

Native Orchid of the Month—August

Platanthera integra
(yellow fringeless orchid)

Yellow fringeless orchid, *Platanthera integra*, found in southern New Jersey and eastern North Carolina south to Florida and Texas and north to Tennessee, has orange-yellow flowers with a fringeless lip. It flowers from July to September and it found on pine barrens, peaty depressions in pine savannas, and wet sandy woods.

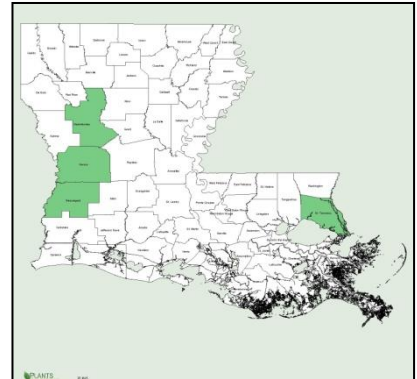
Platanthera integra is a medium-sized terrestrial orchid up to 18 inches tall and bearing a flower head 3 inches or smaller in height.

The small yellow to orange flowers have slightly lacerated edges (but not the deep fringing seen in other *Platantheras*) and are packed in a very dense cluster atop a fluted, blue-green

stem. The leaves (one to three) start out rather long for the small plants at the base of the plants, but are quickly reduced to the size of the floral bracts somewhat below the actual flower head.



Although small, the flowers are quite conspicuous. Perhaps the best time to look for these is in the late afternoon, when the sunlight itself is golden. Under such conditions, the flowers of these orchids have been described as looking like small torches having been lit within their grassland setting.



Platanthera integra is considered globally vulnerable and is rare throughout parts of its range.

