

***Sacoila lanceolata* var. *lanceolata*:**
Leafless Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchid

Sacoila lanceolata includes two varieties of orchids. *Sacoila lanceolata* var. *lanceolata*, is known by its common names as the Leafless Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchid or the Leafless Beaked Orchid. It is a herbaceous terrestrial, perennial orchid and flowers without its leaves. *S. lanceolata* var. *paludicola* is the Leafy-Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchid. As its name suggests, this variety flowers with leaves attached and is also a terrestrial orchid. It is not as commonly found as var. *lanceolata*.

Geographical Distribution

The Leafless Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchid is a native of Florida and is found throughout the state. It does not tolerate frost well, and its populations decrease north of Alachua County. Outside Florida, its range extends from Mexico to Uruguay and throughout the Caribbean.

Threatened Species and Variety

The two orchid varieties are listed as threatened in the state of Florida. *S. lanceolata* var. *lanceolata* tends to grow best in open spaces that face continuous construction pressure.

Growing Conditions

The Leafless Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchid is one of the most conspicuous of orchids and among other places it is found in pastures, meadows, and open roadsides in wet and dry conditions. We did not find these plants in concentrated colonies, rather they were randomly dispersed in small clumps over a large area.

The variety prefers full sunlight to partial shade and is known for its high drought tolerance. It has low nutritional requirements. However, the salt tolerance for this orchid is not known.



Location of plants photographed



Close-up of upper inflorescence

Leaves

The plant is deciduous. The leaves are not present at the time of bloom. They appear after flowering and persist from summer to early winter. The leaves are thick, glossy with a rich green color. They are commonly 18 inches long and three inches wide and form a basal rosette.



Plant form. Early September



Basal rosette. Early September

Inflorescence and flowering

In the spring and early summer, this plant bears a single stiff, upright stalk of inflorescence. The stalk is commonly 26 inches tall and includes an inflorescence that is up to 7 inches tall. The width of the stalk is approximately 0.40 inches wide. The inflorescence has approximately 10-20 closely spaced, small coral colored, waxy flowers that are about 1 inch in length and 0.25 inches in width. The flowers are tubular and have a slightly spiked appearance when on the inflorescence. The sepal stays a bright coral color with the pedal changing into a light pink and has a possibly white colored tongue. Fruit is seen in an erect capsule along the spent inflorescence.



Flowering in late May.



Cluster of Leafless Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchids.
Late May



The height of inflorescence is approximately knee high.
Late May.



Cluster of Leafless Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchids. Late May



The width of the stalk is approximately 0.25 inches.



A flower stalk meets the ground. The plant bears no leaves at this time.



Inflorescences of Leafless Beaked Ladies' Tresses Orchids. Late May Single Flower. Late May

Roots

The root structure of the plants is large, producing numerous thick fleshy roots.



Fleshy roots of the plant. Mid September.



Roots and inflorescences

References

- Catling, P. [Notes on the Breeding Systems of *Sacoila lanceolata*](#). Missouri Botanic Garden
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- Subrahmanyam Prem. 2009. [Scarlet Ladies' Tresses \(*Sacoila lanceolata*\)](#)
- [Leafy Beaked Ladies' Tresses Field Guide](#). 2000. Florida Natural Inventory.

YouTubes

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This fact sheet was reviewed by Karen Headlee, Lee County Extension; Pat Rooney, Master Gardener; Bonnie Farnsworth, Master Gardener.

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