

Plant Wise

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

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Calla Lilies

What is a Calla Lily? (*Zantedeschia*) is not a true lily, but is an extraordinary herbaceous, perennial, flowering plants in the family Araceae, native to southern Africa. The genus has been introduced on all continents except Antarctica.

This beautiful plant, available in a multitude of colors, grows from rhizomes and is ideal for use in beds and borders. You can also grow calla lilies in containers, either outdoors or in a sunny window as houseplants.

Calla lilies are easy to grow and add a classy look to perennial gardens, cutting gardens and container plantings. Their distinctive flowers come in many beautiful colors, including classic white, yellow, orange, pink, rose, lavender and dark maroon.



The plants have smooth, sword-like foliage that's often decorated with white freckles. This foliage looks neat and attractive all season long, both before and after the flowers bloom. Depending on the cultivar, calla lilies grow between 1 to 2 feet tall. In the garden or in a vase, calla lilies are elegant and always impressive.



Cutting Gardens

Calla lilies are terrific cut flowers. They are easy to

arrange and can last for up to two weeks in a vase. Planting calla lilies in a cutting garden allows you to grow a wide range of different colors and have plenty of flowers for bouquets. Because they are known for being long lasting cut flowers, they are a favorite for using in weddings!



Planting and Care

Calla lilies do not generally require too much attention. Proper planting and location are about the only important things to consider when growing them. Calla lilies grow well in full sun or partial shade. The lilies should be planted in loose, well-drained soil. Calla lilies are typically planted in the spring. However, wait until the threat of frost has passed and the soil has warmed sufficiently before planting. It's best to wait until the soil has warmed to at least 65°F.



Calla lilies should be planted 3 to 4 inches deep. If planting in a container, they look best planted just 4" apart. Set the rhizome into the hole with the

“eyes” (growing tips) facing up. For greater results, space them between 6” to a foot apart. When first planted, it’s important to water sparingly. Once the plants have a few leaves, you can begin watering more generously. Calla lilies enjoy being kept moist and will also benefit from a monthly dose of fertilizer throughout the growing season.

An adequate layer of mulch around the plants will help keep the area moist and free of weeds. Although calla lilies can remain in the ground year-round in warmer climates, here in Iowa it is a little different. Calla lilies are winter hardy in zones 8-10. In colder areas they can either be grown as annuals or can be dug up in the fall and stored indoors for replanting the next spring.

Over Wintering

Too over winter dig up the rhizomes in autumn, usually after the first frost. Shake off any loose soil and trim off the foliage. (At this time, you can also break apart or split the larger rhizomes) Allow them to dry out for a few days before storing the rhizomes for winter. Calla lilies should be stored in peat moss and located in a cool, dry area, preferably dark, at 50-60°F. Check once or twice during the winter to make sure the rhizomes are not too moist (rotting) or too dry (shriveling). In the spring you can wait for warm weather to plant or you can choose to start your calla lilies indoors in pots during late winter and transplant them outside in spring.



Here is a common Question.

Should Calla lilies be deadheaded? Unlike many other flowers, calla lily deadheading won’t cause the plant to create more blossoms. Each calla lily is designed to create a certain number of flowers, sometimes one or two and other times as many as six. Once those blooms have died off, the plant will only show foliage until the following spring.

So, why do you deadhead calla lily plants? First, it simply looks better to have a neat and tidy green plant than one with dead and drooping flowers hanging down. Second, calla lily deadheading is important for growing large, healthy rhizomes to plant for next year’s flowers. Spent flowers tend to turn into seed pods, which use up resources better left for other tasks. Having a bloom on the plant takes a lot of energy, and the plant can use this

energy better by concentrating on making a large, hardy rhizome. Once you remove the dead flower, the plant can focus on getting ready for next year.



If you are planning to save your Calla Lilies for replanting next year, fertilize the plants throughout the growing season. Cut off the flower stems as soon as the blooms have faded. Continue to water and fertilize until the foliage begins to yellow or after the first frost. With proper care you can have calla lilies for many years to come! The blooms will last for weeks on the plant, giving you that splash of color in your beds or pots!



The Wonderful Winter Squash!

Winter squash is a vegetable representing several squash species within the genus Cucurbita. Squashes are one of the oldest known crops, and are all native to the Americas. Squashes are not able to survive more than a touch of frost, so all came from warm regions of southern North America, Central America and northern South America.

The difference in winter squash from summer squash varieties is that summer squash is harvested and eaten while the skin is still soft and the seeds inside are still immature. Winter squash is picked and eaten when the seeds within have matured fully and the skin has hardened into a tough rind.



Unlike summer squash, winter squash is harvested in autumn when they are hard and ripe, and most varieties can be stored and enjoyed for use through the winter.

Here are 11 common varieties of winter squash, and what you need to know about each.



Acorn Squash is small in size, typically weighing between one and two pounds, with orange-yellow flesh and thick, dark green and orange skin. This squash should have a firm exterior free from soft spots and blemishes, and feel heavy for its size. Store them in a cool, dry place and they will keep for at least one month. Acorn squash has a mild, subtly sweet and nutty flavor. This skin is also edible. It can be baked, roasted, steamed, sautéed, or even cooked in the microwave.



