

NEEDLEROOT AIRPLANT ORCHID

Dendrophylax porrectus (Rchb. f.) Carlswald & Whitten

Synonyms: *Harrisella porrecta* (Reichenb. f.) Fawcett & Rendle; *Campylocentrum porrectum* (Reichenb.f.) Rolfe

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: GU/S4

Legal Status: US-none FL-Threatened

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-none



Epiphytic on Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*); leafless with numerous small roots; fruit a capsule ranging from reddish brown to green. Photo taken at Salt Lake WMA by Kelly Anderson.

Field Description: Needleroot airplant orchid is a leafless epiphytic orchid, often on red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) and cypress (*Taxodium spp.*). Chlorophyllous roots without white marks; perianth segments (sepals/petals) < 4 mm long; lip ovate, lacking long caudate lobes, pale yellow; scrotiform spurs to 4 mm long; roots < 1 mm wide

Similar Species: The only other similar species is the closely related epiphytic, leafless ghost orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*). Ghost orchid roots are larger and more dense, and often grow directly on the trunk. It is only known from southwest

needleroot airplant orchid

Dendrophylax porrectus

Florida.

Related Rare Species: Ghost orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*), state-endangered, has chlorophyllous roots with prominent white marks; perianth segments (sepals/petals) > 20 mm, white to cream-colored; middle lobe of lip with subquadrangular isthmus, between 2 twisting caudate lobes 45-70 mm long; arcuate spurs to 17 cm long; roots 3-5 mm wide.

Habitat: Swamps and mesic forests; epiphytic.

Best Survey Season: Summer-fall; fruits visible year round

Range-wide Distribution: Peninsular FL (Citrus and Volusia counties southward); West Indies; Mexico and Central America.

Conservation Status: Listed state-threatened, this species is vouchered from central and south Florida and may be common on host trees in the appropriate habitats.

Protection and Management: Protect from collection. Extra care should be taken during exotic plant treatment or mechanical operations as the orchids are inconspicuous and often grow on low branches where they can easily be knocked over.

References: Weakley et al. 2023, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Carlsward and Whitten 2008.



Epiphytic on Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*); leafless with numerous small roots; fruit a capsule ranging from reddish brown to green. Photo taken at Salt Lake WMA by Kelly Anderson.



Epiphytic on large diameter branch in the crown of Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). Photo taken at Salt Lake WMA by Ethan Hughes.



Growing on lower and upper branches of Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) in ecotone of basin marsh and hydric hammock. Photo taken at Salt Lake WMA by Kelly Anderson.