



Manitoba Lily Connection

Manitoba Regional Lily Society Newsletter

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President's Message

Winter is definitely upon us, with January temperatures in December! Although, we welcome a rest from gardening, we would perhaps like a bit warmer rest. I hope you've had a productive fall, getting all your lilies and other perennials planted.

During these cold winter months, the MRLS Board is planning this coming year's events for our lily society; the Spring Seminar, the July Lily show, the Fall Get Together, even the initial beginnings of the 2014 Bulb Sale. Please see the next newsletter for the details of the 2014 Spring Seminar (and its small bulb sale).

As the Lilies lie sleeping in their winter beds, from your Board of Directors, Warm Wishes for Wonderful Holiday Season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Ted Sobkowich
(2013-2015)

*FROM EVERYONE ON THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS OF THE MRLS*



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A Short Note about Species Asiatic Section Part 1

Ted Sobkpowich

The Asiatic section contains a lot of species, which we should be able to grow here in Manitoba. Many are the ancestors of our wonderful modern day hybrids.

L. amabile grows wild in Korea. The turks-cap flower colour is orange-red, with purple spots. It can have 5 to 15 flowers, reportedly having an unpleasant scent. The lily can be 1 to 3 feet tall. There are a couple of variants: var. *luteum* has golden yellow flowers with black spots and var. *unicolor* is a spotless softer orange colour. *L. amabile* grows in cool gritty, well-drained lime soils.

L. callosum, a native of eastern Asia (Siberia, China, Japan, Taiwan,) grows in humus rich soils. It grows 1 to 3 ft tall and as up to 12 turks-cap flowers. The flowers are brick red, with fine black spots. Var. *flaviflorum* from Japan, has yellow flowers.

L. cernuum is native to Siberia, Manchuria and Korea. The down-facing flowers are lilac-rose/pink and number up to 8 flowers per stem. Leaves are very narrow – grass like. It grows about 1 to 2.5 ft. but it can be taller in cultivation. It prefers very well drained soils. There is one reported rare variety – var. *candidum*, which has white flowers.

L. concolor from Siberia, China, Japan and Korea, grows in sandy-loam/humus soils. It grows 1 to 3 ft tall and blooms with up-facing star shaped flowers of a shiny scarlet-red, no spots. Var. *coridion* has lemon yellow, small-brown spotted flowers whereas var. *pulchellum* has unspotted orange-red to cinnabar-red flowers.

L. davidii is from western and northwestern China. It grows in any good garden soil. It reaches 3 to 4 ft and has up to 20 or more scarlet to cinnabar-red, very finely black-spotted flowers. There are a number of reported varieties: var. *macranthum* is 6ft and is orange flowered; var. *unicolor* has pale orange, faintly or unspotted flowers and is up to 3 ft tall; and var. *willmottiae* flowers orange-red and has very small brown spots

L. duchartrei is from western China. It grows in moist soils. The stems can wander a bit underground before emerging. The stems can grow 1.5 to 5 ft tall. Flowers are white turks-caps, with wine-red spots along the petal edges. The flowers are reported to grow in an umbel of 2 to 6 - mine did not. A couple of stems reached 6 ft and had an inflorescence of 7 to 13 flowers. Everyone should try to grow this beautiful lily.

FALL BULB SALES

Brandon/Winnipeg

This year's bulb sales saw a reduction in the total number of bulbs purchased for resale. Even with those reduced numbers, both the Winnipeg and Brandon sales proceeds remained approximately the same as 2012. Dauphin sales actually increased this year by almost 1/3 over the last few years. The assortment of bulbs available covered everything from the brand new to the market to a few heritage garden favourites and even included an international flavour with some Latvian bulbs we were able to get at the last minute. Almost every classification was on offer from Asiatics to Species and, of course, Martagons. Thanks to all who donated bulbs to the sales at all three venues. These donations help our bottom line every year.

2013 saw the MRLS Winnipeg sale back at the Conservatory in Assiniboine Park. I think all the volunteers and the BOD are glad we made the move! Thanks to all the Winnipeg volunteers, our members and to the Brandon Garden Club as well for all their enthusiastic assistance.

The committee approach to our three sales was a challenge with two sales on one day but after some reflection, I think it worked well and, with a few refinements, will continue in the future.

