

Alstroemeria



Alstroemeria cultivars: Left: 'Diana' Photo: DJ. Right: 'Inticancha Navayo' Photo: Andy Mabbett, Wikimedia Common CC BY-SA 3.0. The streaks or colour patches on flowers, called nectar guides, save the time and energy of pollinating insects, encouraging them to visit.

Commonly known as Peruvian Lily, *Alstroemeria* is a genus of flowering plants in the family Alstroemeriaceae (Order: Liliales) and are native to South America but have now been naturalised in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Madeira and Canary Islands.

This genus was named after the Swedish baron Class Alstromer [1736-1794].

Plants in this genus grow from a cluster of tubers. They send up fertile and sterile stems some reaching 1.5 meters in height. The leaves are variable in shape and the blades have smooth edges. The flowers are solitary or borne in umbels. They have 6 tepals each up to 5 centimetres long. They come in many shades of orange, yellow, red, pink, purple, green and white as well as red and green. Some are flecked, striped and streaked with darker colours.

Many Hybrids and at least 190 cultivars have been developed in order to cater to the florists' problem of seasonal dormancy and resulted in plants that are evergreen and flower for most of the year. As a cut flower they can last up to 2 weeks in water. The breeding is mostly done in the United States and the Netherlands.

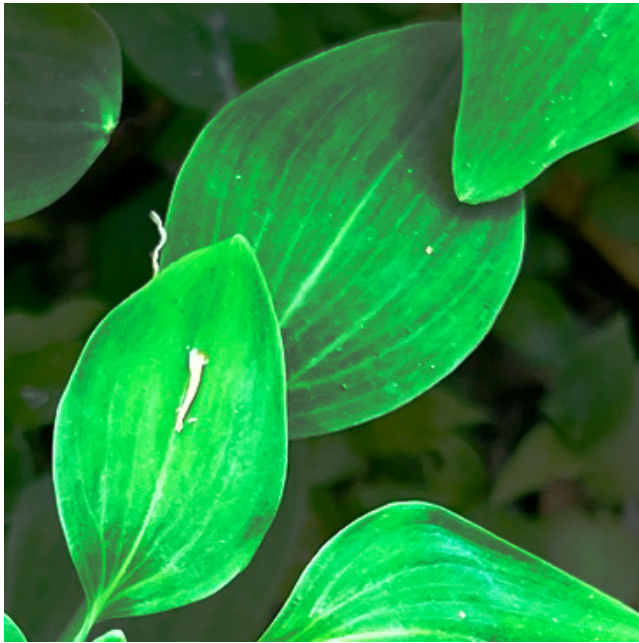
Most cultivars available for the home bloom late in Spring to early Summer. The roots are hardy and the plant requires 6 hours of morning sunlight, regular water and a well-drained soil.

Some *Alstroemerias* have escaped cultivation and become weeds in Australia.

Some are growing in the Perennial Border of the Geelong Botanic Gardens (See map page 3).



The leaves of *Alstroemeria* and some of the other species in the family Alstroemeriaceae twist 180° near the stem (called resupination). It doesn't appear to be known whether this gives any benefit. Photo: DJ.

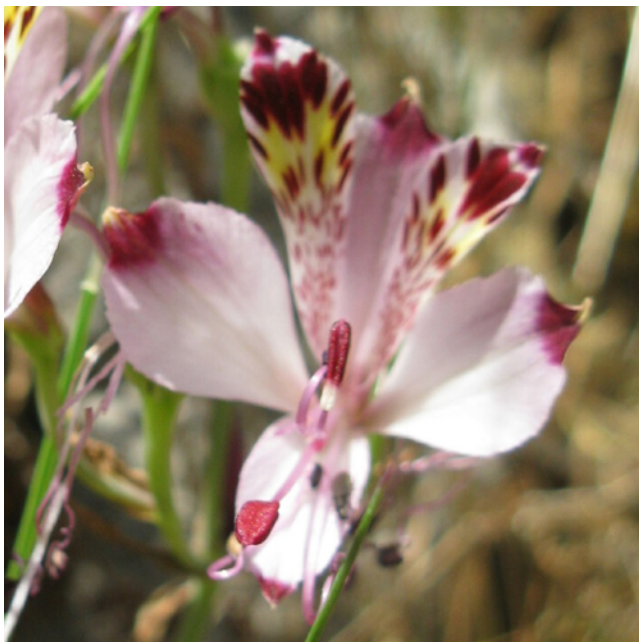


Top left: Like most other monocotyledons, the leaf veins of *Alstroemeria* originate in a bundle at the base of the leaf and run parallel to one another. Photo: Kelsey Kriege, inaturalist.org CC BY-NC.

Top right: *Alstroemeria psittacina* flowers form a trumpet shape, unlike many other species. Photo: Ewen Cameron, Wikimedia Commons CC BY 4.0.

Left: *Alstroemeria pulchra* has more prominent colour patches than many. Photo: Cristóbal González Rossel, Valparaíso, Chile, inaturalist.org CC BY-NC.

Below: Seed pod *Alstroemeria magnifica*. Photo: Bastian Riveros Flores, Chile, inaturalist.org CC BY-NC.



Below: Map of Geelong Botanic Gardens, showing the locations of *Alstroemeria* plants.

