



## Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

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### Plant of the month: Coastal Flax-lily *Dianella* sp. aff. *revoluta* (Coastal)



Coastal Flax-lily is a long-lived, rhizomatous perennial herb that can form large spreading colonies. The arching green leaves grow to 65 cm long and 5-12 mm wide, with a reddish base and flattish to slightly revolute (rolled under) margins. Blue to violet flowers to 20 mm wide have yellow filament swellings and dark brown to black anthers. They are in panicles generally held above the foliage and flower from October to January. Flowers are followed by an ovoid, deep bluish succulent berry, with shiny black seeds. The *Dianella* genus is undergoing a revision with several species separated from *Dianella revoluta*, including Coastal Flax-lily. It is an exclusively coastal species and grows extensively at Venus Bay. *Dianella brevicaulis* is another now separate coastal species with flower stems only up to 15 cm long, not exceeding the foliage.

Once Coastal Flax-lily is established it is very hardy, being both drought and frost resistant. It provides long periods of interest in the garden with its compact, clumping and evergreen foliage. It prefers a well-drained soil and accepts part or full shade. It looks best in mass planting and makes a decorative understory plant while adding texture. Birds, including parrots, are attracted by the berries. The strappy leaves were used in basket and cord making by Aborigines, the roots were cooked and the fruit used for dyeing. Propagation is from seed or division of rhizomes.



The genus *Dianella* has recently changed to the Asphodelaceae or Aloe family. *Dianella* is named from *Diana* the Roman Goddess of the hunt; 'ella' being small. *Revoluta* refers to the inrolled leaf margins. For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.