



Maine Department of Conservation
Natural Areas Program

Goodyera oblongifolia Raf.

Giant Rattlesnake-plantain

Habitat: Dry coniferous or mixed woods. [Conifer forest (forest, upland)]

Range: Alaska, British Columbia to southwest Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec to Maine, New Brunswick & Nova Scotia; California, Montana, Arizona, South Dakota; Great Lakes.

Phenology: A perennial, leaves evergreen. Flowers late July - August, fruits mature fall. Fruit stalk and capsule often visible the next summer.

Family: Orchidaceae



Illustration from Britton & Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, 2nd ed.

Aids to Identification: This orchid is closely related to our more common rattlesnake plantains (such as the checkered rattlesnake plantain, *G. tessellata*), and like them, grows from a basal rosette of leaves, sending up a flower stalk on which are borne small, creamy white flowers. It differs from other members of its genus in having the leaves larger (up to 10 cm long) and marked with only a broad whitish stripe up the middle, rather than the reticulated (net-like) leaf patterns of other *Goodyeras*.

Ecological characteristics: *Goodyera oblongifolia* differs from many of Maine's rare plants in that its habitat is not at all unusual, at least in appearance. The plant grows in spruce-fir woods of northern Maine, which in themselves are extensive. However, within this vast belt of ostensibly suitable habitat, the species has seldom been found, perhaps because it is at its southern range limit. Where it does occur, it may form large colonies, spreading by underground rhizomes.

Synonyms: Formerly known as *Goodyera decipiens* (Hook) Piper, *Peramium decipens* (Hook) Piper.

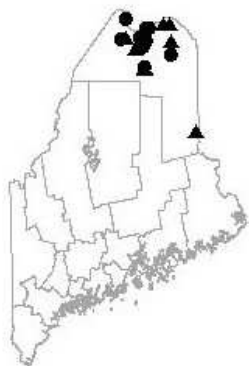
Rarity of *Goodyera oblongifolia*

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|--------------------------|------------|--|
| State Rank: | S1 | Critically imperiled in Maine because of rarity or vulnerability to extirpation. |
| New England Rank: | Division 2 | Regionally rare plant: Fewer than 20 current (seen since 1970) occurrences within New England. |
| Global Rank: | G5? | Demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure globally (uncertain). |

Status of *Goodyera oblongifolia*

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|------------------------|------------|--|
| Federal Status: | None | No Federal Status. |
| State Status: | Endangered | Rare and in danger of being lost from the state in the foreseeable future; or federally listed as Endangered. Few individuals, At edge of range, Declining populations, Vulnerable to human activity |

Known Distribution in Maine:



- ▲ Historical (before 1982)
- Recent (1982 - present)

This rare plant has been documented from a total of 12 town(s) in the following county(ies): Aroostook.

Dates of documented observations are: 1880, 1881, 1893, 1905, 1956, 1976, 1981 (4), 1983 (2), 1991, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2001 (3), 2002 (2)

Reason(s) for rarity:

At southeastern edge of range, more abundant in western US and Canada. Populations are scattered and local in eastern US and Canada.

Conservation considerations:

This plant has been known to disappear from an area following logging. Orchids are popular among some speciality gardeners, and populations of this species are vulnerable to unscrupulous or uneducated collectors. Plants dug from the wild usually do not survive; more importantly, removing these plants harms the natural population and may cause its eventual disappearance. Not known to have been successfully propagated, so any plants offered for sale have almost certainly been collected from the wild.

The information in this fact sheet was downloaded from the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Database on 07 MAY 2004. We are grateful to our Botanical Advisory Group for additional information on particular species, and in particular, to Arthur Haines for his assistance with identifying characteristics and taxonomic questions. Nomenclature follows Haines and Vining's *Flora of Maine* (V.F. Thomas Press, 1998); where older works refer to a plant by another name, it is given under "Synonyms". The Natural Areas Program, within the Department of Conservation, maintains the most comprehensive source of information on Maine's rare or endangered plants and rare or exemplary natural communities, and is a member of the Association for Biodiversity Information.

If you know of locations for this plant or would like more information on this species, please contact the Natural Areas Program
State House Station 93, Augusta, Maine 04333; telephone (207) 287-8044.

