

Plant lilies for a summer garden

By Melinda Myers

Lilies add long-lasting color and fragrance to flower gardens and summer bouquets. These stately flowers provide vertical interest and blend nicely with other perennials. And best of all, with very little care, you'll be enjoying them for years to come.

Plant different types of lilies to extend your enjoyment from early summer into fall. The colorful and often fragrant blossoms add elegance to any bouquet and are long-lasting in a vase.

Start off the summer with Asiatic lilies. These compact plants have upward or outward facing blooms, and though they are not fragrant, they do come in bright colors that will light up your early summer garden. All are hardy in zones 4 to 9.



Kaveri lilies bloom mid-summer and enliven gardens with their golden yellow petals painted with tangerine and burgundy. Photo/Longfield-Gardens.com

The next lilies to bloom are LA Hybrids. These trumpet-shaped lilies are a cross between fragrant Easter lilies (*Lilium longiflorum*) and colorful Asiatics. Choose from an array of rich colors including cream, pink, yellow, orange and red. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

The dainty blossoms of turk's cap lilies open in early summer. Also known as Martagon lilies, these flowers have recurved petals and look like they are dangling from an upside-down candelabra. Hardy in zones 3 to 9, these lilies prefer partially shaded gardens and woodland edges.

Trumpet lilies steal the show in midsummer. Like their close relative the Easter lily, these big, outward-facing blossoms have long trumpets and are wonderfully fragrant. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

Another group of midsummer lilies are the Oriental-Asiatic (OA) hybrids. These have the compact height and outward facing flowers of Asiatics and the larger flowers and heady fragrance of Orientals. Look for the variety Kaveri, which has golden yellow petals touched with tangerine and burgundy. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

Species lilies have downward facing flowers with reflexed petals and extra-long stamens. Bloom times vary. Lady Alice (*Lilium henryi*) and coral lilies (*Lilium pumilum*) flower a full month before tiger lilies (*Lilium lancifolium*). The latter are treasured for their big orange flowers and prominent black spots. Over time, tiger lilies form impressive clumps, with towering, 4-foot stems. Hardy in zones 3 to 9.

Oriental-Trumpet (OT) lilies are hybrids with fragrant, upward-facing flowers that can measure 9" across. Colors range from maroon and rose pink through gold and cream. The cool yellow flowers of Yelloween make this OT lily a favorite among florists. Hardy in zones 4 to 9.

The lily season ends with a bang, when the Oriental lilies

begin to bloom. These big, open-faced flowers have a spicy fragrance that can perfume an entire garden. A wide range of colors, including the popular variety Stargazer, invites lots of creative pairings in the garden and in a vase. Hardy in zones 5 to 9.

Now is the time to order your lily bulbs. The earlier you shop the more choices you'll have. Lily bulbs planted this spring will flower this summer and return to bloom again for years to come.

Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts the Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio segments.