Banana Squash are large elongated squash that can grow two to three feet in length and weigh as much as 40 pounds. It has smooth orange, pink, or blue skin and firm, brilliant orange flesh. When cooked, banana squash has a rich, sweet, earthy taste. Use banana squash in place of other varieties, like butternut or kabocha. It's great for roasting and in soups and stews.



Buttercup Squash is squatty and round with an inedible dark green rind that has green-gray striations. It has firm, dense, vibrant orange flesh. It resembles kabocha squash, though is distinguished by a round ridge on its bottom. It is heavy for its size, with even coloring. Buttercup squash can be stored in a cool, dry place for up to three months. It has a sweet, creamy flavor and is considered sweeter than other winter squash varieties.

The flesh tends to be dry, so steaming and baking are the best methods for cooking this squash.



Butternut Squash is a pear-shaped squash and has a smooth, cream-colored exterior with bright orange flesh and comparatively few seeds. It is firm and heavy for its size. This is the sweetest variety of winter squash. It's perfect for roasting and sautéing, or making a smooth purée or soup.



Delicata Squash is known as sweet potato squash, this small cylindrical squash has thin cream to yellow colored skin with green stripes, and orange-yellow flesh. They are smaller than most winter squash, making them easy to prepare and cook. Delicata has creamy flesh with a mild flavor like to sweet potatoes. The skin is also edible. You can either bake it as is, or cut it into slices which can be roasted, sautéed, or steamed. It is also ideal for stuffing.



Hubbard Squash The hubbard squash is another very large variety of winter squash. It has a hard, firm exterior that can range in color from deep green to gray or blue. It is hard and firm, seeming heavy for its size. You'll find whole hubbard squash at farm stands and farmers markets, though because of its size, it's generally sold pre-cut and seeded in grocery stores. Hubbard squash has a rich, sweet pumpkin flavor. The sweet orange flesh can be substituted for any other variety of winter squash. It's ideal for both cooking and baking, and is especially great for making pie.



Kabocha Squash is squatty and round, and similar in size and shape to buttercup squash, though its base points out. It has a dull finish with dark green skin that sometimes has small lumps, and bright yellow-orange flesh. It can be stored in a cool, dry place for up to one month. Kabocha squash is remarkably sweet with a nice nutty flavor and texture that's similar to a blend of sweet potato and pumpkin. This squash is very versatile and can be used as a substitute for any other winter squash. It can be roasted or steamed, added to soup, or used for a pie filling.



Pumpkin The pumpkins that are used for cooking and baking, are smaller than the field pumpkins used for decoration. They're round with a firm exterior that can range in color from pale to bright reddish-orange, with vibrant orange flesh. For the best flavor and texture, choose pumpkins grown specifically for eating rather than carving, such as sugar pumpkins, sweet pumpkins, cheese pumpkins, and other different heirloom varieties. Sugar pumpkins, and like varieties, have a sweet, earthy taste. You can use these smaller pumpkins just as you would other varieties of winter squash, bake, roast, or purée them. Pumpkin is ideal for soup, curries, and of course, pies! Large field pumpkins, the ones you'd put on your front porch, are best left for decoration since they're dry and flavorless.



Spaghetti Squash has a cylindrical shape with a

firm exterior that ranges in color from pale cream to bright yellow. When you cook the squash, the moist flesh develops strands that resemble spaghetti. It is heavy for its size. Store it in a cool, dry place for up to one month. Spaghetti squash doesn't actually taste like spaghetti. It has a tender, chewy, fragile texture, and a very mild flavor. Unlike other winter squash varieties, it lacks sweetness. Roast or steam it, then scrape out the strands. Top with marinara, pesto, or mix in other veggies, and eat it as you would spaghetti.

Sweet Dumpling Squash



This small yellow squash, with bright orange to dark green striations, may be the cutest of the bunch. Stored in a cool, dry area, away from sunlight, this squash can last for up to three months. The flesh is starchy and sweet, with a flavor that's reminiscent of corn. The small, single-serving size of this squash makes it ideal for stuffing and roasting.

Turban Squash



This large, decorative squash has an irregular turban shape with a dull-looking, bumpy exterior that can range in color from mottled green to orange and yellow. Like other winter squash, it feels heavy for its size. This large squash has a very mild, nutty flavor. Turban squash is most often used as a decoration, though you can use it in recipes in just about any way you use butternut, acorn, or other winter squash. Hollowed out, it makes a beautiful soup tureen.





