

Getting to know Chilliwack's Species at Risk

Species at risk profile: Phantom Orchid, *Cephalanthera austini*

What it looks like:

An elusive non-photosynthetic orchid with a white stem (20 - 55 cm tall). Along the stem are 5 to 20 delicate white flowers, each having a yellow gland on the lower lip. [Click here for more identification details.](#)

Where it lives:

In the Fraser Valley, this plant is found in mature forests often in areas with a sparse ground cover on slopes facing south or west. Only readily visible when it blooms from May to July. [Visit this map for location details.](#)

What it eats:

Food is acquired through a three-way partnership where the plant is fed by an underground fungus that is associated with the roots of a tree species.

What are its main threats in the Fraser Valley?

Habitat loss and disturbance.

Did you know?

- Most of the plant's structure is underground.
- Plants do not necessarily flower every year and may be dormant for up to 17 years.
- Do not confuse it with Indian Pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) a similar looking white plant with only a single drooping flower and a thicker stem.
- Click [here for more facts.](#)

How you can help:

With the special symbiotic relationship between the fungi and the tree roots that it needs to survive, avoid disturbing the forest floor in areas where it has a history of blooming.

Check out this [guide](#) for specific Phantom Orchid land management recommendations.

Join the [Nature Stewards](#) program for personalized property advice.

Spot a Phantom Orchid flowering? – take a photo, record the location, and send it to outreach@fraservalleyconservancy.ca.

For any questions about this or other species at risk, contact the [Fraser Valley Conservancy](#).