

NEW 'GLASS-LIKE' ORCHID SPECIES DISCOVERED IN JAPAN

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This handout photo taken on May 20, 2017 and released to AFP on March 23, 2023 courtesy of Kenji Suetsugu, lead scientist and phytology professor at Kobe University, shows a '*spiranthes hachijoensis*' (Orchidaceae), a new species of orchid, in Nichinan, Miyazaki prefecture. | Photo Credit: AFP

A new [species](#) of orchid with delicate, glass-like blooms has been discovered by Japanese scientists, who found the pink and white plant hiding in plain sight.

Despite its presence in Japan's parks and gardens, it took researchers at Kobe University a decade to confirm that the plant -- dubbed the "*Spiranthes hachijoensis*" -- was a previously unknown species.

A new species of orchid with delicate glass-like blooms has been discovered by Japanese scientists, who found the pink and white plant hiding in plain sight in gardens and parks. | Photo Credit: AFP

"It was a surprise to discover a new species of spiranthes, which is so common that you can see it in parks, gardens and among potted plants," lead researcher Kenji Suetsugu told *AFP* Thursday.

Some of the samples were "from potted plants and gardens", including ones kept at a high school in Japan's central Gifu region, the phytology professor said.

"From its curious look and dainty blooms that resemble glasswork, this flower has long been loved by people," the university said in a press release.

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The plant, with its spiralling blossoms, was even mentioned in Japan's oldest anthology of poems, the eighth-century "Manyoshu".

The discovery of the new type of spiranthes, sometimes known as "ladies' tresses", was [announced](#) last week in the *Journal of Plant Research*. It was given the name "hachijoensis" because many samples were found on Tokyo's Hachijojima island.

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