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Common Name: PURPLE FRINGELESS ORCHID

Scientific Name: *Platanthera peramoena* (A. Gray) A. Gray

Other Commonly Used Names: purple spire orchid, pride-of-the-peak

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Habenaria peramoena* A. Gray

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

Rarity Ranks: G5/S1

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: FACW

Description: Perennial **herb** 1 - 3½ feet (35 - 105 cm) tall, with 2 - 5 leaves. **Leaves** 2¾ - 10½ inches (7 - 27 cm) long and ½ - 2 inches (1.2 - 5 cm) wide, sheathing the stem and gradually decreasing in size to the flower cluster. **Flowers** rose-purple, in a dense cluster at the top of the stem. **Flower** about 1 inch (2.5 cm) long, not including the spur. **Sepals** oval with pointed tips. **Petals** oval with rounded, slightly toothed tips, partially enclosed by the upper sepal to form a hood over the center of the flower. **Lip** with 3 large, finely toothed lobes, the middle lobe widest and notched; **spur** ¾ - 1³/₁₆ inch (2 - 3 cm) long. **Fruit** an oval capsule, ½ - 1 inch (1.3 - 2.3 cm) long.

Similar and Related Rare Species: Purple fringeless orchid is distinguished by its toothed, but not deeply fringed, lip. Also see on this web site: southern white fringed orchid (*Platanthera blephariglottis*), Chapman's fringed-orchid (*P. chapmanii*), large purple fringed-orchid (*P. grandiflora*), and monkeyface orchid (*P. integrilabia*).

Habitat: Moist meadows, sunny bogs in the backwaters of lakes, moist openings among bottomland hardwood forests.

Life History: Purple fringeless orchid is pollinated by moths and butterflies, whose long tongues are adapted to probing the long, nectar-containing spur of fringed orchids. During the process of probing for nectar, sticky packets of pollen adhere to the front of the insects' heads and are brushed off onto the stigmas of flowers that are subsequently visited. Flowers must be cross-pollinated for fruit to set. The dust-like seeds are dispersed by wind and gravity.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (late June–early August).

Range: Georgia, north to New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and west to Missouri and Arkansas.

Threats: Destruction of wetland habitat by ditching, draining, and filling; off-road-vehicle use of habitat; plant poaching.

Georgia Conservation Status: Three populations are known, one in the Chattahoochee National Forest, another on state conservation land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Protect bogs and other mountain wetlands from off-road-vehicles, draining, and logging. Prosecute plant poachers.

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Date Compiled or Updated:

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