By Deborah Petrie

Dauphin

It was a cold day in Dauphin this year but that didn't stop all the lily people from stopping by to purchase their new lilies at the Marketplace Mall on October 12th! Hard to believe we have been doing this for 11 years. Once again, Iowa Rose sold out in record time and we thank our president Ted Sobkowich for finding and bringing it out for us and then staying around to help out. Dauphin Horticulture Society also provided us with several volunteers throughout the day. In addition, they dug and donated back to the MRLS several bulbs from the Loray Manor display garden which were greatly appreciated. They all found new homes, too. Just another reason why their support is so valuable to us. Thanks to Louise Fiel and the Dauphin Horticulture Society for everything they do for us. Our regular customers were back in force contributing to our successful sale. It was a full day of talking lilies, meeting new lily friends and reconnecting with old friends from our lily family. Thanks to all and we will see you next year with more amazing lilies!

By BJ Jackson

MRLS AT COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM CONFERENCE

This year the Manitoba Regional Lily Society reached out and participated with a display table manned by Ruby Tekauz and myself at the 2013 Manitoba Communities in Bloom Conference in Selkirk, MB on September 6th & 7th 2013.

This proved timely as one of the guest speakers was Dr. Wilbert Ronald. The display provided information on the upcoming Fall Bulb Sales, along with information using various materials available from MRLS.

There were various questions and, needless to say, many about the Lily Beetle. Many expressed that even though they had yet to see the Lily Beetle they hoped it would not reach their communities, and wanted to know where to get information.

All information below was directly lifted from the Communities in Bloom website. If you are not already involved in your Community's activities, you may want to learn more and contact this great organization. <http://www.mbcommunitiesinbloom.ca/index.php>

By Valerie Denesiuk

Fertilizing Lilies
(By Deborah Petrie)

Lilies will do quite well on their own with decent soil, proper PH levels, lots of sunshine and good drainage. So unless your soil is poor or you want to raise super show lilies, it isn't necessary to fertilize them. Many lily growers, though, find that lilies will clump up faster, produce taller and stronger stems with more and larger flowers when a balanced approach to fertilizing is used. This is definitely something to consider over this long winter to come.

So what type of fertilizer to use? To answer that question, the components of fertilizers need to be understood. Fertilizer has 3 major food groups: nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P) and potassium (K). Nitrogen provides plants with the ability to produce more chlorophyll which in turn allows plants to grow quickly. Phosphorous aids in root development and increases flowering ability and bloom size. Potassium strengthens the plant tissues and is essential for photosynthesis. Potassium also increases the plant's resistance to disease and increases the plants ability to survive the cold winter months.

There are many opinions out there on feeding lilies. Through much reading and talking with lily growers, I have found a plethora of fertilizer types and regimes being used, all with good success. Many lily growers use compost as a top dressing and that's all. Some only use well-rotted horse, sheep or cow manure. Others choose a time-released granular application and/or liquid fertilizers alone or in combination with compost, well-rotted manures or leaf mould.

If you choose chemical fertilizers, either granular or liquid, "Let's Grow Lilies" suggests 20-20-20 and Ed McRae's book "Lilies" suggests a balanced fertilizer such as 12-12-12, 15-15-15, or 20-20-20. Some growers have special formulations based on their soil types and weather conditions and other factors present in their gardens.

Now that you know what to use, lets talk about when to use it. Most lily growers agree on this aspect of fertilizing lilies. A bulb wants more nitrogen when it is preparing to bloom. While it is blooming, a balanced fertilizer is preferred. Once the blooms have faded, feeding lilies with phosphorous and potassium will beef up the bulb for next year. Never use nitrogen fertilizers in the fall. Lily growers that do fertilize start after the last threat of frost or when the lilies are about 8 inches tall. Some will continue to fertilize every two weeks to a month until bloom time. Keep in mind, though, that too much nitrogen can produce lush leaves but weak stems. As well, heavy nitrogen use in hot and wet areas can set the stage for bulb rot. Most growers I spoke to fertilized only in the spring and summer and a few also used a 0-10-10 mix in the fall.

All of this information leads to the next topic, how to use the various types of fertilizers.

When using a granular fertilizer, sprinkle it on top of the soil, then water in thoroughly. Granular fertilizers can burn you lilies so try not to get it on the tender growing tip or on the leaves. Never let granular fertilizer come into contact with the lily bulb. Liquid fertilizers, when mixed according to product directions, can be sprayed directly on both the soil and the plants.

Compost, well rotted manures and leaf mould can be mixed into your garden soil at any time during gardening season and are also frequently used as top dressings in spring and fall.

