

EPIDENDRUM CONOPSEUM IN NORTH CAROLINA

By DONOVAN S. CORRELL

PLATE 11

Epidendrum conopseum R. Br. was reported for the first time from North Carolina by Thomas F. Wood and Gerald McCarthy in their *Wilmington Flora*, published in the *Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society*, vol. 3, 1885-86. Credit is here given to a Major Young as having found it in Pender County in 1881. As far as the writer has been able to determine, there is no other record of this orchid having been found in the state until 1933 when Small included North Carolina in its (*Amphiglottis conopsea* (Ait.) Small) range in his *Manual of the Southeastern Flora*.

It is interesting to know that for a period of 46 years this orchid has evidently escaped collectors in North Carolina. In a conversation with Professor Oakes Ames last winter he expressed the opinion that the reason for this was perhaps due to the "Big Freeze" of 1888-89 which may have destroyed these plants this far north and thus temporarily moved the limits of its northern range farther south. It is also possible that the position of the orchid high up in the trees may have made it easily overlooked.

While collecting in the eastern part of the state last summer, much time was spent in an unsuccessful attempt to find new stations for *Epidendrum conopseum*. Not being discouraged, however, further search for this plant was made on the week-end of October 5 and 6, when Dr. H. L. Blomquist and the writer made a collecting trip through the Coastal Plain region of the state. On the return trip, a brief stop was made at Lake Waccamaw, Columbus County, to collect the Florida shield fern (*Dryopteris floridana* (Hook.) Kuntze) which reaches its northern limit there, and to look for any orchids which might be in flower at this time of the year.

After having found a few beautiful specimens of *Spiranthes odorata* (Nutt.) Lindl. in full bloom, growing in the flooded, mucky soil of a swamp on the northwestern side of the lake, we walked a short distance along a narrow, wooded sandbar, lying between the lake and the flooded swamp. Suddenly Dr. Blomquist called our attention to a large limb

of a sweet gum tree, growing out about 15 feet from the base of the trunk of the tree and arching out over the sandbar to about 8 feet from the ground. With that astonishment and delight experienced only by searching botanists, we saw growing on a considerable part of the limb a mantle of *Epidendrum conopseum* together with the epiphytic fern *Polypodium polypodioides* (L.) Watt. Needless to say, there was a clambering up the branch in a flash. At last, after many weeks of vain search and disappointments, here was success!

In spite of the inclement weather, the late hour of the day, the difficult position of the plant, and a single film left, we succeeded in obtaining a fairly respectable photograph of the orchid, which is reproduced herewith.

After returning home, we communicated with Dr. J. K. Small who kindly informed us that his report was based on a specimen collected by Mr. H. A. Rankin of Fayetteville, near Hallsboro, Columbus County. In response to a letter to Mr. Rankin, we have received a specimen from him with the following note: "We were cutting timber in White Marsh, a large swamp between Hallsboro and Whiteville (Columbus County), along the railroad crossing. On practically all of these large tupelo trees there were large colonies, growing just like *Polypodium* and frequently with this. All was high in the trees—from 40 to 60 feet—and usually about the large limbs where the main trunk divided. Sometimes they would cover sections four to six feet long."

Apparently this orchid is fairly common in the Lake Waccamaw section and possibly in other places in the southeastern part of the state, although, so far as known, only two collections exist which are represented by specimens.

It may be of interest to add that collections of *Epidendrum conopseum* have also been made in the neighboring state of South Carolina. Dr. W. C. Coker of the University of North Carolina collected the orchid from a large limb of live oak at Myrtle Beach on July 13, 1932, and H. W. Ravenel collected it along Santee Canal where he said it was growing as a "parasite on *Acer rubrum*." There may possibly be some other collections from South Carolina which have escaped our notice.

DUKE UNIVERSITY,
DURHAM, N. C.



EPIDENDRUM CONOPSEUM AT LAKE WACCAMAW, N. C.