

## Sowerbaea juncea – Vanilla Lily

Sowerbaea juncea, commonly known as the Vanilla Lily is a tufted plant found naturally in sandy wallum heathland and sub-coastal and mountain heath communities from Queensland to Victoria and northern Tasmania.

The leaves form blue-green, grass-like clumps rather like chives and the plants grow to about 40cm in height. The roots are fibrous-fleshed and lack any tubers. The flowers are borne in dense heads of more than 20 individual flowers on a single, unbranched stem and are a delicate mauve shade with pink bracts and have a delicious vanilla perfume. Flowering occurs in Spring, and a patch of Vanilla Lily is both a sight and scent not to be forgotten.

In some areas it used to form colonies of considerable extent, but with the increasing development of its habitat most of these areas have now disappeared.

Vanilla Lily prefers a sunny, moist situation in light well-drained soil - sand or light loam. It can be grown as a container plant, or in a rockery, or a terrarium, and is useful around the edges of a pond, unfortunately it is only rarely seen in cultivation and fresh seed is not often available. It can also be propagated by division of mature clumps or by seed.

### Propagation

**When to Sow** – In warmer areas at any time, in cooler areas where frost is a risk, either in the spring in a greenhouse or after the danger of frost has passed. Cover only lightly to about 15mm.

**How to Sow** – In a seed bed or large pot with a sandy loam with a generous quantity of leaf mould. When they are large enough to handle, prick the seedlings out into individual pots or plant out in position. In colder, frost prone areas it may be desirable to grow them on in the greenhouse or a protected position for at least their first winter. Plant them out into their permanent positions in late spring or early summer, after the last expected frosts.