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Lilies for North Dakota

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LILIES FOR NORTH DAKOTA

Lilies should become more popular both as landscape subjects and for cutflower use. Modern lily breeders have produced many new forms as well as colors both brilliant and subtle. You will find many that are hardy under average garden conditions.

Originally, lilies were classified as having cup-shaped, turkscap (reflexed petals), or trumpetlike blooms. Today you will also find many intermediate forms - bowls, flares (almost star-like), and semi-reflexed types. These you will find more valuable than the older cup and turkscap shapes either in the garden or in an arrangement.

Colors now range from white through pinks and rose to bright red and on to mahogany, as well as clear yellows through apricot and orange to red. Orchid and fuchsia shades as well as limegreens are no longer uncommon. Heights may vary from less than two feet up to four feet. Some lilies will start flowering in June and others will continue into August. A variety can keep your garden colorful for weeks.

CULTURE

Soil - In general, lilies prefer a loamy or even sandy soil with very good drainage. Moisture is essential but soggy, low areas will bring on bulb rots. Too much organic matter (rotted manure, etc.) in contact with the bulb may injure it. Use organic matter as a surface mulch.

Exposure - Nearly all lilies prefer full sun, but the more subtle pink and orchid shades will fade less quickly with a little afternoon shade. Two-thirds day of sun will be necessary to produce strong bulbs for next year.



FIG. 1 FORMS OF LILY FLOWERS

Planting and transplanting - September is the best month for planting or resetting the hardy lilies. The less hardy trumpet types and their hybrid relatives are better moved in early spring from April to very early May.

Commercial bulbs often are not available on the market until October. Since late fall planting often results in loss of bulbs the first winter, you should plan on planting new bulbs in the spring.

Set large bulbs five to six inches deep and spaced 12 to 18 inches apart. Plant smaller bulbs and bulblets shallow, but never less than two inches deep. Never allow the bulbs to dry.

Propagation - Lilies are propagated in many ways.

Division is accomplished by breaking up clumps at proper planting time. Each stem in an old clump represents a bulb. Clumps should be divided and reset each three to four years if they are growing as vigorously as they should.

Underground bulblets will be found along the underground portion of the stem. If you have room, remove them and plant 2-3 inches deep in the garden for a couple of years. They should then be flowering size bulbs.

Stem bulbils are found along the stem where the leaf originates from the stem. Such varieties as the Tiger lily and Enchantment produce quantities. You may remove these in August or early September and plant immediately in the same way as underground bulblets.

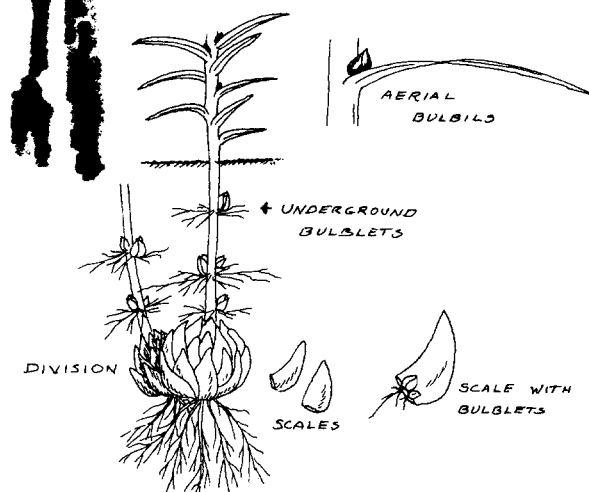


FIG. 2 LILY PROPAGATION

Scaling is accomplished by breaking a few large scales from mature bulbs. These may be planted two inches deep in your garden in the spring. If separated in the fall, place them in plastic bags and store them at room temperature. Small bulblets will form at the base of the scale. If these should begin to form leaves before spring, store them in your refrigerator until spring and then plant as you would the underground bulblets.

Cutting flowers - When using lilies as cutflowers, cut as few leaves as possible. Leaves are needed to produce a strong bulb for next year's bloom.

PESTS

Lilies are not generally troubled by pests. If you see aphids on new shoots, spray with malathion.

In heavy or poorly drained soils you may notice early yellowing of the leaves. In that case your lilies may be infected with bulb-rot. Dust the bulbs with Arasan or Captan and reset them in a well drained bed. Do not plant lilies where you have previously had trouble with bulb-rot.

MOST RELIABLE VARIETIES

Mid-Century and Related Hybrids

Among the hardiest hybrids are the better varieties of the Mid-Century group and similar types of

Canadian origin. Most will bloom from late June through most of July. You will find a variety of colors in the following list: Prosperity and Mega (yellow), Fireflame, Ruby, Redbird, Firebright (red), Joan Evans (yellow-orange), Enchantment and Firecrown (red-orange).

Patterson and Related Hybrids

The Canadian lilies often referred to as Patterson lilies are turksap to semi-reflexed in form but present some of the most delightfully subtle pastel shades. A few of the better known types are Edith Cecilia (light pink), Rose Queen (rose-pink), Rosalind (pink), Orchid Queen (lavender), Fuchsia Queen and Fuchsia Lady (fuchsia), White Gold (cream), Lemon Lady (yellow), Primrose Lady (pale yellow) and Honey Queen (soft palomino-flesh). All are choice, vigorous and very hardy.

The Harlequin hybrids originating in Oregon are similar in type but are less well selected for color. They may also be less hardy.

USABLE LILY SPECIES AND HYBRIDS

Species

- Amabile luteum - butter yellow turksap, June.
- Auratum - white bowl, August, not reliable. Mulch for winter.
- Candlestick (L. hollandicum) - red-orange cup, June.
- Concolor - red, upright star, June.
- Coral - small orange turksap, June.
- Regal - white trumpet, July, semi-hardy.
- Speciosum rubrum - rose and white flare, August-September, not reliably hardy.
- Auratum-speciosum hybrids (Potomac hybrids, Imperial hybrids, etc.) White and rose flares, August. Not reliably hardy. Mulch heavily for winter.
- Aurelian hybrids (numerous strains and varieties are available). White through cream to apricot - orange bowls, flares and turksaps, July-August. Variable in hardiness but not fully reliable. Mulch for winter.
- Preston hybrids - red to orange turksap, June. Although these are reliably hardy the same colors may be found in the more attractive Mid-Century group.
- Trumpets (including the Olympic hybrids, Magic strains, Golden Clarion strains and other Centifolium hybrids). White to golden yellow and greenish trumpets, July. Although these are not reliably hardy they are among the most spectacular and popular lilies. Mulch for winter insurance.