

Growing Lilies in Containers

Lilies love growing in containers! They come in a wide variety of heights and sizes and can be planted alone or with companion plants. They work beautifully on decks and patios, are wonderful for spaces large and small. If your garden is prone to underground animals that love the taste of bulbs, containers are a great way to thwart them so you too can enjoy more lilies!

Lilies in containers have most of the same requirements lilies in the garden do: make sure the soil is well drained (potting soil mixes from your local garden store are fine), that the lilies receive at least half a day of sun, and don't let the container get dry to the point where the plant or flowers wilt. Plant bulbs 4 to 6 inches deep in a container (a bit more for really large bulbs) to allow for good stem rooting. Bulbs can be planted an inch or two closer together in containers than we recommend in the garden, with extra attention to water and feeding. You can grow even the largest lilies in containers--just be sure the container you choose is proportionate to the plant you will be growing. Choose a pot with drainage holes that is at least 10 inches deep (6 inches would be fine for a single bulb); any material will work, but lighter colored containers are best. In areas with hot summers and/or direct sun, darker colored containers can "cook" your bulbs!

Protect your containers and the bulbs within through the late fall and winter. Rapid freezing and/or thawing can be the death of lily bulbs, as can perpetually wet soil. If you choose to leave your containers outside, insulate them with a material that still allows the soil to "breathe", and turn them on their sides if possible. This will keep excess moisture from accumulating in the containers. We advise against burying the pots in the garden, as most containers cannot drain water properly or rapidly enough underground. Containers can also be moved into an unheated space, like a garage or root cellar, to overwinter. Once the danger of heavy frosts has passed, bring them out and watch your containerized garden grow!

If you want to transplant lilies from your container to another location, the rules are the same as in the garden--once the stems have died back, you can dig up the bulbs and plant them in a new location.

We are delighted that you chose our lilies, and we hope they bring you beauty, color, fragrance, and enjoyment for many years!

The Lily Garden

www.thelilygarden.com Phone: 360-253-6273

GROWING LILIES

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Your lily bulbs are ready to plant and ready to GROW! In mild climates, they can be planted anytime the ground is not frozen solid and is dry enough to dig a hole without making clods. Fall and early winter planting produce stems that flower at the "expected" time; planting late in the spring will produce later flowering stems, which may be shorter than usual if hot weather comes quickly. The following winter will reset the lilies' "clocks" and put them on "standard blooming time" again. The flowering times listed in our catalog are typical for western Oregon and Washington. Translate "mid-June" into "when the roses begin to flower" to provide a frame of reference for flowering time in your own area.

The sooner you plant your bulbs, the better they will grow and perform. **Do check your order** upon receipt, and if you cannot plant your new bulbs right away, they can be stored where they will stay COOL **but not frozen** above 28° Fahrenheit. Keep them in the original packing material, as this will protect the bulbs and allow them to respire. Your refrigerator or garage will be fine for temporary storage. Keep the bulbs in the dark if you can, for exposure to light will make them sprout quickly, and once they begin to show sprouts, they need to be planted. Lily bulbs are extremely hardy, but as the shoots elongate, their softer and more watery tips can be harmed by sudden freezes. Lilies with very long sprouts will grow beautiful stems, as long as the whole sprout is planted deep enough. The stem will still come up nice and straight, even if the bulb and sprout are planted upside down.

If you want to make up for a late start and winter seems slow to finish, you can pot your bulbs and leave them in a "root cellar" environment until sprouts appear. They will begin to form roots at very cool temperatures, as long as moisture is adequate. When it is warmer, you can move the pots outside or transplant the mass (with its emerging shoot) like a big "seedling plug" into the garden.

Choosing a location

Choose a well-drained spot with at least half a day of sun. If it's too shady, the stems will stretch and lean a little toward the light. Full sun is fine, too, and is preferred for mass plantings. Well-drained soil is key—slow drainage or continually damp soil conditions can cause bulbs to rot, but they need regular watering until flowering time. If your soil needs amending, add fairly coarse material, or try a pre-made soil mixture like Sunshine mix. We advise against peat moss, since it retains moisture all too well.

Try to choose a spot that is quick to dry out after a wet day, since lilies can be bothered by botrytis, a fungus that spots the leaves in prolonged cool, wet weather. In the home garden, this is rarely a problem, since most gardeners do not plant their lilies as thickly as we do in our commercial fields, and the leaves usually dry out quickly. If you do see "bull's eye" spots on the leaves, use a copper-based spray or any fungicide recommended for roses. Botrytis does not hurt the bulbs, but it reduces the leaf area that should be manufacturing sugar to grow a bigger bulb for next year.

Planting your bulbs

Plant the bulbs 4 to 6 inches deep; they are not fussy about this, but they do like to stay cool in the summer, so deeper planting is fine, especially for larger bulbs. You can always follow the general rule: choose a planting depth 2 to 3 times the height of the bulb. The stem that pops out of the ground will grow roots *above* the bulb, before it emerges from the soil, so deeper-planted bulbs will be well anchored, with roots above and below the bulb. Another way to accomplish deeper planting is to make a raised bed, with the lily bulbs at ground level and the soil 4 to 6 inches deep or deeper on top of them. This also assures superb drainage, which is important for lilies.

Give bulbs enough elbow room, too—a radius of at least 6" per bulb gives each stem its own spot in the sun.

Loosen the soil a bit below the bulb level, pat down the soil over the bulb, water, and wait for warm weather to do its magic. If you expect a great deal of frigid weather after planting, do give the lilies a mulch. Remember, it is the emerging shoot that must be protected from late frosts; the trumpet lilies are the most vulnerable. If you do mulch, watch that the mulch isn't a haven for slugs just about the time the lilies begin to pop up, looking like asparagus shoots!

Special Questions

If you want to fertilize, put on a little well-balanced fertilizer at the time of emergence and about a month later. Slow-release fertilizers are excellent. It isn't necessary to feed the lilies, though, unless your soil is poor and you want to raise super show-lilies. The sort of fertilizer that gardeners use in your area to grow potatoes will be fine. Too much nitrogen can produce lush leaves but weak stems, so don't overdo it. Heavy nitrogen in hot, wet areas can also set the stage for bulb rot.

If you want to cut the gorgeous flowering stems, remember that the green parts are the food factories that are building up next year's bulb; if you leave the bottom two-thirds of the stem, it will easily make a nice bulb for the following year.

Lilies only rarely need more water after flowering. The Asiatics and Trumpets are well adapted to dry summer areas, if they have enough water until flowering time. The Orientals, however, will need watering during hot, dry summers, since they don't flower until August. Summer mulches will help keep the bulbs cool and watering requirements at a minimum, as will some companion plants (such as annuals or low-growing perennials) that are compatible, but be sure they do not harbor slugs.

Lilies are perennials that will come up year after year. They will gradually increase by division of the main bulbs and by growth of small bulbs along the old below-ground stem. If the clumps that form become too thick, lift and divide them in September or October, after the lily stems have turned brown and died back. You can remove stems once they have died back if you like to tidy up your garden in fall.

Our Guarantee

We guarantee every bulb to grow and bloom, and your satisfaction is our primary goal. If for any reason you are dissatisfied with any of our products and their performance in your garden, we will replace your bulbs, refund your money, or issue you a credit for different bulbs. **Guaranteed!**

