

Lilies come with specific needs

Easter lilies (*Lilium longiflorum*), the white trumpet lily in all their splendor, are popular this season of the year, but require special care.

Place the plant near a window where it will receive maximum natural light in a cool (60-70 degrees) area, away from drafts, heaters or heating vents. Keep the soil uniformly moist, but not wet, and water once or twice a week. Remove spent flowers.

One week after flowering, feed with a balanced liquid fertilizer at half the recommended strength. Repeat 2-3 weeks later. When the entire plant turns brown, cut stems off at soil level. Moisture the soil well before planting the bulb outdoors 4-6 inches deep when the weather is suitable — usually about mid-May.

You may find it blooming again next fall. But be assured that when it has adjusted to the new growing conditions (a year or two) it will revert to its normal midsummer flowering schedule.

In addition to planting the Easter lily outside, perhaps this is the year to try other lilies as well. The best way to learn about these flowers is to begin with just one type. Lilies have been classified into various divisions according to parentage, time of blooming and cultural requirements.

Growing needs vary and this may account for their reputation of being hard to grow. If specific conditions

are met, growing these plants can be successful. Some are acid-loving, some prefer alkaline soil, some like sun, some like shade. Some are planted in the spring, some in the fall. We just need to learn which want what.

All lilies need good drainage — this can't be emphasized enough. They also need plenty of organic material in the soil. A raised bed, a build-up of soil so that it forms a mound, or growing them on a natural slope in the garden helps with drainage. They can be grown in containers filled with potting mix, if a proper area in the landscape can't provide adequate drainage and good, rich soil.

Lily bulbs have no outer protective covering like tulips and other bulbs, so they must be handled carefully. They are never completely dormant, so it is best to purchase good healthy bulbs that have been placed in plastic bags or containers to which damp peat moss or other material has been added.

Keep the bulbs in a cool location until ready to plant. Don't allow bulb packages to remain in the sun. If a few soft or moldy scales are evident in a small area of the bulb, they will often recover after planting. If roots are growing from the bulb, don't remove them when planting. A mulch of wood bark, straw, sawdust, or semi-coarse grind peat moss is recommended. Fertilize when sprouts ap-

down to earth



Marty Figley

pear above the soil in early spring. Don't mix fertilizer into the soil at planting time.

Earlier I suggested starting small with lily growing. The Division 1 classification of lilies is called Asiatic hybrids because the species from which they are derived is from Asia. These lilies can be grown almost anywhere and many are bright colors. They like sunshine, but adapt well to partial shade and make wonderful companion plants.

Most of these early lilies have bright red, yellow and orange blooms — the latter two combine well with purple and blue flowers like larkspur, bachelor buttons and campanulas. The deep red ones go

well with shasta daisies or sweet alyssum or strike a dramatic pose growing up through a veil of baby's breath. If planted with other flowers, regular fertilizing with a balanced formula will be necessary.

Some of these Asiatic hybrids bloom in delicate shades of pink, salmon, dusky rose, lavender, plum, lemon, cream and white, therefore satisfying most tastes.

These hybrids, which grow 2 1/2 to 3 feet high, should be planted in the spring, with the bulbs 4-5 inches deep. Roots develop along the stem.

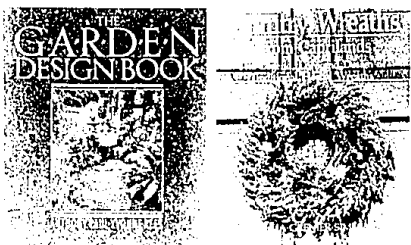
Lilies can be planted so that they bloom from late spring to fall, therefore their colorful blossoms and lovely perfume can be enjoyed throughout the season.

Rose Society meets Friday

The Detroit Rose Society will meet at 7:45 p.m. Friday at the Oak Park Community Center, Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge and north of Eight Mile, Oak Park.

State University extension service will speak about soil, pH and how to build a rose bed.

The public is welcome at no charge.



Books for herb fanciers

The symposium, "Herbs from the Past to the Present," to be held Saturday, April 8 at North Congregational Church of Southfield, will include a large book section as well as guest speakers. They will cover growing, cooking, landscaping and managing herbs. Pictured are two of the books which will be available. The symposium, a project of the Southern Michigan unit of the Herb Society of America is open to the public. For information, call 737-9470 or 681-1925.

Southfield artist wins prize

Suzanne Young of Southfield recently won first place for her cast resin sculpture, "Female Figure," in the third annual women's art show, "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" at Oakland Community College of Farmington Hills.

Banks-Ord won best of show for her water color self-portrait; Jude Buresh received a second for her mixed media work, "Barroquedo Shells," and Sandra Bennett took third for an oil painting, "Painting the Town."

Honorable mentions were awarded to Sandy Schabestel, Marion Splitzley, Sarajane Seaver and Terre Ritchie.

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