



Maine Department of Conservation
Natural Areas Program

Spiranthes lucida (H.H. Eat.) Ames

Shining Ladies'-tresses

Habitat: Alluvial or damp rocky shores and slopes, rich damp thickets and meadows. [Non-tidal rivershore (non-forested, seasonally wet); Open wetland, not coastal nor rivershore (non-forested, wetland)]

Range: New Brunswick to Ontario, south to Virginia, upland North Carolina and Tennessee, Indiana, and Illinois.

Phenology: Flowers June - July, earliest *Spiranthes* to flower in our region. Ladies'-tresses are leafy stemmed orchids with small, mostly white, flowers borne in spiralled racemes.

Family: Orchidaceae



Illustration from Britton & Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, 2nd ed.

Aids to Identification: *Spiranthes lucida* has 3-5 erect, oblanceolate to oblong, shiny green, basal leaves. Its short, compact floral spike has 3-4 ranks of flowers. A broad yellow spot on the protruding lip brightens the waxy white tubular flowers. The flowers appear late-June to mid-July, earlier than most other species of *Spiranthes*.

Ecological characteristics: *Spiranthes lucida* seems to prefer circumneutral damp soil, and may often be found on calcareous gravelly shores. It may be locally abundant but seems infrequent throughout its range, perhaps because it is easily overlooked growing among taller grassy weeds. One author points out that it is usually found in disturbed areas where the water supply is plentiful, as in wet cow pastures growing on hummocks of mud thrust up beside deep cow prints. Another author reports that attempts to grow *S. lucida* in home gardens have often failed because it "soon falls prey to fungi and slugs which are especially fond of it".

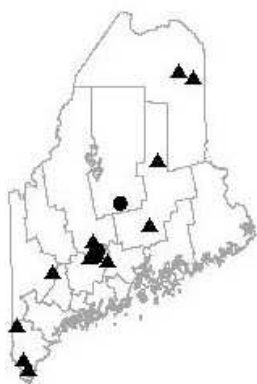
Synonyms:

Rarity of *Spiranthes lucida*

State Rank:	S1	Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity or vulnerability to extirpation.
New England Rank:	None	
Global Rank:	G5	Demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure globally.

Status of *Spiranthes lucida*

Federal Status:	None	No Federal Status.
State Status:	Threatened	Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened. Listing criteria met: Few individuals, Special habitat, At edge of range, Declining populations, Vulnerable to human activity



▲ Historical (before 1982)
● Recent (1982 - present)

Known Distribution in Maine:

This rare plant has been documented from a total of 16 town(s) in the following county(ies): Aroostook, Kennebec, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, York.

Dates of documented observations are: 1909, 1914, 1915, 1920, 1935 (2), 1941 (4), 1946, 1982, 1983, 1984 (3), 1993

Reason(s) for rarity:

Habitat naturally scarce, near northern limit of range.

Conservation considerations:

Maintain hydrologic integrity of its rivershore habitat, including natural disturbance by water and ice. Populations could be threatened by heavy recreational use. Like almost all orchids, this should not be dug or collected from the wild.

Although some *Spiranthes* have been successfully propagated, any plants offered for sale are more likely to have been dug from the wild.

The information in this fact sheet was downloaded from the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Database on 17 MAY 2004. We are grateful to our Botanical Advisory Group for additional information on particular species, and in particular, to Arthur Haines for his assistance with identifying characteristics and taxonomic questions. Nomenclature follows Haines and Vining's *Flora of Maine* (V.F. Thomas Press, 1998); where older works refer to a plant by another name, it is given under "Synonyms". The Natural Areas Program, within the Department of Conservation, maintains the most comprehensive source of information on Maine's rare or endangered plants and rare or exemplary natural communities, and is a member of the Association for Biodiversity Information.

If you know of locations for this plant or would like more information on this species,
please contact the Natural Areas Program
State House Station 93, Augusta, Maine 04333; telephone (207) 287-8044.

