



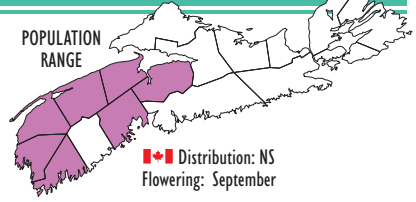
Nova Scotia Ladies'-tresses

Spiranthes casei var. *novaescotiae*

NS General Status Rank: Sensitive

HERBS: NON-WOODY PLANTS

POPULATION RANGE



SIZE: 20-40 tall.

LEAVES: 2-4 lance-shaped leaves that attach to the stem at the base of the plant (basal). They are smooth, 5-15 cm long, and 8-12 mm wide with parallel veins running from base to tip. The leaves do not wither during flowering.

STEM: Bright green, smooth, slender, and erect.

FLOWERS: Tubular flowers arranged in a twisted spiral at the top of the plant. They are creamy white, curved downwards, and are six-parted. The bottom petal (lip) is pointed, fleshy, and its edges curve inward. The top 'petal' (dorsal sepal) does not flare outwards.

The sepals are 5-7 mm long.

FRUITS: Small seeds.

NOTES: Nova Scotia Ladies'-tresses is not found anywhere else in the world! It is more common than Case's Ladies'-tresses in NS which is only known from a few locations (including Brier Island). Nova Scotia Ladies'-tresses is scattered over a larger area but still relatively uncommon.



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Case's Ladies'-tresses



Flower spiral showing gaps without flowers

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Nodding Ladies'-tresses



Yellow Ladies'-tresses



Pointed bottom lip of Nova Scotia Ladies'-tresses



Case's Ladies'-tresses

Habitat:

Acid and sandy soils, roadsides, dry fields, and open barrens.

Interesting point: The genus *Spiranthes* is Latin for "spiral flower", which refers to the spiraling or twisted nature of the flowers.

Similar species: There are four *Spiranthes* orchids that flower in the fall. Case's Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes casei* var. *casei*) is more slender with smaller flowers, the bottom petal (lip) is wide and has a ruffled edge, and the top 'petal' (dorsal sepal) flares out. Its leaves are withered during flowering. Nodding Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) is typically shorter with immaculate white flowers and a wide bottom petal (lip). It is the most common of the four species. Yellow Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes ochroleuca*) is taller with larger yellowish flowers that have mouths that flare open. Nova Scotia and Case's Ladies'-tresses have gaps in their flower spirals with areas that are absent of flowers. Nodding Ladies'-tresses and Yellow Ladies'-tresses have uniform flower spirals with no gaps.

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From left to right: Yellow, Nodding, and Case's Ladies'-tresses