



## Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

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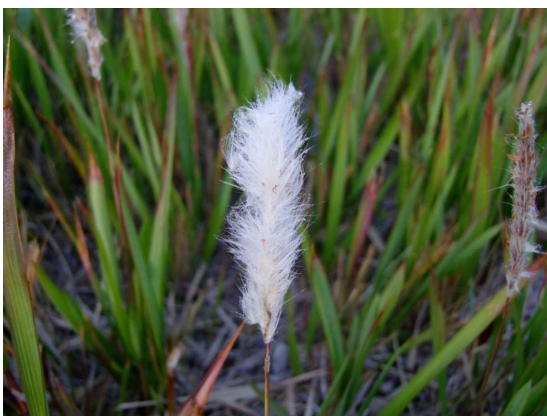
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### Plant of the month: Blady Grass *Imperata cylindrica*



Blady Grass *Imperata cylindrica* is a vigorously spreading rhizomatous (with underground horizontal stems), deep-rooted perennial grass that can grow to 1 metre high. The strappy, ribbed green leaves with reddish parts grow to 70 cm long x 1.5 cm wide, have serrated edges and feel rough on the upper surface. The spike-like, white flowers have dense, silky hairs, making it easy to distinguish from weedy grasses. Bronze anthers and stigmas fleck the spike with colour. Flowering time is January to May and is generally more prolific in response to slashing or fire.



The fluffy flowerheads make Blady Grass extremely ornamental. To encourage flowering, slashing should be done in late spring. It is also extremely important habitat for many small animals such as the native Swamp Rat, Echidnas, Blue-tongue Lizards and butterflies. Blady Grass should be maintained in remnant vegetation and we are fortunate to have several significant areas in Cape Liptrap Coastal Park and local reserves. The leaves have been used for thatching, weaving and paper-making. It likes sandy, well-drained soils and full sun or part shade and spreads by seed or underground stems.

Blady Grass belongs to the Poaceae or grass family. The genus *Imperata* is named to honour Italian apothecary and botanist Ferante Imperato (1550-1625) and the species name *cylindrica* is from the Greek 'cylindricus', referring to the flower spike.

For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.