

## GREEN LADIES'-TRESSES

*Spiranthes polyantha* Rchb.f.

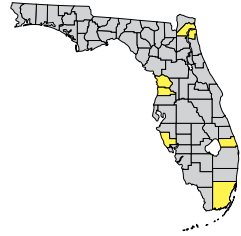
**Synonyms:** *Mesadenus polyanthus* (Rchb.f.) Schltr.

**Family:** Orchidaceae (orchid)

**FNAI Ranks:** G4/S1S2

**Legal Status:** US—Mgmt Concern FL—Endangered

**Wetland Status:** US—none FL—FACW



Paul Martin Brown



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**Field Description:** Inconspicuous, perennial **herb** with 1 - 3 oval, short-stalked, satiny green, **basal leaves**, 1.2 - 2.4 inches long, that appear in the fall and wither away by spring. **Flowers** 10 - 40, loosely spiraled in a frail, slender spike up to 12 inches tall. **Flowers** tiny, greenish-brown to purple; **sepals** widely spreading; **petals** pointed, curved backwards at the tips; **lip** pointed, gray-green, fading to rose at the base. **Fruit** an oval, erect capsule.

**Similar Species:** Cranichis ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes cranichoides*, syn.: *Mesadenus cranichoides*) has 4 - 6 greenish-purple basal leaves; flowers are greenish-brown except for the white, pink-spotted lip; lip is square-tipped or bluntly tipped.

**Related Rare Species:** Tall neottia (*Spiranthes elata*, syn.: *Mesadenus elatus*), state-endangered, has 6 - 7 long-stalked, basal leaves; flower stalk to 20 inches tall; and brown flowers with a white lip. Also see southern ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes torta*) in this guide.

## Green ladies'-tresses

## *Spiranthes polyantha*

**Habitat:** Rock outcrops in mesic hammock, rockland hammock, maritime hammock.

**Best Survey Season:** Flowers late January–March. Very difficult to see at any time.

**Range-wide Distribution:** FL, West Indies, Mexico, Central America.

**Conservation Status:** Seven populations are known, all on conservation areas.

**Protection & management:** Avoid logging or grazing in mesic hammocks. Protect rockland and maritime hammocks from development. Eradicate exotic pest plants.

**References:** Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Luer 1972, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

