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Iris domestica

[Synonyms : *Belamcanda chinensis*, *Belamcanda chinensis* var. *taiwanensis*, *Belamcanda pampaninii*, *Belamcanda punctata*, *Gemmingia chinensis*, *Ixia chinensis*, *Pardanthus chinensis*]

LEOPARD LILY is a bulbous perennial. Native to China, Japan, the Himalayas and south-eastern Asia, it has brown or purple-red spotted inside, salmon-orange flowers.

It is also known as *Angínovník čínský* (Czech), *Balamtandam* (Malayalam), Blackberry lily, Chinese blackberry lily, Dwarf tiger lily, Iris, *Leopardenblume* (German), *Leopardenlilie* (German), Leopard flower, Pardelle, *Surjakanti* (Assamese), and *Tigré* (Guadeloupe, Martiniquais).

The flowers bloom for a very short time.

Warning – it is alleged that the whole plant is poisonous thus it should be treated with caution.

Domestica is derived from Latin *domesticus* (belonging to the house, domestic) meaning ‘cultivated, or domesticated’.

In Sumatra (now part of Indonesia) the leopard lily is believed to have played a role in ceremonials associated with the rice crop.

Some authorities believe leopard lily was introduced to Britain in 1823. Others have noted that Philip Miller (1691-1771), who was curator at the Chelsea Physic Garden in London from 1722-1770, received plants from Canton and it is thought first grew it there in 1759. It was introduced to Hawaii in the mid-1800s.

Medicinally, the underground stem is an important ingredient in Chinese medicine, not only as a tonic but also in treatments for liver disorders and chest ailments (especially tonsillitis).

The plant has been used to induce sleep. Stem pulp has also been taken for stomach upsets, and the roots have been used in remedies for snake bites.