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Zephyranthes atamasco

[Synonyms : *Amaryllis atamasca*, *Atamasco atamasco*]

ZEPHYR LILY is a bulbous perennial. Native to south-eastern North America it has pale pink-tinged, white flowers.

It is also known as Amaryllis, Atamasco lily, *Cullowhee* (Cherokee American Indian), Easter lily, Eastern lily, Fairy lily, Jamestown lily, Rain lily, Stagger grass, and Swamp lily.

Warning – all parts are poisonous (especially the bulb). It is believed to cause ‘staggers’ in some animals and poultry, including horses, cattle and chickens.

Atamasco is derived from an American Indian word for ‘stained with red’ with reference to the flower.

It came to be known as Easter lily in North America because its flowering period coincides with the Christian Easter festival. *Cullowhee*, one of the Cherokee American Indian names for the flower was adopted for the name of a mountain town in North Carolina.

The Creek North American Indians have eaten the bulbs as a famine food.

Zephyr lily was introduced to Britain in the early 1630s by the senior John Tradescant (1570-c.1638) the English naturalist and gardener, who travelled in Arctic Russia and also became head gardener to Charles I (1600-1649). The plant did not arrive directly from North America as Tradescant is reported to have received it from Vespasien Robin (1579-1660), son of an English friend of long standing.