

# Lilies For Easter 1959

John G. Seeley

Cornell University

Department of Floriculture

Easter is March 29, 1959. The following schedule is a guide with adjustments having to be made by the grower depending on the weather, greenhouse temperature, etc.

1. *Early December.* Pot pre-cooled Croft bulbs. Because of slower growth, Ace lilies usually are potted 2 weeks earlier than Croft. Since the pre-cooling storage treatment has an effect on the rate of growth, follow the recommendations of the bulb supplier for date of potting. Have the top of the bulb 1½-2 inches below the soil surface to stimulate formation of stem roots.

2. *Soil.* Use a well drained soil of medium nutrient content with pH of 6.5 to 7.0. If too low, add ground limestone. A mixture of 1/3 soil, 1/3 coarse peat moss, and 1/3 sand will drain well. Use a half inch of gravel, or broken crock, in the bottom of the pot to improve drainage. The soil mixture, pots, gravel, etc. should be "sterilized" for disease control. Sterilize the gravel or cinders on which

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the pots are placed, or set pots directly on new or copper naphthanate-treated boards.

3. *Temperature.* Put potted bulbs in greenhouse with 60° night temperature and 70-75° day temperature.

4. *Latter part of December.* Good white roots should be apparent. Stems should be breaking through the soil by the end of the month.

5. *Early January.* Shoots will be 2 to 4 inches tall. This is the period when flower buds are initiating. Keep the soil moist. Start fertilizer applications and continue until flowering time. Give a good watering with a fertilizer solution every 14 to 18 days, using nitrate of soda or calcium nitrate at the rate of 1 pound per 50 gallons of water. If the soil pH gets up to 7.2, substitute an application or two of ammonium sulphate.

If the original soil pH was 6.5 to 7.0, you can use a mixture of 3 ounces of ammonium sulphate and 12 ounces of nitrate of soda in 50 gallons of water. This combination is about neutral and will not cause much change in the soil pH.

6. *January 16-19.* Sort the plants. Place slow ones in warmer location to speed them up. Space adequately so leaves do not overlap.

7. *February 2-5.* You should be able to feel the buds in the stem tips.

8. *February 10-12.* Flower buds should be just visible in the growing tip. Sort the plants if necessary.

9. *March 10-13.* The largest bud on the plant should be 2 to 3 inches long.

10. *March 23-25.* Plants should be ready for sale.

11. *Storage of early plants.* Plants which are too early for Easter may be stored for two weeks in a 38-40° refrigerator room without lights. Water the soil well and put in plants with the first flower just ready to crack open. As a precaution against botrytis, mist-spray the plants with a zineb (1/2 pound in 100 gallons of water) prior to storing. Take plants out 1 day before full bloom is desired.