Milkmaids

Scientific name: *Burchardia congesta*

Aboriginal name: Kara (Noongar)

About ...

This plant, *Burchardia*, was named after German botanist, Johann Heinrich Burckhardt. Milkmaids grow prolifically around the Perth area. They grow in all Australian States and in Western Australia range from Northampton to Cape Naturaliste. Due to their abundance they were a substantial part of the Noongar peoples diet in summer and autumn. Once the flower has died, the plant looks like any other grass and the Aboriginal people would dig over large areas of soil to locate the tubers. Only the tubers that were at least four millimetres thick were good to eat.

Aboriginal Uses

- The tuberous roots can be eaten raw or roasted; when eaten raw, the tubers taste like a succulent potato
- Nutritionally valuable due to its high protein content

**Family**

COLCHICACEAE

**Climate**

Temperate

**Habitat**

Jarrah and banksia woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain

Darling Scarp

**Form**

Tall, open, lily-type

Usually a single stem

Height: 40 – 80 cm

**Foliage**

Very slender

Grass-like

**Flower**

Djilba to Kambarang (August to November)

Cream to white petals

Yellow centres and stamens

Forming a spray of several small flowers from a single stalk

Caution: Do not prepare bush tucker food without having been shown by Indigenous or experienced persons. Some bush tucker if eaten in large quantities or not prepared correctly can cause illness.