The Showy Orchid grows in moist woodlands across eastern North America, from Quebec to Georgia and as far west as Oklahoma. Mature plants have just two basal leaves, but along the stem a leaf-like bract grows at the base of each fragrant flower. This orchid flowers in spring, just as hungry bumblebees are starting to emerge. The flowers are typically bicolored with a pink to lavender hood above a white lip that creates a landing pad for the bees. At the base of the lip, a small hole leads to a hollow spur with a drop of nectar. As the bee probes the flower and sips nectar with its long tongue, pollen is transferred. The Showy Orchid does not tolerate much competition from other plants in the forest, and is vulnerable to canopy loss from storms and logging. Understory plants that respond quickly to sudden increases in sunlight soon crowd out this charming orchid. The Showy Orchid is not shy – you may find it waiting by the trail on your next springtime walk.

To learn more about the Showy Orchid, scan the QR code with your phone or visit the species page on Go Orchids at goorchids.northamericanorchidcenter.org.
This is what the paper Showy Orchid will look like when built.