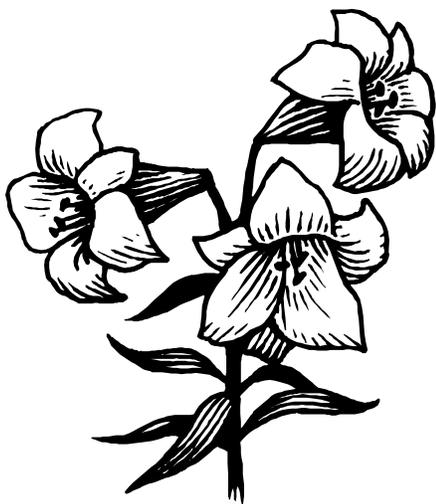


# ***Unique Garden Centre***

## **LILIES**



Lilies are among the choicest hardy plants, with many cultivars and colors now available. Hardy lilies fill a gap in the perennial border that occurs when June flowering irises and peonies and Oriental poppies are over. For the best show, groups of up to a dozen bulbs should be planted rather than one or two. A collection of lilies shows up better and is easier to look after when planted with larger plants or small shrubs behind to provide both a backdrop and shelter from the hot sun, as some species tend to bleach if exposed to bright sunshine.

The fact that lilies must have good drainage cannot be over emphasized. Take pain to select a spot where spring run off water will not linger. Dig the soil deeply, loosening the subsoil and working in a few inches of well – rotted manure, compost or peat moss.

Plant the bulbs 10 – 18 inches apart, grouping for a greater effect. \*Basal rooting lilies are planted 4-5 inches deep and stem rooting varieties are planted about 3 times the depth of the bulbs. (\*All lilies root from the base of the bulb but some produce roots from the part of the stem below the ground as well). Place a 2” layer of coarse sand beneath the bulbs to insure quick drainage.

Lilies can be planted in the fall, September being the best time, or in the spring. To guard against early, deep penetrating frosts, lay on a 6” cover of flax straw, dry sawdust, leaves or peat in early October.

Nearly all lilies bloom best in full sun. While some hybrid stalks are quite strong, it is advisable to shield from high wind and stake the taller varieties. Lilies require adequate water, but never an overdose. A summer mulch or low growing ground cover will help conserve moisture.

When blossoms wither, cut them away. After the last blossoms dies, cut the stalk just below the lower most blossom, but above the leaves, allowing food to be replaced for the bulb and root systems. Leave stalks on the plants until spring. This helps to trap snow for extra winter protection. Cut down the stalks in spring.

Propagation of lilies is readily done by planting bulb scales, the outer curved covering on the bulb. Lift the bulbs in early fall, strip away dried up or rotted scales, and then carefully break off the healthy scales at their base, working around the bulb. The bulb cone can be replanted and will often re-flower the following year. Plant the scales, base down, in shallow rows in a light sand – peat mix. Bulbs will begin forming on sealed edges in 60 – 90 days at which time the scales are moved to a cold frame and planted 6” apart. Mulch well and by the following autumn the bulbs should be ready for a permanent position in the garden. Most lilies also self propagate by forming baby bulbs (bulblets) at the base of the mother bulb. This results in the lilies forming into a clump. When the clump gets too large for the area, lift the entire clump and gently separate bulbs and replant. This should be done in early spring as soon as the lilies are showing any sign of life.

After spring growth is active and flower buds can be detected, apply a side dressing of 5-10-10 and repeat as the first blooms open. Lilies are one of the finest cut flowers – leave as much stem on the plant as possible to allow for rebuilding of the bulb.

