

Gardening in the ZONE[®]

with Iowa Gardening Magazine's Liz Gilman



Garden Lilies

They are often called Queen of the Summer Garden. This week I interviewed Cindy Haynes, associate professor of horticulture at Iowa State University, about garden lilies.



Cindy Haynes with some royal flowers.

According to Haynes, there are quite a few flowers that are called lilies like daylily, calla lily, toad lily and surprise lily but they are not true lilies. True lilies are the royalty of the garden. They are members of the genus *Lilium*. True lilies bloom from a bulb so you can buy them in the fall or you can buy them in containers this time of year and plant them in your garden.

Many true lilies do well in our hardiness zones 4 and 5, but the two that you find most commonly available are Asiatic and Oriental. Asiatic lilies are probably the most popular. Their outward facing flowers are available in a

wide range of colors- yellow, orange, red, lavender, and purple- and are freckled with dark spots. Haynes said that they are among the first lilies to bloom in early to mid June and continue to bloom for a couple weeks. Asiatic lilies are considered the most durable and multiply quickly. They aren't however, fragrant.

If fragrance is important, you really need to plant Oriental lilies. Their sweetly scented blooms begin in mid to late summer, just as the Asiatic hybrids are finishing. Many of you are probably most familiar with the 'Star Gazer' lily's bold scent. Oriental lilies are typically taller and reach three to five feet in height. They have wider foliage and larger blooms of pale yellow, pink, lavender and white. Both Asiatic and Oriental lilies perform best when protected from the hot afternoon sun and strong winds and when planted in well-drained soil that is slightly acidic.

And an important thing to remember with lilies-- pluck off the pollen anthers when smelling them or cutting them for arrangements. The pollen will stain your clothing, table top or nose. Plus, removing the pollen actually prolongs the blooms.

So add a little royalty to your garden and consider planting a true lily. ♪

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