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), currant (*Ribes* spp.), mosses, sedges (*Carex* spp.), twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), and bunchberry dogwood (*Cornus unalaschensis*). Elevations in WA: 270-1620 m (875-5320 ft).

Comments: Threats include livestock grazing, road construction, timber harvest, and hydrologic alteration. This taxon is rare throughout the western U.S., Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and possibly extirpated from MA.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 26; Luer 1975.

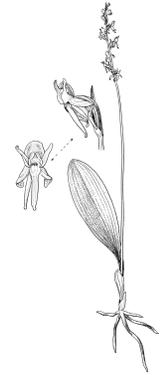


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