

WILD FLOWERS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

No. XXX.: THE YELLOW-BEARDED LILY

(*Tricoryne elatior*, R.Br.).

(By C. A. GARDNER, Government Botanist.)

At this season of the year there are few bush flowers in the country. The dry summer has caused practically a stoppage of floral development, and it is only the hardier plants which have the courage to produce flowers because of the parched soil and hot dry winds. Already, however, the new leafy shoots have appeared, but these are mostly protected by a blanket of hairs, and Nature awaits the first seasonal rains before further development takes place.

The Yellow-Bearded Lily, however, continues almost throughout the year indifferent to the varying climatic conditions. The plant has only a few grass-like leaves at the base, the upper leaves being reduced to scales, hence it can afford to defy the heat and drought of summer; and winter calls forth but little response. Throughout the year this plant continues to unfold its pretty yellow star-like flowers, and when each has expanded for its brief season, and performed its own special function, the "petals" fold up neatly in a close spiral, protecting the young fleshy fruit.

The common name appears to be suitable, since the plant belongs to the Lily family, that is, it has six petal-like perianth-segments in two whorls (3 outer and 3 inner), 6 stamens, and an ovary of 3 carpels. The beard is provided by the dense tufts of small yellow woolly hairs on each of the six stamens. Look into the flower closely, and you will observe these proceeding from a point of the filaments below each anther. It is only by these beard-like tufts that you can recognize the plant.

The plant is a perennial herb with strong fibrous roots. The stems are green and wiry and branched upwards, and there are small scale-like leaves at each node. The flowers are arranged in terminal umbels of 4-8 flowers with short brown bracts at the base. The pedicels are short and slender.

The flower consists of six yellow petal-like perianth-segments, of which the three inner are broader than the other; each has a green median stripe outside. The 6 stamens are evenly spaced opposite to the perianth-segments, the 3 inner being

larger than the outer. Each filament has a dense woolly tuft of hairs above the middle. The ovary is 3-lobed, and 3-celled, with 2 ovules in each cell. The slender style is simple, with a small terminal stigma. The perianth twists over the ovary after flowering. The fruit consists of 3 small green nut-like carpels each containing a solitary black seed.



THE YELLOW-BEARDED LILY

(*Tricoryne elatior*).

A.: Plant showing habit; B.: Inflorescence, showing flower, withered flowers (spirally rolled), and fruits; C.: Flower; D.: Stamens.
A.: Slightly enlarged; B., C., and D. enlarged.

Icon origin.