

green upper portion of the rachis, the distant pinnae, and more especially in the 3 parted lower pinnae.¹

The dimensions of our plant fairly approximate those given by Ascherson and Graebner (l. c.), but the Lugano form described by Dr. Christ exceeds those dimensions by about one third, the fronds reaching a length of 15 cm. as seen in the fine figure published by that author.

Our plant, however, differs from the European forms already published in having the lower pinnae more deeply lobed or even divided, and this inclined me at first to treat it as a distinct form, but in view of the well known disposition on the part of hybrids to produce all manner of deviations, and the existence of certain other deviations in the European forms, it has seemed best to regard all such deviations as of minor importance and to recognize only the one combination.

Mr. Woolson is to be congratulated on his interesting discovery, which adds new evidence of the unity of the American and European fern floras. It should also be a spur to fern-students and encourage them to search carefully for other fern treasures that lie hidden awaiting only the advent of some keen eyed observer to bring them out into the light.

MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS.

SPIRANTHES OVALIS.

OAKES AMES.

IN 1840, Dr. John Lindley published the description of a new species of *Spiranthes* collected by Drummond in Texas and in allusion to the oval form of the inflorescence called it *S. ovalis*. From that time on the specific name was not taken up by American botanists and at present is not applied to any American species in our botanical publications. The explanation of this is perhaps simple, as *S. ovalis* is one of the rarest of the *Spiranthes* species which are natives of the United States, and as the description in Lindley's *Genera and Species of Orchidaceous Plants* is a wholly inadequate characterization.

¹ A print from one of Mr. Woolson's specimens since seen, shows at least one of the lower pinnae not only with three distinct lobes, but with the outer lobe becoming again slightly 3-lobed.

When A. W. Chapman prepared the third edition of his *Flora of the Southern United States* he described a new variety of *Spiranthes cernua*, Rich., and named it var. *parviflora*. The type was collected in rich oak woods near Rome, Georgia. Later, Dr. Small, as shown by his *Flora of the Southeastern United States*, recognized that Chapman had strained affinities in making the Georgian plant a variety of *S. cernua*, and he, therefore, raised it to specific rank under *Gyrostachys*. In my treatise on the American Species of *Spiranthes*, published in Fascicle I of *Orchidaceae*, I placed this species, doubtfully, next to *S. Romanzoffiana* on account of the constriction of the lip in several specimens examined. Last November at Kew a comparison of *Spiranthes parviflora* with *Spiranthes ovalis* Lindl. proved that they were conspecific. The type comprises three individuals preserved in the Hookerian Herbarium.

Spiranthes ovalis is of special interest as it is not confined to the states of the extreme south and as the northern limits of its distribution bring it within the area covered by Gray's Manual. According to studies of the material in the principal herbaria of America and England it is most common in Missouri, where George Engelmann collected specimens as early as 1835, and where as recently as September, 1905, it was found by B. F. Bush (no. 3322). How such a distinct species has been omitted from our manuals devoted to the botany of the northern United States is difficult to explain. It is very similar in aspect to *Spiranthes latifolia*, Torr., and might easily be mistaken for it, but *S. latifolia* is a summer bloomer, while *S. ovalis* does not bloom until the fall of the year, even in the southern states, a fact which should have led to careful investigations. Furthermore, the flowers of the two species are quite different, and the scape of *S. ovalis* is much taller in relation to the leaves than the scape of *S. latifolia*.

SPIRANTHES OVALIS Lindley, *Orch. Pl.* 466 (1840).—*S. cernua*, var. *parviflora*, Chapm., *Fl. S. U. S.* ed. 3, 488 (1897).—*Gyrostachys parviflora*, Small, *Fl. Se. U. S.* 318 (1903).—*Spiranthes parviflora*, Ames, *Orchidaceae*, Fasc. 1, 137 (1905). Lip ovate, 4–5 mm. long, sometimes constricted above the middle, few nerved, membranaceous; nipples slender, elongated, strongly curved. Distribution: Georgia, westward to Indian Territory; Tennessee and northward to Missouri and Illinois. In shady moist woods and on high wooded hills, September and October.

NORTH EASTON, MASSACHUSETTS.



Ames, Oakes. 1906. "SPIRANTHES OVALIS." *Rhodora* 8, 15–16.

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