

# Fragrant ladiestresses

(*Spiranthes odorata*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_botanical\\_terms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms).

Fragrant ladiestresses is a semi-aquatic to aquatic perennial native orchid. Its flowers are small, white and very fragrant with a vanilla-like scent. They are arranged in a spiral around a terminal spike. Upper tepals may be fused and form a hood-like structure over a lower lip. Like most orchids, the flowers are resupinate, which means their position turns upside down as they develop.

Its leaves are basal and narrowly lanceolate. Roots are fleshy and can appear tuberous. Seeds are tiny and born in capsules.



Photo by Mary Keim

Fragrant ladiestresses occurs naturally in swamps, wet pinelands and seepage slopes and blooms fall through early winter. It is one of the few orchids that can be considered aquatic.

The genus *Spiranthes* comes from the Greek *speira*, meaning “coil,” and *anthos*, meaning “flower.” It refers to the spiral arrangement of the inflorescence. The species epithet *odorata* comes from the Latin for “fragrant” or “perfumed”—literally translated as “with an odor.”

**Family:** Orchidaceae (Orchid family)

**Native range:** Throughout most of Florida.

*To see where natural populations of Fragrant ladiestresses have been vouchered, visit [www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).*

**Hardiness:** Zones 8–11

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Seasonally wet to moist, well-drained sandy, organic or calcareous soils

**Exposure:** Full sun to partial shade

**Growth habit:** 6–10” tall

**Propagation:** Seed

Fragrant ladiestresses are not commercially available. Visit a natural area to see them.