

COSTA RICAN LADIES'-TRESSES

Beloglottis costaricensis (Reichenb. f.) Schlechter

Synonyms: *Spiranthes costaricensis* Reichenb. f.

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G3G5/S1

Legal Status: US - none; FL - none



Close up of flower. © Keith Bradley

Field Description: Plants to 40 cm. **Roots** 1 - 4, 1 - 6 cm by 3 - 8 mm. **Stems** subterranean or nearly so, short. **Leaves** fugacious, present or absent at time of flowering, 2 - 5, delicate, glabrous; petiole erect, slender, 2 - 4 cm; blade spreading, elliptic, 2 - 4.5 by 1.3 - 2 cm, apex acute. **Inflorescences** 6 - 35-flowered racemes, pubescent distally; scape 10 - 12.5 cm by 0.6 - 1 mm; bracts 5 - 6; floral bracts ovate, 5 - 12 mm, apex acuminate. **Flowers** white with green midveins, subsalverform; sepals connate at base, 1-veined, lanceolate, margins entire, apex acute to acuminate, abaxially pubescent; dorsal sepal 4 - 6 by 1.5 mm; lateral sepals oblique, 4.2 - 6 by 1.2 mm; petals 1-veined, linear, slightly falcate, 4 by 0.6 mm, apex acute, glabrous; lip adnate to base of column foot, 3-veined, 4.5 by 1.5 - 2 mm, glabrous; claw 1.5 mm, auricles subulate, 0.7 - 0.8 mm, projecting basally, flanking column and column foot; column slender, 2.5 mm, foot extending obliquely along ovary 1.5 mm without forming mentum; pedicellate ovary 3 - 4 mm, sparsely pubescent. **Capsules** 4 - 6 mm. (FNA 2024)

Similar Species: Costa Rican ladies'-tresses (*Beloglottis costaricensis*) is the only member of its genus in the state, but are closely related to other ladies'-tresses species (*Spiranthes*). The Costa Rican ladies'-tresses have a single central green stripe in the white lip of the flower, while other ladies'-tresses have a white lip which is centrally yellow to greenish-white, occasionally with multiple green veins. (Weakley 2023)

Related Rare Species: Costa Rican ladies'-tresses (*Beloglottis costaricensis*) is the only member of its genus in the state, with no rare relatives.

Habitat: Tropical hammocks; found on edges of solution holes.

Best Survey Season: Spring.

Range-wide Distribution: Miami-Dade County in Florida. West Indies, Mexico, and Central America

Conservation Status: Endangered - Florida

Protection and Management: Protect from invasive plants and development.

References: Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2023.



Flowering stem. © Keith Bradley