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Ornithogalum thyrsoides

[Synonyms : *Ornithogalum revolutum* sensu]

CHINCHERINCHEE (English, German) is a deciduous bulbous plant. Native to South Africa it has small, white, cream or yellow flowers with yellow stamens.

It is also known as Cape chincherinchee, *Chinchérinchée des Boers* (French), Chink, Chinkerinchee, *Fuglemaelk* (Danish), *Kapstjärna* (Swedish), *Milchstern* (German), *Ornithogale* (French), *Ornitógalo* (Portuguese), *Pinhas* (Portuguese), *Snědek* (Czech), Star-of-Bethlehem, *Tjienkerintjie* (Afrikaans), *Torrões de Açúcar* (Portuguese), and Wonder flower.

Warning – the plant is extremely poisonous (including the petals). It can cause permanent blindness and purging and convulsions too. It can also cause dermatitis. Chincherinchee can be fatally poisonous for some animals, particularly cattle and horses.

Thyrsoides is made up of Greek *thyrso-* (wand) and *-oides* (like) components meaning ‘a dense flower-spike that is broad in the middle’.

The name Chincherinchee is said to be the sound of the flowering stems brushing each other in a breeze.

These flowers have an unusual property. If their stems are stood in dye or ink the flowers will absorb the colour.

Medicinally, an infusion of the leaves has been used to treat diabetes.