

More Lilies to Love: Moving beyond the familiar.

Fans of lilies are always looking for more! If you have been happily growing the familiar Asiatics, Division I and Martagons, Division II, perhaps it's time to branch out into the world of lilies from other divisions and to interdivisional crosses. Many different types of lilies from other divisions and interdivisional crosses are available, offering attributes not often found in the old faithfuls such as oversize blooms, exotic fragrance and a wider range of colours.

For almost ten years the Research Plots at Olds College have been used for data collection on the general performance of Asiatic lilies, as well as the impact of mulch-use and planting depth on that performance. Over the years we have expanded the focus of our collection to include several lily hybrids from other divisions and we felt it was time to outline some of the information we have gathered.

First and foremost we are interested in hardiness – whether these hybrids can survive and thrive in Alberta's climate. We are then interested in other performance matrices such as height, bloom count and bloom duration. Initially lilies were kept in the plots for three years, but as we interpret the data from our hybrids, we have realized that three years is not long enough to be able to determine trends in performance so moving forward we will aim to keep them in the plots for a minimum of five years. The information provided below has been taken from specimens that have been in the plots for three or more years.

Asiapet (AA Hybrids) - Division VIII interdivisional crosses

These lilies are the result of crosses between Asiatic and Trumpet/Aurelian lilies. Asiapets are generally considered hardy, although it is recommended that they be planted deep and for mulch to be added. They are desirable for their huge, fragrant blooms in late season (August/September).

At the college we have grown only one specimen, Ivory Belles which was in the garden for three seasons. The plants were at their tallest in the first year, then declined over the next two years. Bud and bloom numbers peaked in year two, then drastically declined over the third season. Bloom duration also peaked in year two. With this minimal data, indications are that this lily will not be reliably hardy or a good performer over a longer growing time.



Ivory Belles

- Average Height - 34 cm
- Bloom time - end July to early August
- Average bloom duration - 10 days

Orienpet (OT Hybrids) - Division VIII interdivisional crosses

Orienpet (or OT) hybrids are a cross between Oriental and Trumpet lily types that bring together the best characteristics of both. We see the colour range of the trumpet lilies (reds, yellows, oranges) with the shape of the orientals, along with a light, pleasant scent. In the college plots we have grown Northern Carillon, Pink Brilliant, Siesta and Yelloween for between 3-5 years.



Pink Brilliant



Yelloween

Generally, all cultivars have had stable height, bloom count and duration. In some cases a peak in performance measurements was seen after 2-3 years and then generally levelled off. All would be considered hardy so far.

- Average height - 50-75 cm;
- Average bloom count - 4-6 blooms per stem
- Bloom time - late July or early August
- Average bloom duration - 14-20 days

Trumpets - Division VI

Trumpet lilies are tall and elegant with large trumpet-shaped flowers. They are known for their incredible, strong fragrance. Bred from species found in China, varieties can be found with downward facing, bowl shaped or upfacing flowers and colours that include white, yellow, chartreuse, pink, purple and peach.

There are only three trumpet lilies in the plots that have been in for three seasons or more – African Queen, Griesbach Tetra Gold and Pink Planet. These will be left in the gardens, along with newly planted trumpets Orange Planet in 2017 and Easter Moon in 2018. Plant height has remained stable or increased over the three seasons, as have the number of blooms and bloom duration.



Tetra Gold



Pink Planet

- Average height - 50-80 cm;
- Average bloom count – 3-5 blooms per stem
- Bloom time - late July to early August
- Average bloom duration - 10-20 days

Oriental-Asiatic Hybrids (OA Hybrids) - Division VIII interdivisional crosses

Oriental-Asiatic hybrids are expected to have the hardiness of Asiatics, with a light fragrance from the Oriental side of the cross. In the plots we grow Red Power, Yellow Power and Kaveri all planted in 2015. In all three they were their tallest in the first year, declining the next two years. We have spotty data on bloom time and duration so no comments can be made at this time.

- Average height - 50-80 cm;
- Average bloom count - 4-8 blooms per stem
- Bloom time - late July
- Average bloom duration - 14-21 days



LA Hybrids - Division VIII interdivisional crosses

Crosses between *Lilium longiflorum* (Easter lilies) and Asiatics, LA's have large fragrant blooms and are reported to be hardy in Zone 3. Our collection includes Dynamico, Kiss Me, Courier, and Purple Diamond in the gardens for between three and six seasons. No clear trend in heights over the seasons has emerged – some peaked after two to five years, although none dropped off dramatically over time (with the exception of Courier in its 4th year). The same can be said for bloom count and duration.



Dynamico



Courier

- Average height - 55-65 cm;
- Average bloom count - 5-7 blooms per stem
- Bloom time –mid to late July into early August
- Average bloom duration - 15-20 days