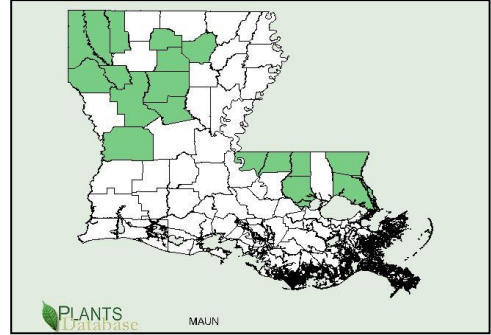


Native Orchid of the Month—December

Malaxis unifolia
(green adder's-mouth orchid)

Malaxis unifolia, commonly known as green adder's mouth, is widely distributed across central and eastern Canada and the U.S., from Texas to Newfoundland. It is a small orchid, usually between 4 and 12 inches tall, and produces one or rarely two glossy leaves mid-way up the stem, with a sheathed base that reaches down to the stem's swollen base.

The inflorescence is a raceme that elongates from a flat ball to a 5-inch tall cylinder of stalked flowers. It



produces up to 160 small green flowers, with a three-lobed labellum and strongly recurved lateral petals. The flowers are the smallest of any of our native orchids, measuring less than 1/8 inch wide.

It flowers in spring and early summer in the northern part of its range, while in the south it blooms later into the late fall. Although the flowers are small and inconspicuous, they are highly attractive to insects; probably small flies are the pollinators.



It grows in moist areas such as swamps, and bogs, as well as in drier woodlands and forest.

