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SPOTLIGHT

A Rare BEAUTY

Southwest Florida is home to some of the world's rarest orchids. The cherished and most elusive of all Florida's native orchids—the ghost orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*)—typically only appears once a year. These beauties flower between June and August for only a couple of weeks at a time, releasing a beautiful fragrance after the sun goes down.

Happiest in humid and swampy environments, the orchid is mostly roots and is considered an epiphyte, a plant that affixes itself to another plant or object for structural support. The white blooms—when they materialize—appear to float in midair, looking like delicate phantoms.

The diversity of native orchid species will be showcased in an exhibit at the **Naples Flower Show & Garden Market**, one of the largest juried flower shows in the state. Aptly titled “A World of Wonders,” the show will be presented by the Naples Garden Club in partnership with Naples Botanical Garden April 5 and 6 in the Garden.

Nick Ewy, director of collections at Naples Botanical Garden, estimates there are only 2,000 ghost orchids in the state. Whether or not they bloom depends on pollination; calculations show that as few as 10 percent flower each year. “They are considered an endangered species in the state of Florida,” Ewy adds.

As part of this year's event, a team of Naples Botanical Garden horticulturists will replicate a smaller version of an exhibition created for the renowned Chelsea Flower Show in London last spring, which called special attention to the ghost orchid. Visitors to Naples Botanical Garden may visit the flower show and view the display on either day between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. with regular paid admission to the Garden. (naplesgardenclub.org)—Gaylene Salomons



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GHOST ORCHID |
BY CLYDE BUTCHER