

Q: I have a plant called Lily-of the Valley that has taken over my back yard. How can I get rid of it?

A: The plant in your garden is called Pampas Lily-of-the Valley, and is very different from the European Lily-of-the Valley that is grown for spring fragrance. Your plant is a *Salpichroa*, and the one from Europe is *Convallaria majalis*. The common names of plants can be very confusing, and you can inadvertently end up with a plant quite different from one you intended to introduce to your garden.

Salpichroa's are members of the Solanaceae family, a large plant family to which both Tomatoes and Deadly nightshade are members. Originating in South America, these plants have become naturalized/or weedy in many parts of the world. Parts of Tasmania have it listed as a noxious weed and forbid transporting any part of the plant. The name *Salpichroa* comes from the Greek word for trumpet, **salpe**, and **chroa**, "color or complexion," referring to the shape of the flowers. This plant is a perennial, spreading by well-developed rootstocks and from seed. It is difficult to control once it becomes established.

The seeds germinate in the early spring, with seed leaves (cotyledons) as wide as they are long. They are soft to touch, and covered with fine hairs. If you recognize the seedlings, prompt mechanical removal is your best method of control. The mature plant spreads with long, flexible branches that can reach up into the canopies of shrubs, the leaves soft and a bright green. The flowers are small, (6-7mm or about ¼"), white, urn-shaped and solitary. A creamy colored berry is produced in the fall.

For your infested garden, the first step will be to pull all of the plant material. Allow the rhizomes to resprout, and dig up. Do not add these to your compost pile unless it is very 'hot,' as they can sprout again. It will take several seasons for you to remove all of the rhizomes, but it is possible. Do not till or move soil around your garden as you can inadvertently spread this weed.