

White-fringeless Orchid

WFO09262016

IDENTIFICATION: White-fringeless orchid, *Platanthera integrilabia*, is a member of the orchid family (Orchidaceae) and was [listed as a threatened species](#) on September 13, 2016. It is a perennial herb with a single light green stem that grows from a tuber to about 24” in height. Alternately arranged leaves are elliptic to lanceolate in shape and have entire margins. Lower leaves are much larger than upper leaves and may grow up to 8 inches in length by 1 inch in width. White flowers are loosely clustered at the top of the stem and are generally visible from late July through September. The epithet “integrilabia” refers to the lack of any prominent fringe on the margin of the lower lip petal. The small narrow fruiting capsules (< 1”) mature in October and may each produce several thousand dust-like seeds.



Habitat supporting white-fringeless orchid populations is often on acidic soils formed over sandstone bedrock with low fertility and organic matter content. They are “wet” in nature and often described as swamps, bogs, seepage sphagnum bogs, springheads, and seepy stream banks.

Significant threats to white-fringeless orchid include invasive, non-native plants such as Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) and beefsteak plant (*Perilla frutescens*). Other threats include rooting from feral hogs, silvicultural activities that remove the canopy or cause excessive shading, altered hydrology and right-of-way maintenance. Critical habitat was not designated at the time of listing. Designating critical habitat and publishing detailed location information would greatly increase the risk of unauthorized collection and trade of the species.

FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS: Clear-cutting on or adjacent to white-fringeless orchid habitat has caused declines in populations. Pre-harvest plans should include a strategy to be as environmentally friendly as possible to sites with white-fringeless orchid. Location of skid trails, loading decks, roads and other high use areas should be carefully planned to minimize negative impacts. Care should be taken to ensure that forest management activities don’t alter the flow of water downslope to white-fringeless orchid habitat. Herbicide use should be carefully planned and follow label directions. One population of white-fringeless orchid responded favorably to a selective spraying of woody vegetation.

DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY: This plant is known or believed to occur at 11 sites in Calhoun (two sites, both on Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge), Clay, Cleburne (on Talladega National Forest), DeKalb, Jackson, Marion, Tuscaloosa and Winston counties.

Photo by Mark Pistrang, U.S. Forest Service



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