Convallaria majalis L. Lily-Of-The-Valley
(Convallaria keiskei, Convallaria latifolia, Convallaria linnaei, Convallaria mappii, Convallaria transcaucasica, Lilium convallium, Lilium-convallium majale, Polygonatum majale)

- Convallaria majalis is also known as European Lily-Of-The-Valley, May Bells, or Our-Lady's-Tears; Lily-Of-The-Valley is low growing carpet-forming deciduous herbaceous perennial growing 6” to 8” (12”) tall from short stout stems arising from thickened stolons or shallow underground rhizomes; under favorable conditions the bulbs multiply rapidly to become a solid groundcover, sometimes naturalizing or even becoming invasive; however the vigorous invasive tendencies are only in moister cold winter climates; Convallaria majalis is effective as a garden plant only in the most northern portions of our region; this species requires substantial winter chilling to grow vigorously and it suffers in the hot summers and lack of sufficient chilling in most of Texas and the Deep South; generally C. majalis grows best in USDA hardiness zones 4(3) to 7(8), but is often marketed south and west of its useful range, buyers should be wary.
- In regions where C. majalis can effectively be grown, it is valued as a shade to partial sun groundcover, which can be moved to full sun exposures in cold temperate regions; plants offer miniature versions of a narrow Hosta-like leaf and fragrant one-sided racemes of pendent white flowers intermixed amongst the foliage in spring; flowers are tiny, ¼” diameter, but beautiful on close inspection hanging like miniature glistening white, or sometimes pink, bells with tiny recurved tips on the petals; bright orange to red berry-like fruit that look like tiny tomatoes develop in late summer to fall; be cautious as all parts of C. majalis are reportedly poisonous.
- Although poorly adapted to most of our regional landscapes, C. majalis is included here as it is fairly commonly encountered in some garden centers and is often promoted beyond its adapted range by mail order/internet firms; this species is native to Europe and Asia; the genus name derives from the Latin word convallis meaning valley and the specific epithet indicates May-flowering likely in reference

Copyright 2013 by Michael A. Arnold with all rights reserved; intended for future inclusion in Landscape Plants For Texas And Environments, Fourth Edition.