

### **Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)**

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Sometimes known as Spiny-headed Mat-rush, this plant is hardy enough to grow in a variety of situations. It performs a wonderful service where it grows along watercourses, greatly limiting erosion and stabilizing sandy or gravelly creek banks. It will also grow well away from water and will tolerate some dryness. It is a handy garden plant where it may be used to fill in between or under Australian natives. It provides habitat for small creatures such as skinks and insects, with butterflies and native bees utilizing its flowers.

Watch for the *Lomandra longifolia* at the sanctuary, especially in the open forest and the garden. It is a thickly clumping plant with strappy leaves well over a metre long but only up to 2 cm wide. The spiky flower stalks produce scented creamy-white blossoms in spring to summer.

The various species of *Lomandra* throughout Australia have been well-used by our aboriginal people, especially the women. Mat-rush was a favourite material for weaving carrying bags, as well as for making fish and eel traps. Traps could be pegged in place using sapling material or weighted down with rocks or could be hand held.

*Lomandra longifolia* is the host plant for a beautiful skipper (butterfly), the Splendid Ochre.

