

Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

Long-bracted Green Orchid (*Coeloglossum viride* (Linnaeus) Hartman var *virescens* (Mulhenberg) Luer)



A couple of summers ago, while showing some friends from Germany a colony of the long-bracted green orchid, they remarked that they are familiar with this species in Europe as a much smaller plant. This is not surprising as the variety they know is *Coeloglossum viride* var *viride*, a plant of small stature, while the variety we have in southern Manitoba is *Coeloglossum viride* var *virescens*, a more robust variety.

The variety *viride* is a circumpolar variety, with its range extending through northern Canada, Alaska and into Siberia and most of Europe. The variety *virescens* is common through Canada and some of the northern US states, as well as across Alaska, the Aleutian Islands into Eastern Siberia and Asia down to Korea. Herbarium specimens in Manitoba have been collected from only the southern half of the province. More detailed studies are required to determine the distribution of these two varieties in our province (assuming that variety *viride* exists in Manitoba).

In 1999, while my wife and I travelled a country road in the south east, we observed literally hundreds of these orchids blooming along the roadside. Preferring a reasonably dry habitat, this orchid may be found in deciduous forests, evergreen forests as well as in mixed forest environments.

Expect to find this species in bloom from early June to early July. The entire plant including the inflorescence is green and is often difficult to see as it blends into the background vegetation.