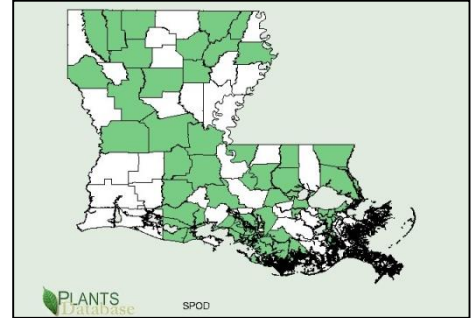


Native Orchid of the Month—November

*Spiranthes odorata*  
(marsh lady's tresses)

Marsh lady's tresses (*Spiranthes odorata*) is an orchid that is native to marshes, bogs, swamps and other wet areas in the eastern United States from New Jersey and Tennessee south to Florida and Texas. It features small, very fragrant, hooded, white flowers densely arranged in vertical, slightly spiral-like rows on spikes growing from 9 to 18 inches tall, typically arranged in a tight spiral forming three ranks up the stem. The flower spikes are tightly spiraled with 3 to 4 flowers per cycle of the spiral.



The very long, wide-spreading roots produce vegetative offshoots often 12 inches from the parent shoot, giving rise to extensive clonal colonies.

This is one of the few orchids native to the United States that can be considered a true aquatic, often growing in water several inches deep. As a result, these are sometimes used in the aquarium and terrarium trades.



Equally at home in

moist bottomlands out of the water, these plants form basal rosettes of leaves giving rise to a single raceme of white flowers with cream-to-yellow throats. The flowers are often quite fragrant, having a sweet smell reminiscent of vanilla and baby powder.

It is found in moist meadows, moist wooded slopes or edges of ponds, streams or hardwood swamps. It is a classic bog plant. It flowers in late summer from September through December.

