



## Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

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### Plant of the month: Coast Spear-grass *Austrostipa flavescens*



Coast Spear-grass *Austrostipa flavescens* is a tufted perennial grass with flowering stems to 1.2 m high and leaves growing to 70 cm long. The dense, narrow inflorescence or flowering section contains many flowers, from October to December, followed by dark, sharply pointed seeds with an awn to 7 cm long. Coast Spear-grass occurs commonly on the vegetated dunes along the coast and is a naturally occurring part of the ground flora at Venus Bay. It is found along the southern Australian coastline from Western Australia to New South Wales.

Coast Spear-grass is most attractive with new growth in spring and summer. It grows in full sun or semi shade in moist, well drained soils and benefits from hard pruning after flowering and seeding. Red-browed Finches love to swing on the stems to eat the seed. Spear-grass is useful for dune stabilisation and tolerates salt spray. Propagation is from seed or division of clumps.

All grasses belong in the *Poaceae* family. The genus name *Austrostipa* comes from the Latin *austro*, meaning southern and *stipa* from the Greek *stipe*, meaning low. The species name *flavescens* means becoming yellow. For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.

