

Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

Northern green bog orchid (*Platanthera aquilonis* Sheviak (formerly *Platanthera hyperborea* (Linnaeus) Lindley)



The species name of this orchid is from the Latin *aquilonius* "northern" in reference to its northern distribution in North America.

Previously known as *Platanthera hyperborea*, recent taxonomic research by Dr. Charles Sheviak indicates that the true *Platanthera hyperborea* does not occur in North America. The original plant ascribed to this epithet was from Iceland and the plants in North America differ from those in Iceland. (Charles J. Sheviak, *Lindleyana* 14(4):193-203.1999. The Identities of *Platanthera hyperborea* and *P. huronensis*, with the Description of a New Species from North America) This species grows as single stems or clumps of several stems ranging from dwarf 5cm plants to more robust specimens that reach 60cm. The flowering spike varies from being lax to very dense with few to many blossoms. The individual flowers are not particularly showy, a yellowish green colour with a dull yellowish green the lip. Identification of this species and distinguishing it from *Platanthera huronensis* is a difficult task and a magnifying glass is a necessity. See the identification key from "Flora of North America" This orchid has a long blooming period from mid-June to mid-August with the prime period in mid-July. Look for it on the slopes of ditches and moist meadows in the prairies and parklands, and in open fens and bogs or in moist sedge meadows of the northern coniferous forests.

Plants previously collected and deposited in herbariums in Manitoba are listed as *Platanthera hyperborea* and not as *Platanthera aquilonis* or *Platanthera huronensis* thus it is difficult to determine the distribution. Both of these species are found in Manitoba and further research will be required to determine distribution patterns. (Please note that during a trip to Churchill with Dr. Charles Sheviak in July of 2003, we did find both *Platanthera aquilonis* and *Platanthera huronensis* at various locations between Winnipeg and Churchill including locations at Churchill.)