

Spiranthes porrifolia Lindl.

synonym: *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* Cham. var. *porrifolia*

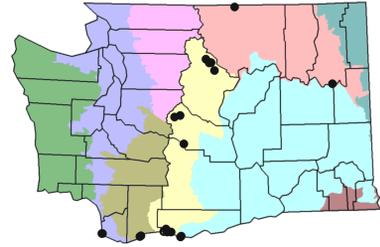
(Lindl.) Ames & Correll

western ladies' tresses

Orchidaceae - orchid family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G4 / S2



General Description: Hairless perennial 1-6 dm tall. Leaves 3-5, linear to narrowly oblong, basal or on lower stem, sometimes absent or withered at flowering time, up to 34 x 3.5 cm, transitioning to short bracts above.

Floral Characteristics: Terminal spike with up to 40 flowers forming a dense, tight spiral. Main flowering stem hairless to sparsely hairy; hairs usually much less than 0.18 mm, capitate, glands often unstalked. Flowers cream to yellowish or greenish white, slenderly tubular. Sepals 4.6-11 mm, fused at the base, tips free and spreading. Petals linear-lanceolate to linear-oblongate. Lowest petal (lip) lance-ovate to lanceolate, 4-9.5 x 2-4.3 mm, inner surface with dense cushion of peg-shaped outgrowths. Flowers May to August.

Fruits: Capsules.

Identification Tips: *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* has white to cream-colored flowers with lower lips that are smooth on the inner surface and violin-shaped (constricted below the tip), and with sepals and petals fused into a curved tubular hood. *S. diluvialis* has white to ivory flowers that are not tubular; its lip prominently diverges from the sepals and petals and lacks peg-shaped outgrowths on the inner surface; and it has obviously stalked glands on the stem of the inflorescence. In general, *S. porrifolia* flowers several months earlier (May to August) than *S. romanzoffiana* (July to October) or *S. diluvialis* (July to September).

Range: WA to southern CA, ID, NV.

Habitat/Ecology: Wet meadows, bogs, streams, and seepage slopes. Elevations in WA: 3-2075 m (10-6800 ft). Associated species include sedges (*Carex* spp.), white brodiaea (*Triteleia hyacinthina*), and seep monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*). Some *Spiranthes* may persist underground for several years before emerging.

Comments: This taxon is also rare in ID. Surveys of potential habitat should be conducted for multiple years due to the species' tendency for prolonged dormancy.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 26; Luer 1975; Williams & Williams 1983.



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