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## Hooded Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*) –Spiraled Beauty



### Did you Know?

- The genus *Spiranthes* is made up of approximately 300 species, found on all continents except Africa
- Ladies' Tresses are a group of orchids that are often very difficult to tell apart. Taking the plant apart, and looking very closely at the flowers are two ways different species can be distinguished from one another
- The twisted stalk of the Hooded Ladies' Tresses inspired its common name; the stalk is said to resemble a braid in a woman's hair
- The Latin name (*romanzoffiana*) honours former Russian minister of state Nikolay Rumyantsev (1754-1856) who financed an expedition to Alaska in 1816

Photo : 2012 Brian Popelier

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**Habitat** – This species is found in a variety of wet habitats, including stream banks, coastal bluffs, marshes, fens, bogs, bog forests, dry to moist forests, and prairies

**Size** – 15-50cm tall

**Range** – North America, eastern Siberia, the British Isles, and Ireland

**Flowering Date** – mid-late July to September (depends on location)

**Status** – S5, Secure

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**Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY**



**Identification:**

Hooded Ladies' Tresses have long, erect stems with alternate long, narrow, mostly basal leaves that become smaller higher up on the stem. Flowers are tubular, scented, and whitish to cream-coloured. Three petals and three sepals are present on each flower, two petals forming the 'hood' and the third forming the 'lip' which is fiddle-shaped. The flowers form three spiraling vertical rows that twist as they spire upward.

Photo : 2012 Brian Popelier

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**Hooded Ladies' Tresses on the Niagara Escarpment**

Hooded Ladies' Tresses are widespread from Lakes Ontario and Erie to Hudson's and James Bay. They are commonly found in the northern part of the Bruce Peninsula, preferring sunny, moist areas. Often they can be found growing in the same areas as sedges, horsetails, grasses and mosses. BTC ecologists have observed these beautiful orchids on several properties in the Peninsula section.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is continually acquiring and protecting land along the Niagara Escarpment, often including land that contains significant wetlands that are perfect habitat for the Hooded Ladies' Tresses.