

Lax-flowered orchid

Orchis laxiflora Lam.

DESCRIPTION

The specific epithet *laxiflora* refers to the loose way in which the flowers of the orchid are arranged. Lax-flowered orchid is 60 centimeters in height. The 4–7 erect yellowish-green leaves are hooded at the tip. The leaves are narrow lanceolate. The inflorescence is 7–12 cm long, with up to 20 blooms. The inflorescence is rare-flowered, and at first conical and after cylindrical. The flower color can vary from whitish basically to purple to dark purple on the edge. The labellum appears long and narrow, its sides are strongly reflexed (folded back). The tip is shallowly three-lobed. The flower is often dark pink and the labellum normally has loop-shaped



markings in basal with white color. The flowers are hermaphrodite and insect-pollinated. The flowering is from March through the end of May, depending on the altitude and subspecies.

HABITAT

This orchid prefers a temperate climate, wet meadows, and generally base-rich soils, from sea level up to 1800 meters above.

DISTRIBUTION

Wide distribution range in Europe and Asia as far north as in south Sweden.

ENDANGERMENT

Habitat destruction by unplanned urbanization, natural successions in open habitat, underground fires. Also, a special threat is the disappearance of insects adapted for its pollination.

PROTECTION

It is on the CITES list of species and is also listed in the red books of several countries.

