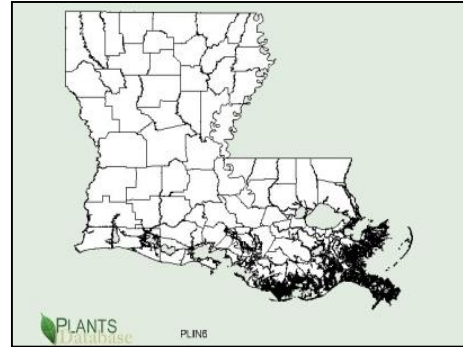


Native Orchid of the Month—May

Spiranthes eatonii
(Eaton's lady's tresses)

Spiranthes eatonii (Eaton's lady's tresses) was named after A.A. Eaton, an early botanist who first collected this species in 1905 in Florida. The tiny flowers are only about 1/6 inch in length and have a somewhat tubular appearance. They spiral around the stalk with 8 to 10 per cycle of the spiral. It can be distinguished from other similar species, which are also white and have a green spot on the lip, by its date of blooming (February to May) and by its geographic location (southern coastal plain).



At flowering, the leaves quickly dry up, but they are in a pattern unlike the grassy-like leaves of most other lady's tresses. Eaton's lady's tresses have 3 to 7 basal leaves that are oblanceolate in shape and up to two inches long.

Eaton's lady's tresses have a limited distribution in the Southeast. They have been found in several States, but nowhere are many plants located. Although its



range covers Louisiana, specimens have not been collected within the State. It usually inhabits moist fields, pine flatwoods, wood roads, and cemeteries and typically flowers from February to May.

