

Native Orchid of the Month—September

*Spiranthes magnicamporum*

(Great Plains lady's tresses)

*Spiranthes magnicamporum* (Great Plains lady's tresses) ranges widely across the eastern and mid-western United States and is found most frequently in the Great Plains. Basal leaves are long and slender, up to 5½ inches long, ½ inch wide and wilt away around 2 weeks before the flowers appear. The stem is stiffly erect with 4 to 6 sheath-like bracts that wrap the stem, the tips overlapping the base of the bract above..



Flowers are closely intertwined in 3 rows, spiraling up a 1 to 4 inch spike with up to 48 blossoms, typically 3 to 4 flowers in 1 cycle of the spiral. The petals and sepals are white except for a tinge of yellow on the lower lip, up to ½ inch long, opening out creating a winged trumpet like appearance

resembling cow's horns. The end of the lower lip unfurls down like a ruffled tongue while the 2 narrow lateral sepals flare out and up. The side and upper petals overlap creating a narrow lance-like hood curled up at the tips. The flowers have an almond fragrance.

Flowering normally occurs from August to November in dry to wet woods, pastures, and prairies in acidic soils.

