

NOTES ON TWO SPECIES OF PLANTS AT THE MARGINS OF THEIR RANGES IN CEDARBURG BOG

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Arethusa bulbosa L.

In a previous article on the marginal and disjunct plant populations of the Cedarburg Bog (Reinartz and Reinartz 1981), it was noted that while the Dragon's Mouth Orchid (Arethusa bulbosa) had been collected in the Cedarburg Bog in the 1920's and 30's, there had been no recent collections in any southern Wisconsin counties, including Ozaukee County and the Cedarburg Bog. We concluded that Arethusa bulbosa may be extinct in Cedarburg Bog and may no longer be found in southern Wisconsin.

In June of 1982 Dr. Weise (pers. comm.) sighted a few blooming Dragon's Mouths just west of Long Lake in the Cedarburg Bog. During 1983, from approximately June 10 to 30, there were a large number of individuals blooming throughout a large area of the string bog. It is estimated that the total number of blooming plants in the string bog numbered at least in the hundreds.

Case (1964) notes that "blooming populations of this orchid can fluctuate considerably at a given station. At one northern Michigan bog observed for over 15 years, the number of blooming plants varied from as low as 12 to over 1,000 in different seasons. During this time water levels remained fairly constant. Populations of later-blooming orchids and most other bog plants showed little fluctuation. However, there were years when late frost, coinciding with the flowering season of Arethusa, cut down most of the flowers, thus preventing seed production. When this occurred in successive years, the number of flowering plants declined sharply in succeeding frost-free years. These observations suggest that Arethusa may be short-lived, depending upon heavy seed production for population maintenance." Apparently 1983 was a very good year for the Arethusa population in the Cedarburg Bog.

Polygala paucifolia Willd.

Fassett (1976) reports a range for Fringed Polygala in Wisconsin that extends south to Wood and Outagamie Counties and on dunes to Manitowoc County. For a number of years a patch of P. paucifolia has flowered in a Cedar-Tamarack swamp along a creek just 1.5 miles northwest of the UWM Field Station (D. Kinnamon, pers. comm.).

In June 1983 two large patches of Fringed Polygala were found in the Cedar-Tamarack woods at the north end of Cedarburg Bog. These patches had obviously been established for a number of years but the species had never previously been noticed in the bog. These Ozaukee County populations are southern disjuncts separated by at least 60 miles from the main part of the species' distribution.

LITERATURE CITED

- Case, F. W. 1964. Orchids of the Western Great Lakes Region. Cranbrook Institute. 147 pp.
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