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*Lilium longiflorum*

[Synonyms : *Lilium longiflorum* var. *scabrum*]

**EASTER LILY** is a bulbous perennial. Native to southern Japan and possibly Taiwan, it has large trumpet-shaped, fragrant white flowers with long stamens.

It is also known as *Açucena* (Portuguese), Bermuda lily, Christmas lily, Church lily, *Giglio* (Italian), *Japanse lelie* (Dutch), *Lilie velkokvětá* (Czech), *Lirio* (Spanish), *Lis blanc* (French), *Lis de la Madone* (French), Madonna lily, *Marienlilie* (German), *Teppoh-yuri* (Japanese), *Trompetlilje* (Danish), *Trumpetlilja* (Swedish), Trumpet lily, *Weisse Lilie* (German), White lily, and White trumpet lily.

The flowers are pollinated by bees.

Warning – some authorities suspect parts of the plant may be poisonous.

*Longiflorum* is derived from Latin *longi-* (long) and *-flora* (flowered) components.

The flower has been cultivated in Japan as an ornamental plant since before 1681 and in southern Japan it was planted on graves. It was introduced to China (probably from Japan) and known there by 1688 and it has since been introduced to many other parts of the world and arrived in Bermuda in either 1853 or 1882.

It was in Bermuda that a highly lucrative export trade was established for exporting the bulbs to the Americas and Europe but around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century a virus decimated stocks. Bermuda never fully recovered from this setback although trade was maintained at a much lower level and still exists to this day.

The edible bulb can be cooked as a vegetable and its starch can be used like that of potato (*Solanum tuberosum*). Cooked young leaves and stems have also been eaten as a vegetable.

Today Easter lily makes a significant contribution to the valuable cut-flower trade all over the world.

The flowers' essential oil has been and still is used in perfumes.

Medicinally, herbalists have recommended the bulb for treating coughs and insomnia, and as a tonic.