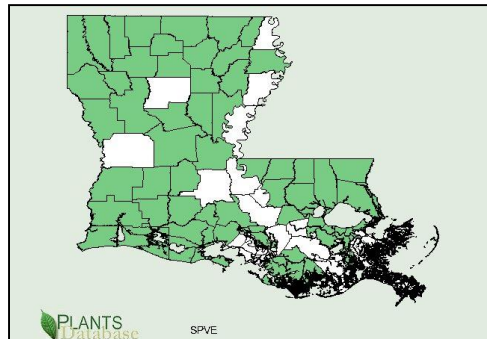


Native Orchid of the Month—February

Spiranthes vernalis (spring lady's tresses)

Spiranthes vernalis, commonly known as spring lady's tresses, is widely distributed across the eastern and central United States, from Texas to New Hampshire. It is pubescent and varies from ½ to 3 feet tall and produces four to five basal leaves which usually persist through flowering. The leaves are thick and up to 12 inches long, but only ½ inch wide.



The plant bears a spiraled inflorescence of up to 50 small white, cream-colored, or yellowish flowers that are fragrant and less than ½ inch long. The inflorescence is covered in small hairs, and the labellum or lip occasionally has two orange or brown spots near the center and curves downward.

It flowers as early as January, but more likely April and May, in the southern portion of its range. It is typically found in dry to moist meadows, prairies, fields,



along roadsides, and occasionally in bogs. *Spiranthes vernalis* is one of the more common species of native orchids.



