



Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

ABN 17 536 241 485

PO Box 244 Venus Bay Vic 3956

Website: www.friendsofvenusbaypeninsula.org.au

Email: friendsofvbp@gmail.com

Plant of the month: Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia*



Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia* is a dense tussock with strappy leaves to 1 metre long. The leaves are 2-10 mm wide, have cutting edges and the end has a distinctive chopped off look with 2-3 irregular teeth. There are two subspecies of *Lomandra longifolia*, both found locally; the more common subsp. *longifolia* and the finer leaved subsp. *exilis*. *Lomandra* species are dioecious i.e. they have male and female flowers on separate plants, from August to December. The creamy-yellow flowers clasp the stem and have spiny bracts coming from the base of the flower clusters. The female flowers develop into a capsule that splits to produce 3 whitish seeds. Spiny-headed Mat-rush is found in many habitats from South Australia to Queensland.



Spiny-headed Mat-rush is an important butterfly food plant, is bird attracting and provides habitat for small animals. It adds structure to a garden, either mass planted or as a feature plant and is commonly used in landscaping. It grows well under established trees, or in full sun, in well drained soils. Cutting back hard after flowering can be used to regenerate plants. Propagation is from seed or division of clumps. Aboriginal uses include drinks from nectar, flour from grinding seeds, the base of the leaves was eaten and the leaves were also used for basket weaving.



Lomandra has recently been reclassified into the Asparagaceae family. The genus name *Lomandra* comes from the Greek *loma*, edge and *andros*, male, referring to the circular margin of the anthers and the species name *longifolia* refers to the long leaves. For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.