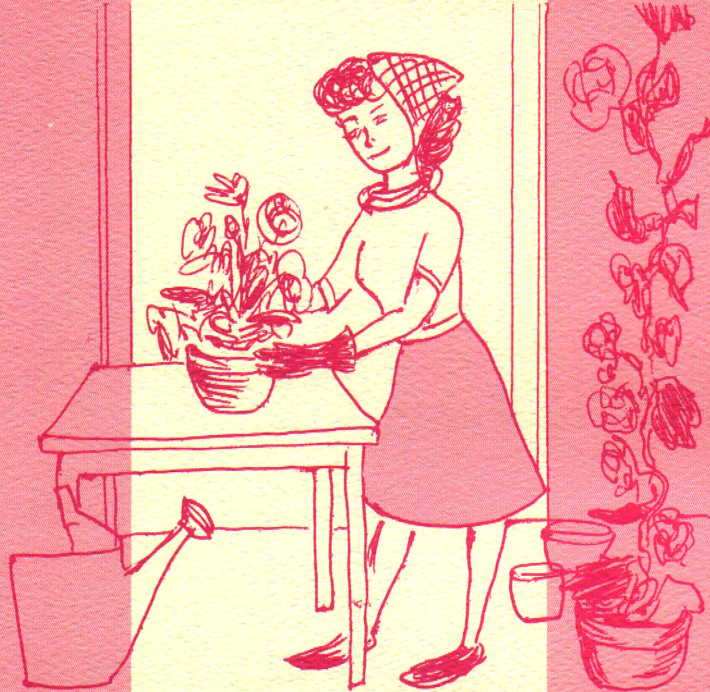


## Care of House and Garden Plants

# Hints on Growing LILIES

Cooperative Extension Service Michigan State University



by M. Jane Coleman  
Department of Horticulture

The many species and hybrid lilies (genus *Lilium*) now available will provide attractive and colorful displays in your garden and home.

### Varieties

All varieties deserve merit. You will find a wide range of colors and forms, with natural flowering season from May through late August. Consult your dealer or write direct to a bulb and seed company for complete up-to-date listings.

Lily bulbs are never dormant, so they bruise easily without adequate cushioning in the pack. A slight moisture loss can be replaced by putting the bulbs in moist peatmoss or sand at 40 to 50° F for up to 14 days.

### Planting

Fall is usually the best planting time, but if bulbs arrive after the ground has frozen, EITHER store in moist peatmoss or sand at about 35° F until spring, OR plant in pots and get earlier growth.

Garden position must be well-drained: use a natural slope or raise a portion of your garden. Add sharp sand (1:1 ratio) to heavy soils for improved drainage. Add 1 part humus to 1 part soil to both top- and sub-soil. Mix a 5-10-10 or 6-8-12 garden fertilizer at the recommended rate with the topsoil.

Remove dead and infected parts of the bulb. Dust with a powder fungicide before planting.

All lilies (except *L. candidum*) should

be planted at a depth (to bulb top) of 2 to 3 times the vertical thickness of the bulb. *L. candidum* must have no more than 1 inch soil over the top of the bulb. Apply a winter mulch of leafmold, sawdust, pine needles, or similar material.

### In Spring

Remove winter mulch when lily shoots emerge from the soil. Protect the young shoots from late frosts with temporary covers for example, thick paper.

Fertilize with general garden fertilizer at recommended rate. Avoid fertilizer contact with shoots and leaves — it will burn them.

### During Summer

Keep bulbs and roots cool by applying a summer mulch or planting shallow-rooted ground cover plants.

Water generously, but avoid wetting the leaves. Shake taller flowering stems. Removing faded flowers keeps the plants attractive throughout the season; do not, however, cut off live leaves, or you will reduce flowers next year.

### Fall Treatment

Remove summer mulch. Cut stems back as they dry out.

Apply fresh winter mulch. Lilies can be left in the ground through winter. Replanting becomes necessary when crowding reduces flower size and vigor.

### Lilies in Pots

Any garden varieties can be grown in the greenhouse, and will flower earlier than those outdoors. Forcing lilies have precooled bulbs, and will flower out of season.

After flowering, pot lilies should be planted outdoors for the remainder of the summer. They will flower again the following year.

### Pests and Diseases

All-purpose spray for application once a month during summer 50% DDT wettable powder — 2 tablespoons, plus 50% Captan emulsifiable concentration — 1½ tablespoons, plus 50% Malathion emulsion — 2 teaspoons, in 1 gallon of water.

Insect pests rarely cause trouble if plants are sprayed regularly. Only three severe diseases may trouble your lilies:

**Mosaic** — a virus causing stunted growth with discolored and mottled leaves. Dig out the whole plant and burn it to prevent spread of the virus.

**Botrytis blight** — orange-brown flecks on the leaves precede gray-colored mold. Spray Captan thoroughly at the recommended rate.

**Basal rot** — prevents growth in spring. Clean off partially infected bulbs and dip in powder or liquid fungicide. Replant in fresh soil.

Additional information obtainable from Home and Family Series Extension Bulletin E-510 (March 1966), available at County Extension Offices.



