

# Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

## Loesel's Twayblade (*Liparis loeselii* (Linnaeus) L.C. Richard)



Named by Linnaeus in honour of Johann Loesel, a seventeenth century German botanist, this small orchid is found in eastern North America as well as in northern and central Europe. (Luer, Caryle A. The Native Orchids of the United States and Canada excluding Florida). This is the only species of this Genus in our province. In Manitoba it occurs in the south eastern corner of the province, north into the Interlake area and across to the Swan River and The Pas area. In 2003 we found it at Hargrave River on #6 highway as well as in the Rotary Campground in Flin Flon. It prefers alkaline rather than acid situations in cool moist bogs, fens, and meadows and readily adapts to disturbed areas frequently colonizing borrow-pits, roadside approaches, ditches and trails. This orchid has been found growing in shallow standing water.

Only 10 to 15 cms high, this inconspicuous, small flowered orchid is easy to miss and may be more common than reported. Blooming from late June into July, the yellow green flowers are short lived, quickly forming large seed capsules. Dr. Paul Catling has noted that pollination may be assisted by raindrops being deflected toward the anthers by the upturned labellum, dislodging pollinia onto the stigma. (Catling, P. M. 1980. Rain-assisted autogamy in *Liparis loeselii* (L.) L. C. Rich. (Orchidaceae). Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club 107:525-529.)

The seed capsules are conspicuous and often lead to the discovery of the plant. The Tall Grass Prairie Preserve in south-eastern Manitoba is a good area to search for colonies of plants in both the blooming and seed capsule stages. Look carefully among the grasses and *Equisetum* (horse tails) in moist to wet roadside ditches.