



# Small Whorled Pogonia

## *(Isotria medeoloides)*

**Description:** As a perennial member of the orchid family, the small whorled pogonia produces a smooth, hollow stem from 2 to 14 inches tall and topped by five or six leaves in a circular arrangement (false whorl). One or two flowers stand in the center of the whorl of leaves. The leaves are milky-green or grayish-green, and the flower is yellowish-green with a greenish-white lip. In the northern part of the species' range, plants with flowering buds emerge from the leaf litter in May and bloom in June.



**Habitat:** The small whorled pogonia grows in a variety of upland, mid-successional, wooded habitats, usually older hardwood and mixedwood stands of beech, birch, maple, oak, and white pine. This orchid is almost always found in proximity to features that create long-persisting breaks in the forest canopy; the tree canopy is relatively open. It prefers acidic soils with a thick layer of dead leaves and sparse to moderate ground cover. It often occurs on slopes near small streams.



**Occurrence in Maine:** The small whorled pogonia is found in Cumberland, Kennebec, Oxford, and York Counties. The area of influence map in IPaC is based on a habitat model of the most likely areas where this orchid can be found. It is known the following towns: Cumberland County (Baldwin, Gorham, Harrison, Sebago), Kennebec County (Readfield, Greene), Oxford County (Brownfield, Hiram, Otisfield, Stoneham, Waterford), and York County (Acton, Lebanon, Limington, Lyman, Newfield, North Berwick, Parsonsfield, Shapleigh). New populations are likely to be discovered in southern Maine.