

## **Pancratium Maritimum or Sea Lily**

Related ingredient: *NEUROLIGHT.61 G*

*Pancratium Maritimum*, also called *Sea Lily*, alludes to Greek etymology: the prefix *pan* means “everything” and the root *cratys* means “powerful”. *Sea Lily*, without being all-powerful, was famous for ancient Latin populations, thanks to its many medicinal properties.

*Maritimum* comes from Latin and means “from seaside”.

Synonyms: Sand Lily, Sea Lily, Sea Daffodil, etc.



## BOTANY

*Pancratium maritimum* is a perennial bulbous plant from Amaryllidaceae family. This is an herbaceous plant, from 30 to 60 cm tall, with magnificent, large, white and scented flowers.

The stem is about 30 cm tall, and emerges from a large bulb buried in the sand, allowing the subsistence of the plant during the dry summer season.

The long and narrow leaves (from 5 to 20 mm long, and a width up to 75 cm) grow in straps, twisted in spirals. The leaves disappear during summer, and grow again in September.

The sweet-scented flowers are white inside, and streaked with green outside. They are very long (up to 15 cm), and made up of 3 sepals and 3 petals. The flowers are gathered together in an umbel from 3 to 15 flowers, and are surrounded by 2 wide bracts (small leaves which cover the flower before its development and which are located at the root of the peduncle). These delicate and ephemeral flowers open at nightfall and give off a fruity and exotic fragrance. *Sea Lily* is also called *Starry Lily*, because its flowers look like stars.

The fruit is an almost spherical capsule, and is located on the fructiferous peduncles, leaned toward the floor. It allows the seed contained in the fruit to spread in the water and on the beaches.

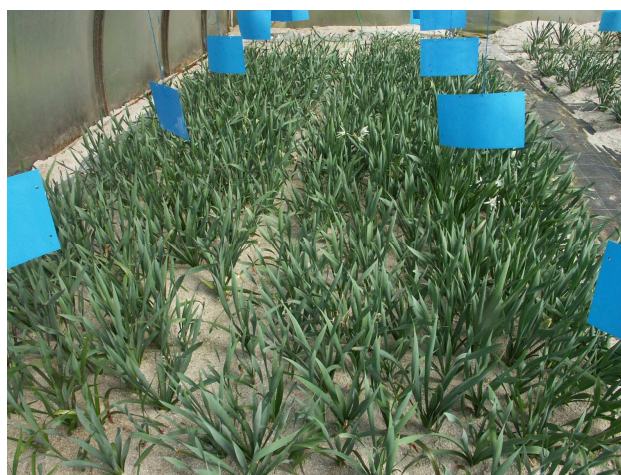
## BIOTOPE

*Sea Lily* is commonly found on the shorelines, from beaches to seashore sand dunes. This plant naturally grows in the sand, and perfectly resists to the drought and the spindrifts. In order to develop, *Sea Lily* needs a lot of sun and a very sandy substrate in which the bulbs will be deeply buried. The species, due to the disappearance of its traditional habitat (dunes), is the subject of a protection in some French regions (particularly in Provence). It is a rare species, and endangered in Loire-Atlantique (French region).

*Sea Lily* takes root in sandy soils, and has the particularity to be able to bury deeper in order to avoid its loosening, or to lengthen its stem in case of a too important covering by the sand. It flowers during the months of July and August.

## OUR CULTURES

*Sea Lily* is nowadays a protected species, therefore the young plants used for the production of our active ingredient Neurolight.61 G exclusively result from greenhouses.



*Neurolight.61 G cultivated in greenhouses*

## HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

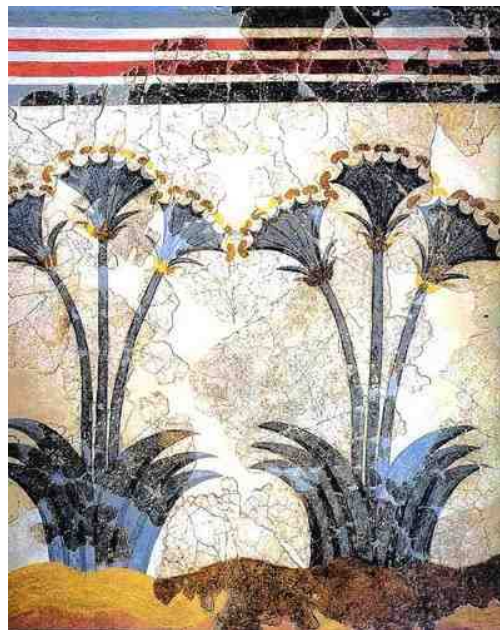
*Pancratium maritimum* has been cultivated from Antiquity in the Mediterranean countries. Native from Crete, and more particularly from Chania island, we also find *Sea Lily* on Hoedic and Houat islands, located in Brittany, in the North West of France.

## HYSTORY AND LEGEND

This elegant white flower has inspired artists from Minoan civilisation, who depicted its beauty on many frescos, and in particular in Knossos Palace in Crete. Knossos is the biggest archaeological site of Cretan Bronze Age, and probably the political centre and the ceremonial place of Minoan civilisation and culture. As its flowers are ephemeral, *Sea Lily* is also linked to death, and the fact it is inevitable. That's why we associate it with the goddess Persephone (or Ariadne) who, following the mythology, was sentenced to eternally spend by all the phases of life, including death, in order to come back to life again and again. In Christian time, *Sea Lily* became a symbol of resurrection.



Persephone



Fresco from Knossos Palace which depicts *Sea Lily*

## CULTURAL ASPECT



French Postmark which depicts *Sea Lily* - 1992

A postmark showing *Sea Lily* was issued in 1992 by the French Post, to more than 5 millions copies. It is part of a limited edition called "Nature from France - Swamp plants", which sums up 4 remarkable species (*Orchis palustris*, *Drosera rotundifolia* and *Nuphar lutea*). We also found this plant on a Maltese postmark in 1999, a Bulgarian one in 1965, and an Israeli one in 1960.

## MEDICINAL USES

*Sea Lily* is famous for the following medicinal properties:

- Hypotensive : reduces blood pressure
- Purgative

It would also be used to treat asthma.

This plant would enable to fight against malaria. Alkaloids in the bulb would be used, for example in Turkey, to prevent and fight against tumors, and several types of cancers.

*Pancratium Maritimum* has an important value in the African shamanism. Indeed, the African shamans rub the roots of the plant on their heads, in order to benefit from its cardiotonic and hallucinogenic effects.

## DIETARY USES

Seeds from *Pancratium Maritimum* would be used as a condiment.  
It is also said that the bulbs would be edible after being cooked.