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Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society

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Photos: Florida contains over half the wild orchid species found in the United States, at roughly 100 species. The endangered Ghost Orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*) makes its home in the area of southern Florida known as the Big Cypress Swamp (including the Fakahatchee Strand and Corkscrew Swamps on its western edge). The orchid’s name is derived from the fact that the flowers seem to float in mid-air without any discernible plant nearby—just a mass of untidy roots growing on the trunk of a tree. These roots perform all the photosynthesis for the plant, which bears no leaves. Subject to habitat loss, environmental degradation, and over-collection, their population has been on the decline for many years. It is estimated that there are only around 2,000 Ghost Orchid plants left in the wild. These photographs were taken by Prem Subrahmanyam, noted nature photographer and native orchid expert, in the deep swamps of the Fakahatchee Strand State Park near Naples, Florida. You can view more photos of this enchanting species, as well as many of Florida’s other native orchids, at www.flnativeorchids.com.
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