

Native Orchid of the Month—March

Pogonia ophioglossoides
(snakemouth orchid)

Pogonia ophioglossoides (snakemouth orchid) occurs from central Canada to the east-central and eastern United States. In Louisiana its range is mostly in the western portion of the State. Also known as the rose pogonia, it usually has only one flower on an erect, slender stem.

The flower is about 1 to 2 inches across on the top slender 8- to 20-inch stalk. Sepals are petal-like, an upper sepal stands erect at the top, 2 petals—sometimes with darker pink veination—form a hood above, 2 lateral



sepal stands erect at the top, 2 petals—sometimes with darker pink veination—form a hood above, 2 lateral sepals open out to the sides. The lavish lower lip is unlobed but ornate with pink fringes and a yellow and white bearded throat. A leaf-like bract is at the base of the ovary behind the flower.

It has a nice fragrance and appears like a seductive snake's mouth or just a toothy smile. This orchid's delightful appearance is always a cheerful event. It is pollinated by bumblebees.

It flowers in early spring through July and is typically found in sphagnum bogs, moist acidic sandy meadows and prairies, wet pine flatwoods, and pine savannas.

