

Conserving orchids in the Southeastern United States

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Orchids are one of the largest families of flowering plants and also one of the most threatened. Botanical gardens are essential to the conservation of threatened plants, bringing together horticulture, living collections, and scientific expertise, while engaging and educating millions of people worldwide. In this talk, I share a workflow developed by the Southeastern Center for Conservation that drives our conservation program. Four of our recent orchid conservation projects illustrate this workflow process: 1. A regional analysis of the conservation needs of 16 threatened orchids that occur in our region's national forests; 2. Innovative ecological research with the use of conservation detector dogs to address critical knowledge gaps in the conservation of small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*); 3. Applied conservation actions with partners across states for the white fringeless orchid (*Platanthera integrilabia*); 4. Scientific and fieldwork support for our Puerto Rico partners to safeguard rare orchids in the Garden's Conservation Seed Bank.