

**MAT-RUSHES IN OUR AREA – DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?**

The *Lomandra* species are mainly indigenous to Australia and are considered generally to be of the Xanthorrhoeaceae family; however, the Australian National Botanic Gardens states on its website, ‘According to the Australian Plant Index, this species belongs to the Asparagaceae family, but can also be found listed in the Lomandraceae and Xanthorrhoeaceae families’.

*Lomandra* are perennial, dioecious (bearing female and male flowers on different plants) tussock plants. These species are very hardy plants, which tolerate nearly all soils and conditions, and can even be found in damp areas. They are important feed plants for butterflies, and were used extensively by aboriginal people.

There are 50 species, of which we have six in the Anglesea region. The common ones are:

**Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia* subsp. *longifolia***



Many-flowered Mat-rush

This is the largest. Its tussocks have leaves which are light to dark green, to 1 metre high and 10 mm wide, and which sometimes have a pungent scent. Branched inflorescences are about 60 cm long, with short lived, yellow, cylindrical flowers in August –December, often fragrant, and surrounded by spiny bracts. Male and female flowers are similar.

*L. longifolia* grows well in most soils, but they must be well drained. It also does well in containers and in coastal sites. This species is commonly used in landscaping around public areas, such as the gardens at the Anglesea Shopping Centre.

**Many-flowered Mat-rush *Lomandra multiflora* subsp. *multiflora***

***multiflora***

This interesting, tussock plant is about 60 cm tall. Its leaves are darker, and at 3 mm, thinner than *L. longifolia*. They are dull, leathery and flat, or sometimes lightly concave, and are often slightly twisted. The inflorescences have flat stalks up to 30 cm in the male and 40 cm in the female. The 3 mm yellow and purplish flowers, are spaced along the stalks from June to January, and are similar in the male and female. *L. multiflora* is a very hardy plant, needing only good drainage.

**Wattle Mat-rush *Lomandra filiformis* subsp. *coriacea***

*L. filiformis* subsp. *coriacea* grows to 30 cm, with dull-green, channeled or inrolled, 3 mm wide leaves. The male inflorescences grow to 15 cm long, with tiny, yellow, wattle like flowers. Females flowers are smaller, and crowded near the base of the leaves. This species is found in open forest in most soils, but needs good drainage.



Wattle Mat-rush (*coriacea*)



Wattle Mat-rush (*filiformis*)

***Lomandra filiformis* subsp. *filiformis*** is smaller than the *coriacea* subsp., with very narrow leaves .

**Small-flowered Mat-rush *Lomandra micrantha* subsp. *micrantha***

This plant also grows in tussocks to 70 cm with fine, slightly twisted, leaves about 2.5 mm wide. The inflorescences are about 25 cm long, branched in males, and shorter in females. Delicate yellow flowers appear from April to July.



Small-flowered Mat-rush

References: Margaret McDonald ed 2009, *Flowers of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet*  
Rodger Elliot and David Jones, *Encyclopaedia of Australian plants suitable for cultivation*, vol. 4, Lothian, Sydney, N.S.W.

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