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Plant of the month: White Iris *Diplarrena moraea*



White Iris *Diplarrena moraea* is a densely tufted perennial herb with a rhizomatous rootstock. The strappy dark green leaves grow up to 70 cm long and 5-10 cm wide. Flowers occur in clusters of 3-6 on stems longer than the foliage, to 100 cm tall. They consist of three white outer segments to 35 mm c 22 mm and three smaller oblong inner segments that are yellow with purple veins, from October to January. Seeds follow in a 3-sided capsule. *Diplarrena moraea* has several other common names: Butterfly Flag, Tarwin Lily and Mirboo Lily amongst them, even though it is an iris and not a lily. It is found locally in South Gippsland in heathland and open-forest, generally at low altitude. It also occurs in New South Wales and Tasmania.

White Iris makes an excellent accent plant in the garden. Its honey-scented flowers only last one day but are produced in profusion, especially in the landscape after fire. It grows in full sun or semi-shade, likes well-drained soil and benefits from extra watering in summer. Propagation is by seed or division.

Diplarrena belongs in the Iridaceae or Iris family. The genus is from the Greek *diploos*, double and *arrhen* male, referring to the two fertile stamens. The species name *moraea* is named in honour of Robert More, an 18th Century English amateur botanist. Photo: Lorraine Norden. For more information visit www.friendsofvenusbaypeninsula.org.au

