

Spiranthes

By Kathy Ethridge, Conservation Rep

Spiranthes is a genus of about fifty species. These are two species that grow wild in our area. Their common name is Lady's tresses, nodding ladies'-tresses, or twisted ladies'-tresses. The inflorescences have the appearance of braided hair, which is the source of its common name. The flowers are fragrant, with a lilac or vanilla-like odor. The *Spiranthes vernalis* blooms in the summer and *Spiranthes cernua* blooms in the fall. They are found in Eastern Kansas in prairies, meadows, ditches and woods. They like moist, sandy or loamy, acidic soil. These species are recognized by their spiral of white flowers, broad crisped lip, and absence of leaves at flowering time. KOS members, Mark and Karleen Sanborn, have found them growing outside their home in Butler County. The *Spiranthes vernalis* has been discovered growing in Claude Lambe Park in East Wichita.



Spiranthes vernalis.

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Spiranthes cernua