



# Best Management Practices for Construction and Development Projects Eastern Prairie-fringed Orchid *Platanthera leucophaea*

**Common name** • Eastern Prairie-fringed Orchid

**Scientific name** • *Platanthera leucophaea*

**Federal status** • Threatened

**State status** • Endangered

## Purpose and Use

The information in this document is to be used to help avoid and minimize species impacts due to construction practices. It is not intended to be used as a guide to manage habitat for a given species. Contact the Department for management information.

## Ecology

The Eastern Prairie-fringed Orchid is a stout, erect plant standing one to four feet tall and occurs in rich, deep-soil upland and bottomland prairies of Missouri. This perennial orchid blooms from mid-June to early July and bears seed in August. The flowers are fragrant at night to attract moths, which are the only known pollinators. Following drought years these orchids may remain dormant in the soil. The Eastern Prairie-fringed Orchid was known to have been distributed throughout the state in mesic areas of upland prairies, in bottomland prairies, and in prairie fens. Currently it is known only in Grundy County.

## Reasons for Decline

Decline of the Eastern Prairie-fringed Orchid is directly linked to the conversion of prairies to cropland and exotic grass pastures. Currently, the Eastern Prairie-fringed Orchid's habitat continues to be lost to agricultural practices that diminish or destroy high-quality, diverse native prairies.

## Specific Recommendations

- Survey prairie swales, fens, and wet prairies in Missouri during flowering period to determine if the orchid is present.
- At known or expected occurrence sites: avoid herbicide use during growing season unless spot spraying is used on target species.
- Do not mow during the orchid's growing season.
- Maintain or promote hydrologic conditions fostering prairie swales and bottomland prairies.
- Avoid any pesticide use at prairie sites that might affect the species' pollinators.
- Maintain high-quality, diverse prairie through periodic burning or mowing.

## Information Contacts

For species information:

### [Missouri Department of Conservation](#)

Resource Science Division  
P.O. Box 180  
2901 W. Truman Blvd  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180  
Telephone: 573/751-4115

For species information and Endangered Species Act Coordination:

### [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)

Ecological Services  
101 Park Deville Drive, Suite A  
Columbia, Missouri 65203-0007  
Telephone: 573-234-2132

For Clean Water Act Coordination:

### [Missouri Department of Natural Resources](#)

Water Protection Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176  
Telephone: 573/751-1300, 800/361-4827

### [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

Regulatory Branch  
700 Federal Building  
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896  
Telephone: 816/983-3990

### [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division  
901 North 5th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
Telephone: 913/551-7307

## Disclaimer

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from state and federal agencies, contractors and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat. Compliance with these Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, and state or local laws may affect construction practices. Please contact the appropriate agency for further coordination.