

# Native Turmeric – Cape York Lily

*Curcuma australasica* (Family: Zingiberaceae)



**Description:** This spectacular tropical plant is not a lily, but a ginger. It is related to the Asian *Curcuma longa* which the familiar culinary turmeric. The showy flower spike is usually the first sign of life emerging (almost overnight) from the dormant rhizome in Spring. Bright pink bracts enclose the yellow flower buds, which fade to green as the flowers open. The exuberant leaves sprout soon after and may reach a height of 80cm. The fruit, which is not the edible part, is a three-celled capsule. The Cape York Lily would make a highly ornamental addition to any tropical or subtropical garden. In the growth stage it needs water but during dormancy, when the plant dies back, it should be kept reasonably dry. Container grown plants are very successful if kept in a warm place.

**Uses:** As the established plant spreads, the outer rhizomes can be harvested and used in similar ways to the common turmeric.

**Witjuti Grub Bushfood Nursery**

