



*Isotria medeoloides* (small whorled pogonia) in NH. Photo by Ben Kimball for the NH Natural Heritage Bureau.

The **small whorled pogonia** (*Isotria medeoloides*) is one of the rarest wild orchids in eastern North America and has been classified as federally threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The largest populations of small whorled pogonia are found in central New Hampshire and southern Maine, although the species is widely distributed in the eastern United States and Ontario, Canada.

The small whorled pogonia is a wildflower that reappears in the spring from a perennial underground rootstock. The stems usually occur singly (sometimes in groups of two or three), and are usually 3-6" tall. The elliptical leaves, usually numbering five, are 1-3" long and grow in a single whorl at the top of the stem. Flowering individuals (early June) have one (occasionally two) greenish-yellow flower, about 1" long, borne atop the whorl of leaves.

Most population losses in the past occurred simply because landowners were unaware of the presence of small whorled pogonia on their property. Therefore, informed and concerned citizens continue to make a huge difference in the protection and recovery of this plant.

