

Easter Lily

History

The Easter lily is a time-honoured flower of Easter, symbolizing beauty, life and hope. Myths have been told that Easter lilies sprang up where drops of Christ's sweat fell. Lilies are also associated with the Virgin Mary, mother of God, or Hera, the mythological Queen of Heaven. Easter lilies are found in churches to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

The botanical name for the Easter lily is *Lilium longiflorum*, and 'Nellie White' is the most common cultivar. These lilies have large, white trumpet-shaped flowers. The Easter lily is native to the Ryukyu Islands of Japan.

Purchase

Select plants that have lots of dark-green, dense foliage all the way to the soil line. This is a good sign of a healthy root system.

Care

Easter lilies like moderately cool temperatures. Daytime temperatures should range from 11-21°C, and nighttime temperatures should range from 8-18°C. Avoid placing plants near drafty areas or places with dry air from fireplaces and heat ducts.

Easter lilies do well near a window with indirect natural sunlight. Medium light levels are best, yet most light levels are tolerated.

Water thoroughly when the soil surface feels dry to the touch, but do not over water. Remove the wrapping from the pot, or put little holes on the bottom so that water does not get trapped. Mulching helps keep the soil cool and provides nutrients for the stem roots.

Easter lilies need a moderately moist, well-drained soil of one to two parts sphagnum peat moss, one part vermiculite, one part sterilized loam, and one part perlite. Do not fertilize Easter lilies while in bloom.

Removing the yellow anthers before the pollen starts to shed gives the flower longer life.

Problems

To help stop the problem of aphids that like to feed on Easter lilies, wash off foliage with soapy water. Root rot is also a common problem due to over watering; remember to provide adequate drainage by removing the wrapping.

Value

Easter lilies are a great gift for the Easter holiday, adding beauty and a pleasing fragrance to the work place and the home. Do not miss out on their rare beauty, for they are around only once a year.

Leanne O'Sullivan, Class of 2002

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery

Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus, 135 Taylor Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
phone: (905) 641-2252, ext. 4082; fax: (905) 988-4307 e-mail: mnewell@niagaracollege.ca

Website: <http://greenhousenursery.niagaracollege.ca>