Orchids in Your Pocket: A Guide to the Native Orchids of Iowa



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(Art Gislason)

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University of Iowa Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Orchids in Your Pocket: A Guide to the Native Orchids of Iowa, Bill Witt, From 1843, when the first collections were made, until 1987, when an amateur botanist discovered the only known Iowa site for spring ladies tresses, thirty-two species of orchids have been recorded in Iowa. The state's wild orchids range in size from the three-inch-tall delicately blossomed nodding pogonia of the eastern woodlands to the three-foot-tall floral spike of the western prairie fringed orchid and in color from whites and pale pastels to buttery yellows and passionate pinks. Flower shapes run the gamut, too, from the tight-lipped parsimony of the fall coral-root to the cheerful roundness of the yellow lady's-slipper. Along with superb color photographs of all thirty-two species, this latest addition to "Iowa's" series of laminated guides includes common and scientific names, habitat (prairie, woodland, wetland) and distribution, height, approximate time of blooming, status, and potential for hybridization. Bill Witt devotes a separate panel to species missing and presumed extirpated; photos of orchids from nearby states illustrate these lost species. Because orchids have highly specific requirements for germination, growth, and reproduction, the conversion of natural lands for agricultural development has resulted in such loss of habitat that all but a handful of orchid species are now considered threatened or endangered; two orchid species are now known to live in just one site each; and three species have likely been wiped out. "Orchids in Your Pocket" is a welcome reminder of the beauty and fragility of these native species and their prairie, woodland, and wetland homes. Longtime freelance photojournalist and former state representative, Bill Witt is the intellectual property officer and technology transfer coordinator for the University of Northern Iowa. His photographs and essays, almost all focusing on...

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