2014 Manitoba Regional Lily Society Events

Check your upcoming newsletters for further information on all events

**Gardening Saturday
Saturday, March 29, 2014
Canadian Mennonite University
500 Shaftesbury Boulevard, Winnipeg**

**MRLS Spring Seminar and AGM
Saturday, April 5th 2014
Canad Inns Destination Centre
2401 Saskatchewan Avenue West
Portage La Prairie, MB**

**North American Lily Society Show and Convention
“ALL STAR LILIES”
Bloomington, Minnesota
July 9 to 13th 2014**

**MRLS Annual Lily Show
Saturday, July 19th 2014
Kildonan Place
1555, Regent Avenue West
Winnipeg, MB**

**Neepawa Lily Festival Show
Friday and Saturday, July 25th and 26th 2014
Neepawa, MB**

**Fall Bulb Sales
Winnipeg
Saturday, September 27th 2014
Assiniboine Park Conservatory**

**Brandon
Saturday, October 4th 2014
Central Community Centre**

**Dauphin
Saturday, October 11th 2014
Market Place Mall**

**MRLS Awards & Windup Pot Luck
Saturday, October 18th 2014
Bourkevale Community Centre
100 Ferry Rd, Winnipeg, MB**

Peat Moss, Composts and Lilies

By Dr. Ieuan Evans

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What Does Peat Moss do for Garden Soils? Peat moss should always be worked into the soil and can provide the following benefits:

- Gives excellent air and water exchange capacity
- Helps root growth and nutrient exchange
- Provides buffering for soil
- Retains moisture, especially in dry or sandy soils
- Reduces fertilizer leaching
- Keeps soil from hardening and crusting
- Aerates dry soils and binds sandy soils
- Provides some nutrients
- Lightens up and aerates heavy clay soils.

Your typical brown sphagnum peat moss surprisingly has roughly the same nutrient value of nitrogen (N), phosphate (P) and potassium (K) as most cow, sheep or horse manure, each at around 0.7% by dry matter weight. The darker or black peat mosses may have nitrogen levels comparable to poultry manure. Peat moss nutrients are much slower to release than those of most composts.

Sphagnum peat generally has a pH of around 3 or 4, whereas some of the more decomposed black peats like those of Florida or the muck soils of Ontario have a pH range of 5 to 7.5.

Sphagnum peat moss is a natural, organic soil conditioner that helps acidify soils. Peat will hold up to 20 times its weight in water, important in sandy soils and an excellent aerator for heavy clay soils. Peat reduces nutrient leaching, and improves air and water change capacities in all soils.

Composts vary much more than peat mosses in weight, moisture content and nutrient capability. Most composts, manures and peats have very high carbon (C) to nitrogen (N) ratios. The C:N ratio of carbon in lawn clippings is 19:1, straw 80:1, farm (cattle, sheep, horse) manure 80:1, sawdust 142:1 and peat moss 60:1. The ideal C:N ratio for healthy plant growth is 10:1, the same ratio as the humus content of good soil. The higher the C:N ratio of material added to your garden soil, i.e.: sawdust or pine needles, the more nitrogen and other macro- and micro-nutrients are tied up by the soil bacteria and fungi as they feed on and breakdown this high carbon source. If for example, you add 50 lbs of peat moss, cow, sheep or horse manure to your vegetable garden soil, you should also add up to 10 lbs of ammonium phosphate 16-20-0-13 (N, P, K, S) to compensate for the nutrient tie-up by the manures or peat. If you are using sawdust, you could double the amount of fertilizer. Soil amendments least likely to tie-up soil nutrients are alfalfa pellets (18:1), grass clippings (19:1) and well-rotted garden composts (20:1). Composts, while an excellent soil conditioner for established flower beds and shrubbery, are an inadequate nutrient supplier for vegetable gardens or growing lily bulbs. If you want bountiful results, you must supplement your soils, particularly when using manures and peats, with organic or ordinary fertilizer.

In summary, peats, manures and composts are all excellent soil amendments. Non-the-less, it must be remembered that they are, except for poultry manures, low in nutrients that are necessary to grow bountiful crops. On the other hand, in well-established gardens, regular top dressing of peat, manure or composts maybe the only amendment needed to maintain a vibrant and ostentation landscape.

Ieuan Evans is the immediate past president of the North American Lily Society (NALS) and lives in Alberta, Canada. He is well known nationally and internationally as an accomplished Martagon hybridizer and as the developer of the popular "Evans Cherry".

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR