

PLANT PROFILE

Hymenocallis x festalis (syn. *Ismene x deflexa*)



Hymenocallis x festalis is a cross between the Mexican *H. narcissiflora* and *H. longipetala*

Common name: White Spider Lily

Family: Amaryllis - the genus contains more than 60 species

Country of origin: Warmer coastal regions of Latin America

The name is derived from the Greek '*hymen*' meaning membrane and '*kalos*' meaning beautiful.

This summer I have enjoyed two pots of this gorgeous and unusual lily with spectacular white flowers. Luckily, they flowered separately which means I have stretched the pleasure of them over quite a long time.

I began with 3 bulbs in 2016, which I decided to pot to ensure they weren't lost before they had a decent chance to perform. Last summer I got a couple of flowers then in late winter I re-potted and divided into two pots and have been rewarded with beautiful multiflowered stems and pots full of leaves so I think they are multiplying well. These bulbs have glossy leaves like other amaryllis but not as big and coarse as our Easter lilies. They grow from 30 to 45 cm, according to my information, but mine would be barely 30cm at this stage. They like full sun to part shade. Best planted late winter to spring.

My sense of smell isn't wonderful but they are reputed to have a fragrance that is a combination of Lily of the Valley and citrus. Hmm. Not sure on that but delighted with my treasures.

Text and photographs: Julie Kinney