



Spiranthes novae-zelandiae

Common Name(s):

Ladys tresses, *Spiranthes*

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable

Distribution:

Endemic. North, South and Chatham Islands

Habitat:

Coastal to montane in open sites within wetlands of varying tropic levels but most frequently seen in acidic peat bogs. Also record from lake margins, and on the banks of slow flowing streams. Occasional in seepages within tussock grassland, or in damp shingle within river beds.

Features*:

Terrestrial, glabrescent, somewhat fleshy, perennial herb. Plant at flowering up to 1 m tall. Roots stilt-like, numerous, white, more or less swollen, clustered around stem base. Tuber broadly ovoid to ellipsoid. Stem erect, slender to stout, initially rather brittle, becoming wiry. greatly exceeding leaves. Basal leaves 2-10, obliquely erect, held in a loose basal rosette; lamina 50-200 x 5-15 mm; dark green to yellow green, often tinged reddish, narrow-elliptic, narrow-lanceolate, to lanceolate or almost spatulate tapering into a 20-100 mm long petiole; stem-bracts 2-4(-6). Inflorescence spicate. Spike 20-150 x 5-10 mm; flowers more or less crowded, subsessile, spirally around stem. Ovary glabrescent to finely glandular pubescent. Perianth 4-7 mm long, more or less tubular-cylindric, rose-pink, rose-red, red, pink or completely white. Dorsal sepal projecting forwards, column-embracing, more or less oblong, slightly concave except near the upturned apex; lateral sepals divergent, slightly pouched at base, obtuse to subacute. Petals projected forwards, more or less oblong, more or less fused to dorsal sepal with their apices recurved. Labellum white or whitish pink with a white apex, broad and recurved at apex, more or less obscurely trilobed; mid-lobe upper margin more or less finely lacinate, much crisped, irregularly thickened; base sessile, concave, smooth, except for two prominent ovoid, lateral calli which fit beneath the stigma. Column narrow below stigma; anther obtuse, overtopping stigma; stigma broad and prominent, sometimes lacking rostellum, usually overtopped by delicate, membranous, lacinate column-wings.

Flowering:

January - April

Fruiting:

April - July

Threats:

Extremely uncommon and has undoubtedly declined as wetland habitat has been lost and further populations within protected wetlands seem to require regular disturbance to flourish. There are now very few places where this orchid could be regarded as abundant.

*Attribution:

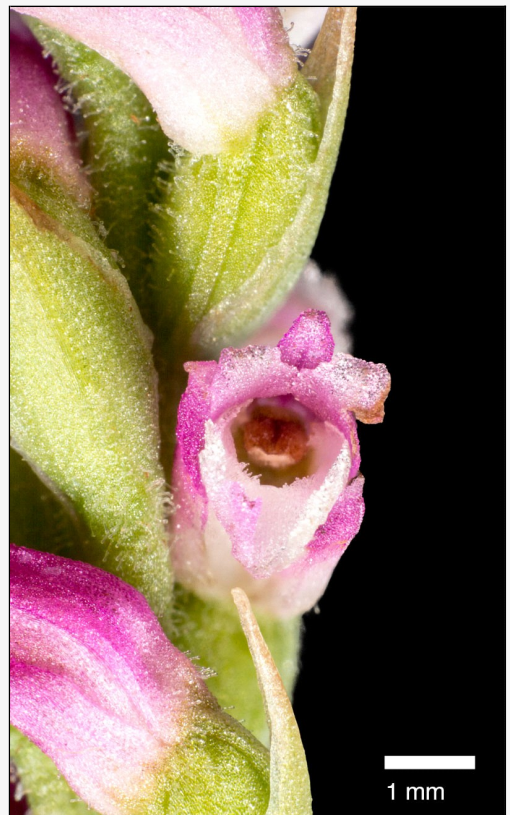
Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

References and further reading:

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1305



Caption: View into flower showing anther. Otaki Forks.

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Caption: Paraparaumu. Jan 2009.

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe