

1997 EASTER LILY GUIDELINES

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Easter 1997 is on March 30. It is an early Easter, therefore it is necessary that you pay careful attention to timing this year.

Root Medium

A good, well-drained soil or soilless root medium is required for lilies. Avoid high levels of superphosphate to avoid leaf scorch. It is also helpful to raise the root medium pH to 6.5 or above with dolomitic limestone. I think most purchased mixes should be amended with additional limestone when used for lilies. A media analysis would be useful for determining such additions.

Standard pots are strongly recommended for lilies. The bulbs should be placed near the bottom of the pot to encourage stem roots. **Do not** use three quarter pots for lilies.

Fertilizer

A constant fertilization program should be used for Easter lilies. We use a complete fertilizer solution to water freshly potted bulbs for both CTF and case cooled bulbs. They are watered with that solution until they leave the greenhouse. Many growers stop fertilizing toward the end of the crop, however this practice should not be followed with lilies. It can cause loss of lower leaves. Fertilize Lilies!

Forcing Temperature

Temperature is the most important tool you have to control lily forcing. The soil temperature should be 60°F from the time forcing begins until flower initiation occurs (around mid January this year). Too high or too low temperatures during this period can reduce flower bud count.

Timing with temperature should not begin until February this year. We also find that Easter lilies grown in Indiana at a constant day/night temperature (a zero DIF) produces an acceptable

finished height and form and therefore I do not recommend either a large positive or negative DIF. But also remember that the average daily temperature does affect timing of Easter lilies and anytime you change temperature, you need to change both day and night temperature at the same time to maintain the same average daily temperature.

Height Control

A-Rest or Sumagic can be used for height control of Easter lilies. Application should be made very early (3 inch stage) to avoid the "palm tree" lily. Early application also helps to even the crop.

A-Rest or Sumagic can be applied as a spray or drench. Drenches are less active in root medium containing bark, therefore drenches need to be adjusted in such media. A spray treatment is often preferred on lilies grown in bark mixes.

The need for lily height control varies greatly among greenhouses. As a general recommendation, we recommend 0.25 mg active ingredient A-Rest per pot as a drench or two spray applications of 50 ppm. Sumagic guidelines are 0.03-0.06 mg active ingredient per pot as a drench or one to two spray applications of 10 to 20 ppm. Several spray applications at lower concentrations always results in a more attractive plant than a single spray at higher concentration. Consult HO-130 for mixing instructions. Always follow label recommendations when applying chemicals.