



CAYMAN ISLANDS WILD ORCHIDS

Family: ORCHIDACEAE

Ghost Orchid

Dendrophylax fawcettii

endemic to Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands

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50 cent stamp 1985

Grand Cayman's rare, endemic & endangered Ghost Orchid, *Dendrophylax fawcettii*, is of historical significance, because it was named after **William Fawcett**, who made the earliest known plant collection in the Cayman Islands in 1888, when he was the Director of Public Gardens and Plantations in Jamaica. He later co-authored the *Flora of Jamaica*. It was also collected during the 1938 Oxford Expedition to the Cayman Islands.



It is on the **CITES** list (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of World Fauna and Flora)



Ghost Orchid on Smokewood, *Erythroxylum confusum*
80c stamp, Quincentennial issue to celebrate the discovery of the Cayman Islands 500 years ago. 1503 - 2003



It has no pseudobulbs or leaves. Its long roots drape over rocks (epipetric) or other plants (epiphytic - derives support, but not nourishment). The fragrant, night-scented flowers attract Sphinx (Hawk) moths, probably the Giant Sphinx Moth, *Cocytius antaeus medor*. The Orchid's long **spur** contains nectar, on which the moths feed, using their proboscis, (long tongue), like a drinking straw.

On the rocks growing with **Peperomia** - *Peperomia glabella*, (left) which needs a similar, humid environment.

