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Alstroemeria psittacina

[Synonyms : *Alstroemeria pulchella*]

PARROT LILY is a tuberous perennial (or annual). Native to northern Brazil it has azalea-like, green tipped, green or maroon streaked or spotted inside, dark-red flowers. It is also known as Alstroemeria (English and Italian), Decorative peruvian lily, *Incalelie* (Dutch), *Incalilie* (German), Inca lily, *Inkalilje* (Danish), *Lis des Incas* (French), New Zealand Christmas bell, Parrot beak, Parrot flower, *Peregrina de lima* (Spanish), Peruvian lily, Red parrot beak, and St. Martin's flower.

Warning – the plant is potentially poisonous.

Psittacina is derived from Greek *psittacin-* (parrot) component or Latin *psittaci* (parrot) meaning 'with parrot-like colouring i.e. green, other dramatic colours'.

Parrot lily is cultivated as an ornamental plant, not least as a pot plant, and is popular in New Zealand for example at Christmas. The flowers are also cut for inclusion in fresh arrangements and are said to last a very long time.

Some authorities note at the turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries that parrot lily has invasive qualities but had not to that point presented any disastrous ecological problems – although by then its progress into uncultivated areas of western Australia had already been witnessed. However this horror for some gardeners who had originally welcomed it with open arms had already been recorded by then as they had proved it to be difficult to eradicate once it had started to take over their gardens.