

# Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

## Checkered rattlesnake orchid (*Goodyera tessellata* Loddiges)



The species name of this orchid is taken from the Latin *tessera* - "a piece of mosaic paving" in reference to the reticulation along the veining on the leaves. The checkered rattlesnake orchid can be distinguished from its close relative, the lesser rattlesnake orchid by its larger size and a different pattern of markings on the leaves.

The range of this orchid includes the ancient beach ridges of Lake Agassiz in the south-eastern portion of the province and the Canadian Shield on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Preferred habitat is mature stands of Jackpine and coniferous forests, usually in dry sandy soil or in humus collected in hollows of the granite outcroppings.

The stems arise from a branching horizontal rhizome, with from 3 to 8 leaves forming a rosette. The inflorescence is loosely spiraled or in a lax cylindrical raceme. This species is thought to be pollinated by bumblebees.

In appropriate habitat the checkered rattlesnake orchid can be locally abundant. Look for it in Jackpine stands of the Agassiz Provincial Forest and canoeists in July to early August will encounter it along portage trails of river systems in the Whiteshell and Nopiming Provincial Park.