



Janet Parker

Phantom Orchid, *Cephalanthera austiniiaea*

The Phantom Orchid is one of 25 orchid species native to Oregon. It is a very rare orchid. The plant can stay dormant for years before sending out a stem. It may bloom once and then go into remission for up to 17 years. This is the only North American orchid that is completely devoid of chlorophyll. Its food is drawn from the rotting humus of the forest floor, with the help of symbiotic fungi that “infects” the plant’s fibrous roots, sharing nutrients with it. Its habitat is in the rich soils of dark coniferous or deciduous forests along mountain ranges. The survival of this species is threatened by high levels of development and logging in its key habitats, as well as mountain bike activity and native plant gathering. If you are lucky enough to see these orchids, please do not pick the flowers! Colored pencil on black, sanded pastel paper. 18 x 24” framed.