

LOOK AGAIN !



Goodyera repens

One of the difficulties that we amateur botanists have with unillustrated keys is that the characteristics cited to differentiate similar species often appear to be minor ones and give the impression that we are going to have trouble deciding which is which.

Actually, it usually comes as a surprise that the second species, when we finally come across it, looks so unlike the first - and in so many respects.

The two species of rattlesnake plantain orchid (*Goodyera*) found in our area are good examples. The average amateur probably will see hundreds of the relatively abundant *Goodyera pubescens* before finding his first *G. repens*, which is much less common. When he does, it will indeed look very different, but since he might put it down as a depauperate *G. pubescens*, it would be well to fix the differences in his mind beforehand:

In the first place, *Goodyera repens* is a smaller plant, and it is this, more than anything else, that is immediately evident. It is perhaps two-thirds as tall as *G. pubescens*, the leaves half as long, and the raceme definitely shorter. Also, the flowers are fewer, less crowded, and distinctly secund.



G. repens

But the best field mark (and this will serve for year-round identification)

is the leaf venation. *G. pubescens* has a prominent whitish midvein and a network of numerous fine, pale green veinlets. In *G. repens* these markings are dark green instead of light, and in our plants (which are distinguished from the European ones as "var. ophioides") they are

bordered in greenish white. The veinlets seldom are branched, run roughly at right angles to the veins, and having wider bands of white are more conspicuous than the veins.



G. pubescens

Goodyera repens is confined to a more northern range than *G. pubescens*, and in our region grows in the cold Canadian-type forests of the mountains. Look for it under spruces and firs along the Blue Ridge Parkway, for instance. And think small!

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