

Martagon Lily – *Lilium martagon*

Family: *Liliaceae*

Hardiness: Zone 3 or even colder! Lilies are native to many countries through the Northern Hemisphere (Northern Europe and Asia).

Lilies are classified into groups, just as tulips and narcissus are. There are eight divisions including:

- Division 1 - Asiatic hybrids
- Division 2 - Martagon lilies
- Division 3 - Candidum hybrids
- Division 4 - American hybrids
- Division 5 - Longiflorum hybrids
- Division 6 - Chinese trumpet hybrids
- Division 7 - Oriental hybrids
- Division 8 – Other hybrids not fitting in above



Martagon lilies are tall and sturdy plants – usually 1 – 1.5 m in height. Mine rapidly grew into magnificent plants with 5 or more stalks, each of which carries a pyramidal arrangement of flowers, often as many as 30 per stem. The leaves are arranged in whorls along the stem, with wider leaves than most lilies. They are called Turk’s cap lilies, having pendent flowers with recurved petals (actually tepals – petals and sepals that are indistinguishable from one another).

Cultural requirements – like most bulbs, Martagon lilies like well drained soils. Many books recommend that you grow them in a woodland setting with light shade and evenly moist soils. Mine are planted in full sun, in a border that has dry, stony soil – and they thrive there. In short, it’s a very forgiving plant that will reward you handsomely for a place in your garden. Martagon lilies don’t like to be disturbed, so make sure you know where you want them and leave them there.

Martagon lilies are unusual in gardens because they can’t be propagated as easily and rapidly as other types, and so are considerably more expensive to buy. You can buy the species, and there are many hybrids on the market with flower colours ranging from white to orange to burgundy red. Flowers may be spotted or clear.



As you can see, my plant has pale, apricot yellow flowers with pink on the backside of the tepals.

Martagon lilies can be grown from seed if you want to try propagating them that way, but be patient – it can 7 years or so for flowers to appear. Many lilies are propagated by scaling. In fall, remove some of the outer scales from the bulb and put them in ProMix. Keep moist, and put them in a warm place to root and develop a small bulbil. After three or four months, place them in a cool place to stratify (4 or 5°C). Bring them out a few months later and they will grow shoots. You can plant them out once the danger of frost is past. It might take three or four years for flowers to come, but that's faster than seed!



Right, you can appreciate their simple beauty.

Martagon lilies are resistant to neither deer nor lily leaf beetle, but there's a saying – anything worth having is worth fighting for!