



PLANT

*Spiranthes australis*

Austral Lady's Tresses

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Life History
-	R	E	-	Perennial

Family ORCHIDACEAE



Photo: © Julia Bignall

### Conservation Significance

The AMLR distribution is disjunct, isolated from other extant occurrences within SA. Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Very Restricted'. Relative to all AMLR extant species, the species' taxonomic uniqueness is classified as 'High'.<sup>6</sup>

Type form from eastern Australia is not strictly a swamp plant and has smaller, darker pink flowers. The SA forms should probably be regarded as distinct subspecies. The two SA forms are regarded as a distinct species as where they are sympatric, they begin flowering at different times and do not intergrade. Described here is the more delicate of the two forms.<sup>3</sup>

### Description

Very distinctive orchid to 45 cm tall, with spiral arrangement of numerous flowers which are bright pink with a prominent white frilly lip, or in some areas the flowers can be wholly white.<sup>8</sup> Flowers are faintly fragrant.<sup>3</sup>

### Distribution and Population

Also occurs in QLD, NSW, VIC and TAS. In SA occurs in SL and SE regions (and possibly KI region).<sup>2,4</sup> More common in the eastern states.<sup>3</sup>

Confined in the AMLR to a few high rainfall areas, near coastal locations from the Adelaide Hills southward.<sup>3</sup> Occurs in small populations in swamps and boglands. Uncommon.<sup>5</sup> Two plants are also known from Bridgewater (K. Brewer/J. Smith *pers. comm.*).

Post-1983 filtered AMLR records in Mount Compass and Inman Valley areas.<sup>6</sup>

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered additional record from north of Mount Compass.<sup>6</sup>

### Habitat

Restricted to peaty bogs and swampy creek-sides, often in locations that are inundated throughout winter. In some areas survives in paddocks grazed by stock.<sup>3</sup> The best specimens are found on mowed firebreaks adjacent to swamps.<sup>3</sup>

Recorded from peat swamps in the Mount Compass area; growing near *Carex gaudichaudiana* and *Leptospermum lanigerum* at Tookayerta Creek; growing near *Baumea rubiginosa*, *Lepidosperma longitudinale* and *Leptospermum continental* in a swampy, damp creek line at Inman Valley.<sup>7</sup>

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation group is Wetland.<sup>6</sup>

Within the AMLR the species' degree of habitat specialisation is classified as 'Very High'.<sup>6</sup>

### Biology and Ecology

Flowers between December and March.<sup>5,8</sup> Pollinated by native bees, but also self-fertile.<sup>3</sup>

### Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the majority of the AMLR distribution occurs in southern Ngarrindjeri Nation (bordering southern Peramangk Nation). Also present in southern Kurna Nation.<sup>6</sup>

Species of Orchidaceae are recorded as being a traditional food source for Aboriginal people in NSW. The small tubers were roasted (Flood 1980).<sup>1</sup>

### Further information:

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Prepared as part of the Regional Recovery Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities of Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia 2009 - 2014



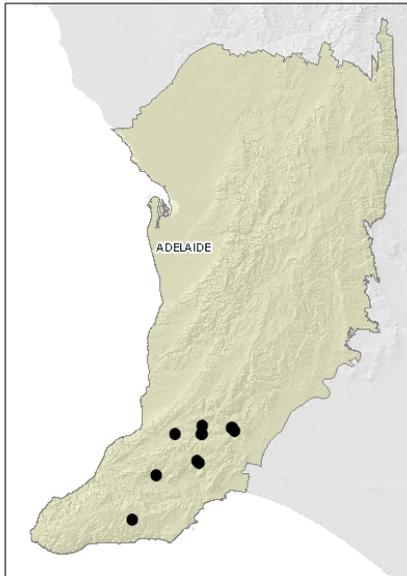


### Threats

Approximately half of known distribution occurs within 2 km of confirmed or suspected *Phytophthora* infestations.<sup>6</sup>

Additional current direct threats have been identified and rated for this species. Refer to the main plan accompanying these profiles.

### Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.<sup>6</sup> Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

### References

Note: In some cases original reference sources are not included in this list, however they can be obtained from the reference from which the information has been sourced (the reference cited in superscript).

**1** Australian National Botanic Gardens (2007). *Aboriginal Plant Use - NSW Southern Tablelands*. Available from <http://www.anbg.gov.au/apu/index.html> (accessed August 2007).

**2** Barker, W. R., Barker, R. M., Jessop, J. P. and Vonow, H. P., eds. (2005). *Census of South Australian Vascular Plants, 5th Edition*. Botanic Gardens of Adelaide & State Herbarium, Adelaide.

**3** Bates, R. J., ed. (2007). *South Australian Native Orchids. Electronic version, August 2007*. Native Orchid Society of South Australia.

**4** Council of Heads of Australian Herbaria (2002). *Australia's Virtual Herbarium*. Available from <http://www.flora.sa.gov.au/avh/> (accessed July 2007).

**5** Department for Environment and Heritage *Electronic Flora of South Australia species Fact Sheet: *Spiranthes sinensis**

(Pers.)Ames. Available from <http://www.flora.sa.gov.au/> (accessed September 2007).

**6** Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Recovery Pilot Project Database*. Unpublished data extracted and edited from BDBSA, SA Herbarium (July 2007) and other sources.

**7** Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *State Herbarium of South Australia Database*. Unpublished data, extracted October 2007.

**8** Jones, D. and Jones, B. (2000). *A Field Guide to the Native Orchids of Southern Australia*. Blooming Books, Victoria.

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