

Native Orchid of the Month—May

***Platanthera lacera***  
(green fringed orchid)

The *Platanthera lacera* (green fringed) orchid is 1 to 2½ feet tall and unbranched. The stem is light green, glabrous, and somewhat stout with two to five alternate leaves developing from sheaths. They are 2- to 8-inches long and ½- to 2-inches across, becoming smaller as they ascend the central stem. In relation to the stem, the leaf



blades are nearly erect and slightly spreading. The central stem terminates in a narrow raceme flowers about 3- to 8-inches long. The whitish or yellowish green flowers are arranged all around the central stalk of the raceme on ascending stout stems about 1-inch long.



The lower petal is the showiest part of the flower, about ½-inch wide and usually paler than the rest of the flower. It is lobed in 3 parts—2 side lobes that extend outward and 1 that extends down, each lobe deeply divided into fringed sections. There is a long spur at the back of the flower that curves down behind the lower petal.



It typically flowers from May through August. The blooming period lasts about 3 weeks. The flowers are often fragrant, especially at night and are pollinated by moths.

Its range includes the eastern portion of North America and, although within its range, plants have not been documented in Louisiana.

