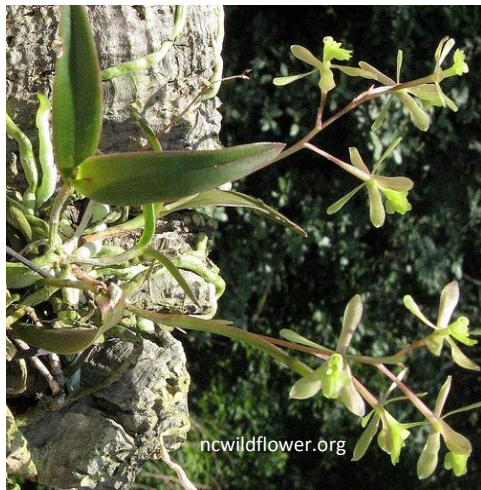
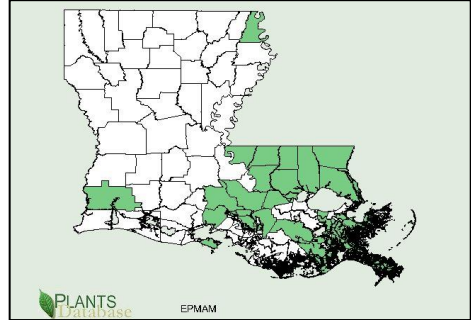


## Native Orchid of the Month—June

### *Epidendrum magnoliae* (green fly orchid)

*Epidendrum magnoliae*, the green fly orchid, is encountered in swamps and hammocks, most often on live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) trees among resurrection ferns (*Pleopeltis polypodioides*). Other common host trees include bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*). It is an epiphyte and the leaves remain green all winter.

Since the plants are often the same height as the ferns, spotting these orchids (even when in bloom) is often quite challenging. It is perhaps easiest to see them when it has not rained for a brief period of time. The resurrection fern



leaves wilt and appear brownish in color, making it easier to spot the shiny, green grass-like leaves of the orchids growing on the branches.

It is the most northern-growing *Epidendrum* in nature, being found wild as far north as North Carolina. They flower from June to January, sporadically in fall, and produce fruiting capsules from October to January.

Plants will often form large matted colonies of many dozens, perhaps hundreds, of growths, their fleshy roots buried in the layer of humus formed from decomposed remains of mosses, bromeliad roots, and fern rhizomes that cover branches of the trees.

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The small, green flowers range from 1/2 to 3/4 inch in diameter, are usually green on the lip and petals and range from greenish to reddish brown on the sepals depending on light levels. The opening beneath the column is usually ringed with purple. The flowers become intensely fragrant at night suggesting a night-flying moth as its pollinator.

