

Conservation Corner for March 2020

As usual, at the SOOS show and sale, questions arose regarding people poaching our native orchids, particularly the Cypripediums which are some of our showier native species. I have always felt that education regarding why you should leave them where they are would help to solve this problem. If you look at any reports regarding our native orchids, back as early as the 1930's, this has been an ongoing problem. Because of the mycorrhizal relationship these orchids have with the fungi in the soil where they grow, by moving them you essentially kill the plants. There is no need to do this, and it is also a criminal offence. There are dealers who are selling Cypripediums that are ethically raised from seed. You can contact Shawn Hillis of Garden Slippers in Calgary Alberta <http://gardenslippers.com/> or Robert St-Jean of the Ottawa Orchid Society who produces *Cyp. Reginae* from plants in his garden. <https://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com/>

Closer to home you can contact one of your fellow SOOS members Greg Warner via his website <https://abloomnaddiction.com/>

If you see someone poaching orchids here is what you can do – if they are in a park or on crown land, or poaching a species at risk, you can call your local rep for the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. (MECP)

Here is a link to their website : <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-environment-conservation-parks>
You can also call their tip line 1-866-663-8477

On private land it becomes an issue of trespassing and should be taken up by the landowner and the local authorities.

So when hiking season comes – and it will be here shortly, enjoy the orchids where they grow and leave the shovel at home.