

My Ten Most Favorite Lilies

By: Barrie Strohman

Instead of rhyming off or listing the names of my ten favorite lilies I would like to approach this from another way of looking at it. Thinking about it I have come up with it from these ten perspectives.

1 A lily in its natural setting.

Here in Manitoba we are still fortunate to see *L. philadelphicum* around edges of meadows with trees as a backdrop, along the roadways and in the ditches. The latest thrilling experience was to see whole hillsides covered in red about two years after a forest burn had taken place in the Riding Mountain National park So I am partial to our native flower here. However I did get excited to see *L. michiganense* growing on a grassy slope in Minnesota and ecstatic when I spied a six foot *L. canadense* in full blooming a wooded area in a TV program. I hope you get the picture of what I mean. How about you? Does not your heart race a bit when you see a species blooming in nature?

2 A lily used in landscape design.

Especially attractive is a lily or clump of lilies placed in strategic places in borders, on the patio, or by a garden gate. Another is a splash of color at the edge of a pond. The reflection gives double the enjoyment. Some trumpet lilies at the inside corner of a raised patio does the trick as well as an oriental or two grown in pots that can be moved around to the best advantage. When judging home grounds, (I should not tell you this,) the grounds would get an additional ten points if there was a lily incorporated in the design.

3. A lily that perfumes the evening air.

Lilium regale is quite potent in this regard and this added attraction is culminated with evening walks in the garden. Many of the orientals lend themselves to this attribute and when planted in pots can be placed in exact so as to enjoy their perfumed presence to the full. Now some of the *longiflorum* and *langonense* hybrids are broadening this added feature for my and your enjoyment.

4. A lily in an arrangement.

Does your heart not do a back flip when you see the use of lilies in the arrangement at the shows? Mine does . Also when you spy a beautiful arrangement on your favorite TV show or soap? Mine does. Especially so when one sees the orientals like Stargazer or Casa Blanca or Journeys End with the odd rose tucked in between. The bold sharp colors with the bold shapes makes for eye catching scenes that takes my mind away from the story and focuses on the lily. It even emits an outburst from me like, "Joy; did you see that arrangement, or Joyce, see that new lily!"

5. A lily with vigorous growth.

This of course starts right in the Fall when noses the size of fists, well nearly, come pushing up out of the ground. A lily with wide dark green foliage that looks like miniature evergreen is my favorite. A vital vigorous healthy growing lily crowned by a tall inflorescence is a joy beyond compare. When you see such a plant it raises your anticipation for the beauty that is to come. This is a favorite time just before bloom time.

6 A lily that has a long bloom time

This means it has to be a good garden lily with an inflorescence that carries 25-50 blooms the substance needs to be fairly heavy to add to the lasting power of the single bloom. Lilies like Embarrassment, White Henryi, Port Alberni Tiger, Citronella and Tiger Babies Fall into mind. Many of the triploids have this quality and consequently get my vote in this category.

7 A grandpa lily or could be a grandma lily.

Naturally the first would be my favorite being a grandfather. Really it means though a lily that has been around for a long time. One that has staying power, a golden oldie. Of course Enchantment and Black Beauty are front and center; however there are others that are still with us and have been for forty and more years. The Preston lily Grace Marshall, Patterson`s Edith Cecilia, Porter`s Orange Light, Skinners Lemon Lady, Robinson`s Ivy Helen, Ericksen`s

Methcal. Why some of Skinner's martagons that have been with us for ages it seems are becoming not just my favorites but a host of others as well.

8 A Lily that is a good hybridizer.

A good parent, one that throws good offspring is definitely a lily that I look up to and adore. Who can deny that these properties exist in Pirate for it is still going strong. Do not forget Conn.King and Conn. Yankee. Now that these are being tetranised as well as some of their offspring like Unique who knows what exciting things lie ahead. A good hybridizer {lily that is} has got to be like an old friend and so qualifies as a favorite.

9 A lily that needs little attention.

A lily that can stay in place for several years with little work certainly is a bonus. This applies quite easily to the martagons and their hybrids. I have seen groups of these the size of a dining room table that resulted from a bulb planted thirty to forty years ago with no apparent loss of vigor or bloom power. Even when dug and divided these clumps had two or three layers of good viable bulbs. This type of lily the martagon lends itself to the advice; plant me in a good place, leave me alone and I will return you dividends of pleasure.

10. A lily that is one of my own seedlings.

Time here is nothing better in the world than one of my own seedlings! Just like a father bragging about his son or a mother about her daughter. It is true! There is nothing better than your own; it is different, it is beautiful, it is fantastic, , there is nothing like it. Yes, even though you had just a small part in putting the pollen on the pistil and thus rearranged the gene pool to bring about something that was always there, yet the feeling that this has got to be your favorite lily will remain. Well at least until you meet up with a fellow hybridizer and their results and **their favorite lily** and that is okay too!