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Strelitzia reginae

[Synonyms : *Strelitzia parvifolia*]

BIRD'S TONGUE FLOWER is an evergreen perennial. Native to the South African Cape it has large orange and blue and white flowers (reminiscent of a tropical bird's plumed head) with the colourful crest perched on a boat-shaped, purple-tinged, green sheath-like leaf (bract or spathe).

It is also known as *Ave do Paraiso* (Portuguese), Bird of paradise, Bird of paradise flower, Crane flower, Crane lily, *Estrelicia* (Portuguese), *Estrelizia* (Spanish), *Kolibrikukka* (Finnish), *Königin-Strelitzie* (German), *Oiseau du Paradis* (French), *Orange Strelitzie* (German), *Papegojblomma* (Swedish), *Paradiesvogelblume* (German), *Paradisfugl* (Danish), Queen's bird of paradise flower, *Strelicie královská* (Czech), and *Strelitzia*.

The flowers arise in succession and successively open although two are usually open at one time. They produce so much thick nectar (which is not sweet) that it trickles out and attracts the pollinating sunbirds and sugarbirds.

Reginae is Latin (queen) meaning 'of the Queen' in this case Queen Charlotte Sophia of Britain.

Bird's tongue flower is a flower emblem of Los Angeles in the United States. It has also featured on South African postage stamps (the R1 issued on 31st May 1961).

In warm regions bird-of-paradise has become a very popular ornamental flower.