

## SO, WHAT'S MY NAME?

by Sue Haffner

For years many of us have grown a little bulb with spotted leaves that seems to have gone under various names: Scilla, Drimia, Drimiopsis, Ledebouria. Every once in awhile someone in the club would say, what is that thing's name, anyway? I remember the late Edith Puckett, a plant person if there ever was one, saying that she wished somebody would straighten out the nomenclature.

In researching the plant, I looked through a number of bulb books as well as floras of Southern Africa, all without much luck. There has been very little written about this plant, not to mention very few pictures that I could use. Finally I went online to the "wiki" created by the Pacific Bulb Society, an organization which includes some of the most knowledgeable plant people—and also some who are fine and prolific writers. (I recommend the organization: [www.pacificbulbsociety.org](http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org), for anyone interested in bulbous plants of any sort.)

The wiki has articles and photos relating to many genera of bulbous plants. After a brief search, I found our little plant, which is currently known as *Drimiopsis maculata*. I say "currently" because a 2004 article by Manning, Goldblatt, and Fay (which I haven't read) proposes, by way of a revised generic synopsis of Hyacinthaceae in sub-Saharan Africa, to sink *Drimiopsis* into *Ledebouria*.

Here is what the PBS wiki has: "*Drimiopsis maculata* ... is found in grassland among rocks in the Eastern Cape. Leaves are

spotted and flowers are grey striped pink, white, green, or brown, insignificant, but fragrant. This is a shade loving plant that blooms late spring to summer and is relatively hardy. It should be planted just below the surface, protected from snails and be kept on the dry side in winter."

I have this species planted in the ground, in filtered sun. The leaves just recently appeared—a bright green, spotted. There seems to be considerable variety in leaf patterning and size, even with the same bulbs from season to season. Mine is just putting up a bloom stalk. I've never noticed that the flowers are fragrant—they're so small that you'd have to get your nose right down to the ground—but I'll try to remember to investigate this.

So, anyway, if you really need to put a name on the plant, you can use *Drimiopsis maculata*.



Photos by Antigoni Rentzeperis