Slow-Cooker Chicken and Dumplings

YIELD: Serves 8 PREP TIME: 20 minutes
COOK: Crockpot on low, 6 hours + standing time

INGREDIENTS:

6 boneless skinless chicken thighs, chopped
1/2 tsp salt, divided, and 1/2 tsp pepper, divided
1 Tbs canola oil
3 celery stalks, chopped
2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
1 large onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
4 cups chicken broth, divided
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon dried thyme

DUMPLINGS:

2 cups all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 tsp salt and 1/4 tsp pepper
1 cup whole milk
4 tablespoons melted butter

Directions:

Season chicken with 1/4 tsp salt & 1/4 tsp pepper. In large skillet, on medium high, add oil and chicken. Cook and stir 6-8 minutes. Then add to 6-qt. slow cooker. In same skillet, cook celery, carrots and onion until tender, 6-8 minutes. Add garlic, tomato paste, remaining salt and pepper and cook 1 minute. Stir in flour; cook 1 minute longer. Whisk in 2 cups chicken broth and stir until thickened. Add to slow cooker. Stir in bay leaves, thyme and remaining chicken broth.

For dumplings, mix flour, baking powder, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Whisk in milk and butter to form a thick batter. Drop by 1/4 cup-fulls over chicken mixture. Cover and cook on low until bubbly and dumplings are set, 6-8 hours. Shut off crock pot and let stand, uncovered, for 15 minutes. When serving, remove bay leaves.

Do you Remember When?

You looked forward to Halloween! As the date came closer, you were thinking about what you wanted to go as! Of course, we didn't get to go the town and buy a costume, your Mom made one for you. So...basically, you were at her mercy. First was the school party. Each class would put their costume on, then, lead by our teachers, we were taken from room to room and paraded through each class! Then back to your home room for treats of cookies, cakes, candy corn and popcorn, made and brought by the parents. And do you remember trick or treating for UNICEF? Going door to door in a large group with your Sunday School Teacher, collecting money for the fund. Usually afterwards you went to the basement of the church for an evening of games and Halloween treats!

Last, there were the private parties, where barns were turned into spook houses. One by one you were lead in, blindfolded, as they would put your hand into a dish and tell you it was a bowl of eye balls! The next one was a dish of brains, OH MY!! On and on they lead you through! At the end when they took off your blindfold, you found that the eyes were actually wet grapes, the brains were wet cold spaghetti and so on...But as a child it was frightfully scary but fun filled night. After everyone arrived and had been lead through the blindfolded maze, we all took part in the traditional Halloween and seasonal fall games, dunking for apples and so much more. The parents hosting the event could be seen smiling with pride in the party they had for their children and class mates.

Please remember to drive carefully through residential areas on the weekends of October 23rd and 30th. Be on the lookout for little Goblins who are trick or treating. Keep in mind how much dressing up means to those little ones. That little Pirate feels like a real swashbuckler! ☺

Happy Haunted Halloween!



October UP COMMING EVENTS

- **October 11**, Columbus Day
- **October 31**, Halloween
- **November 7th**, Daylight savings time ends. Turn your clocks back one hour. Remember the old saying, "Spring ahead, Fall back"



October GARDENING TO DO LIST

- **Collect** and sow seeds from perennials and hardy annuals
- **Plant** Spring flowering bulbs. Tulips, daffodils, crocus,
- **Remove and destroy** all the dead and dying Iris foliage to prevent iris borers from over-wintering.
- **Rake** and compost tree leaves.
- **Plant** garlic. Mulch with straw.
- **Remove**, clean and winterize pond water pumps.
- **Hardy Water Lilies.** If your lily pond is deep enough not to freeze solid, cut back the foliage of your lily and move it to the deepest part of your pond.
- **Place netting** over ponds before the fall leaves start dropping.
- **Continue** to water newly planted trees and shrubs until the ground freezes.
- **Start** putting out winter bird feeders. Prepare birdbaths for winter by adding birdbath heater or replace birdbath with a heated dog water Clean and fill regularly with fresh water to help keep from spreading diseases.



Resources for Horticulture information Iowa State University Publication

PM 1894	Garlic
PM 1892	Melons
PM 534	Planting and harvesting times for Garden vegetables
PM 731	Harvesting and Storing Vegetables
PM 1078	Harvesting and Storing Apples
PM 1398	Harvesting and Drying Flowers
RG 312	Suggested Daffodil Cultivars for Iowa
RG 304	Late Season Perennial Flowers
RG 319	When to Divide Perennials
PM 1313	Peonies
RG 304	Late Season Perennials
PM 683	Composting Yard Waste
PM 1072	Establishing a Lawn from Seed

Horticulture Publications on-line

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListCategories>



ISU Hotline Links and Numbers

Hotlines available for all

Iowa Concern 800-447-1985 Financial questions, legal education, stress counseling, crisis/disaster resources and referral (24 hrs - all days)

Beginning Farmer Center 877-BFC-1999 Program to match beginning and retiring farmers (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Teen Line 800-443-8336 Personal and health-related information and referral (24 hrs - all days)

Iowa 2-1-1 211 Resource referral for housing, health, food, family, transportation, employment, education, and legal assistance (24 hrs - all days)

Hot lines available for Iowa Residents Only

AnswerLine Toll-free: 800-262-3804 Local: 515-296-5883

Questions relating to home and family (9 am-noon & 1-4 pm)
Iowa Healthy Families 800-369-2229 Health information and referral (24 hrs - all days)

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