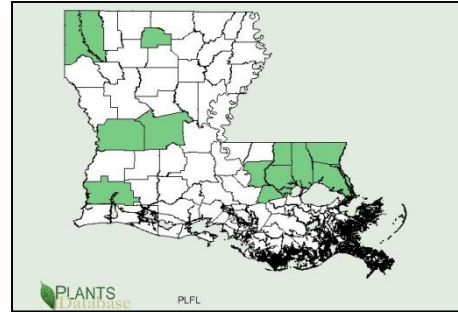


Native Orchid of the Month—May

*Platanthera flava*  
(pale green orchid)

*Platanthera flava* (pale green orchid) has a wide range in the eastern United States and Canada. In the northern portion of its range, this species is particularly associated with shorelines of lakes and rivers, in the seasonally flooded zone. In the south, it is found in wet savannas and flatwoods. The shoreline habitats of the north are maintained by ice scour, while in the south, the flatwoods are maintained by recurring fire. Hence, it appears that this species depends upon recurring natural disturbance to maintain open sunny conditions.



Its sweet, perfume-like fragrance is often detected before the plant itself, as its largely greenish coloration makes this species rather inconspicuous.

The leaves occur only along the hairless stem and are about 8 inches long and 2 inches wide with a lance-like in shape. Plants growing directly in sunlight have yellow-green leaves, but those in the shade have dark green leaves.

The inflorescence a congested spike with elongate bracts; flowers sessile, greenish-yellow or green; lip deflexed, often irregular on the margin, bearing a conspicuous, fin-like extension on the upper side just below the middle, and usually with a small lateral lobe on each side at the base.



Flowering occurs early June through early August; fruiting occurs early July through late August.

