

# Manitoba Native Orchids Compendium

## Northern slender ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes lacera* Rafinesque var. *lacera*)



The species name of this orchid comes from the Latin *lacer*, meaning torn. Close examination of the flower with a magnifying glass reveals a fringed lip that has the appearance of having been torn. The small, dainty flowers are arranged in a single row twisted slightly around the flower stem. A robust stem may reach up to 40 or 50 cm, however the normal stems are more in the range of 20 to 30 cm. A small rosette of leaves close to the ground give rise to this flowering stem.

In Manitoba, the northern slender ladies'-tresses is found in a diagonal band from the south-east corner of the province, north to include the south basin of Lake Winnipeg and across to the Saskatchewan border in the Swan River – the Pas area. The preferred habitat; Jack pine forests over a sand or granite base with a clean under-storey, is very similar to that required by the pink lady's-slipper.

Finding this plant is sometimes a challenge as the slender spikes get lost among the shadows of the forest floor. Crouching down and looking out across the forest floor will often assist in finding this discrete plant. Blooming begins in late June and extends to the later part of July. Mid-July is the peak flowering period.

Dr. Paul Catling has reported bumblebees as a pollinator of this species.