



# J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift and Garden Center

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## Calla Lily

Calla lilies are one of the most beautiful flowers, and they have a unique flower form. Calla lilies are available in a wide array of colors; white, shades of green, pink, red, purple, yellow and orange.

Calla lilies are not true lilies, but they feature large lily-like flowers in the summer. Calla lilies are not a true calla either. They actually belong to the genus Zantedeschia, and are related to the caladiums and philodendrons. They are also known as the pig lily, trumpet lily and arum lily.

Although not considered true lilies, the calla lily is an extraordinary flower. This beautiful plant is ideal for use in beds and borders. You can also grow calla lilies in containers, either outdoors on a patio, or indoors in a sunny window. A grouping of calla lilies is a wonderful addition to any garden, since they are relatively easy to grow, and they are an absolute favorite as a cut flower for inside the home.



Calla lilies have very large, green leaves, typically covered with lighter-colored spots. The flower blooms from the top of a rather thick stem and sort of resembles trumpet-shaped, rolled paper, having an unusual fleshy-texture.

These beautiful cup-shaped, upright, trumpet flowers can grow up to 5" tall and 2"-3" across. The plants grow 12"-36" tall.



The calla lily grows from a type of bulb called a rhizome. The calla lily can also be propagated from seeds, but it takes a little more time than to just divide the bulbs.

You can start bulbs indoors in late winter and then transplant them outside in the spring, when the danger of frost has passed. Be sure to wait until the soil has warmed sufficiently before planting calla lilies outside.



The calla lily is very hardy and will grow in more or less any soil. In many countries, it is a weed and is cut down to make room for other plants. However, just because calla lilies are sometimes considered weeds in their country of origin, it does not mean that callas will automatically love your yard.

Proper planting and location are the important things to consider when growing calla lilies. Calla lilies require loose, well-drained soil. Add 2"-3" of a soil amendment before you plant, especially if your soil is not quite the way you would like it. **Bumper Crop** compost or **Fertimulch** compost are two of the best you can buy.

Calla lilies should be planted deep; about four inches for best results. Space them approximately one foot apart.

They prefer full sun to partial shade. Bright, indirect light is best during the growing season. They dislike the hot, direct sunlight; the plants will tolerate the heat, but the flowers fade very quickly.

Once planted, caring for a calla lily is relatively easy since it grows in almost any soil. Calla lilies enjoy being kept moist and



will also benefit from a monthly dose of fertilizer throughout the growing season.

The calla lily originates from tropical marshlands, so you need to keep the soil damp, but not always wet, or the bulb may rot. It is a very thirsty plant that will not tolerate dry periods or neglect.



Either water the plant regularly, especially during the hot summer days, or plant the calla lily where it can get lots of water without having to be kept in soggy-wet soil. If there is a small pond in your garden it is perfect to plant calla lilies close to it.

Fertilize monthly during the growing season with **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting fertilizer**, or just once with **Osmocote**, a controlled-release fertilizer. Stop fertilizing when the plants start going dormant.



Finally, an adequate layer of mulch around the plants will help keep the area cool, moist, and may help to keep it free of weeds.

Calla lilies can be used in beds, borders, patio pots, or garden planters. They are a great specimen plant, or they can be used in mass planting. They also make good indoor house plants.



### Winter Care of Calla Lilies

*Are calla lilies annuals, or are they perennials to be left in the ground all year?*

Calla lilies are usually planted as annual flowers, but they grow as perennials just like cannas, dinner plate dahlias, gladiolus and tuberous begonias.

Generally speaking, calla lilies will die if left outside during the winter. They are hardy in zones 8-11 (zone 6 & 7 with extra winter protection). However, some varieties (especially those with yellow spotted leaves), in the right location, may survive outside through our Utah winters - if the soil does not get too cold.

Dig up the rhizomes in autumn, usually after the first frost, and shake off any soil. Allow them to dry out for a few days before storing the rhizomes for winter.



Store them in a dark, dry location that remains between 50 and 60 degrees F. Store them in peat moss or vermiculite until you are ready to plant them in the spring. Check them during the winter storage to make sure the rhizomes are not drying out and shriveling up.

Calla lilies can be divided when lifted in the fall, or just before planting them in the spring.

### Poisonous Roots

All parts of the calla lily are toxic. The roots are the most dangerous part of this plant. The plant produces oxalic acid, which if ingested produces symptoms such as: burning mouth and throat, swelling of the mouth and tongue, redness, swelling and pain of eyes, nausea and vomiting, and diarrhea.

While typically this reaction is not life threatening, it is possible to have a severe enough reaction to kill pets or children.

Those with children, or with pets, should use caution when growing calla lilies. If this plant is ingested, a poison control center should be called immediately.

### Potted Calla Lilies

You can grow Callas indoors in a container. To pot the rhizome, first moisten the potting mix. Fill the pot about 2/3 full of mix and set the rhizome, with the pointed growing tip facing up, on top of the mix.



Rhizomes should be planted horizontally, with the growing points facing up. You can put 3 in a 12-inch pot. Rhizomes in containers should be planted 3 inches deep. Cover the rhizome with the remaining mix. Water thoroughly and place in a warm room.

Keep the soil evenly moist while you await the appearance of the shoot. When growth starts, set the pot in a sunny window (preferably one that faces south).

Calla Lilies are one of the few houseplants that thrive in wet, even soggy, potting soil. To maintain a constant supply of moisture, keep the saucer filled



with water. Blossoms usually show between 8 and 16 weeks after potting, depending on the soil temperature and the amount of sunlight the plant receives.



In summer, you can move the plant outdoors to a spot in a sunny area. Keep the plants on the warm side (up to 85°F) during growth and blooming season.

Keep potted and blooming plants consistently moist. As the blooms fade, reduce watering until all the flowers are gone, then let the leaves wither and die as the plant dries out.

If you grow calla lilies indoors all summer, stop watering and move the plant to a dark area once the foliage starts to fade. Let the plant rest. Cut off the dead leaves, and resume regular watering in about 2-3 months.

Bring the pot indoors before frost. Calla Lilies grown in a container can be left in the container over winter. Bring the container indoors in fall and withhold water completely. Let the plant stay dormant for at least a month. Wait to start watering again until you want to start new growth for spring.

During the dormant period, keep the plant cool (down to 50°F).

### Repotting

It is important that your calla lily gets replanted in new soil every year, otherwise there is a risk that the plant may die.



The soil can become exhausted: new bulbs may start taking up too much space in the pot; diseases in the soil may become a problem; too high or toxic levels of fertilizer by-products may build up in the soil. These are all good reasons to repot your plants.



Do not to take re-potting too lightly. Change the soil once a year and the calla lily will be much happier and healthier.

