

LITTLE LADIES'-TRESSES

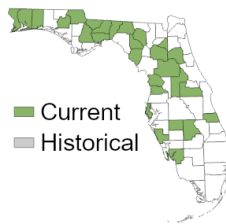
Spiranthes tuberosa Raf.

Synonyms: none

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S3S4

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Threatened



White lip, flowers less than 5 mm long, leaves not present at flowering, and rachis of inflorescence glabrous. Photo taken at Joe Budd WMA by Ethan Hughes.

Field Description: Terrestrial **orchid** which can grow from 9 - 30 cm tall and produces 3 - 5 basal **leaves** that usually wither away at flowering time. **Flowers** occur on one side of the stem and may be tightly or loosely coiled in one spiral row. All parts of flowers are stark white in color with the tubular portion less than less than 4.6 cm long.

Similar Species: There are 16 *Spiranthes* species that occur in Florida. *Spiranthes tuberosa* has a solitary root, is tuberous, basal leaves that are mostly absent at time of flowering, flowers are white with no markings and are arranged on one side of a single spiral stem, and the flowering season is in the spring.

Related Rare Species: None

little ladies'-tresses

Spiranthes tuberosa

Habitat: Sandhills, scrub, dry to mesic flatwoods, upland pine, and disturbed areas.

Best Survey Season: Spring-summer; May-July in Florida

Range-wide Distribution: Known to occur from FL west to TX and OK, and northwest to KS, and follows the eastern coastal states north to MA. Vouchered throughout FL from the western-most panhandle counties, extending as far south as Lee County, and east to Indian River County.

Conservation Status: The species appears to be secure within Florida, where it can be common in appropriate high-quality habitats.

Protection and Management: Avoid ground disturbance and hydrological alterations. Maintain active prescribed fire regime.

References: Wunderlin and Hansen 2011



Upland pine habitat where little ladies'-tresses may be found blooming in early summer. Photo taken at Joe Budd WMA by Ethan Hughes