

FLORIDA LADIES'-TRESSES

Spiranthes floridana (Wherry) Cory

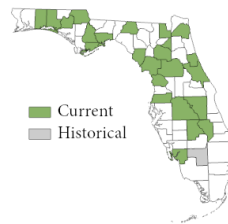
Synonyms: none

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G1/S1

Legal Status: US-none FL-none

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-FACW



Side view of flowers showing ruffled lip © Scott Ward.

Field Description: Erect, perennial **herb** with 3-5 basal oval-oblong leaves that are up to 2.5 inches long. The cream to yellow-colored tubular **flowers** occur in a loosely spiraled spike up to about 16 inches long, the rachis glabrous or only sparsely pubescent. **Sepals** are appressed, the **petals** elliptic with the lip centrally yellow and veined, the edges ruffled.

Similar Species: While over a dozen species of *Spiranthes* occur in Florida, the most similar is *S. brevilabris*. The latter is distinguished from this species by its dense pubescence on the inflorescence.

Related Rare Species: There are three other S1 species of *Spiranthes* occurring in Florida: *S. torta*, *S. brevilabris*, and *S. igniorchis*.

Habitat: Wet flatwoods

Best Survey Season: Flowering typically occurs February-May.

Range-wide Distribution: This species ranges from North Carolina, south to Florida, and west to Texas.

Conservation Status: While several recent population discoveries have been made in the last twenty years, this species is still known from fewer than ten sites and populations tend to consist of few plants. Some populations may not be effectively reproducing sexually. Many populations have been lost over the last century due to habitat destruction, mostly for the creation of pine plantations, and due to fire exclusion. Both of these factors continue to be threats to the remaining populations of this species, along with roadside maintenance activities, when not carefully executed.

Protection and Management: Protect wet flatwoods from conversion to pine plantations in occupied managed areas. Apply prescribed fire where possible to maintain wet flatwoods natural communities.

References: Brown 2002, Weakley 2022.