

Baby Pink Bells

## Planting and Culture

Lilies can be purchased as potted plants and planted in summer but are best planted as bulbs early in the fall to allow them to start root growth before winter. For a larger selection bulbs are often mail ordered from reputable suppliers.

Good drainage is a must. Avoid areas where water collects and amend the soil with compost or organic matter to assist with drainage as well as provide the loose, rich soil that lilies prefer.

Planting depth varies depending on the size of the bulb. The soil above the top of the bulb should be approximately 2 times the size of the bulb or approximately 7.5 to 20 cm deep. Bulbs should be watered in after planting.

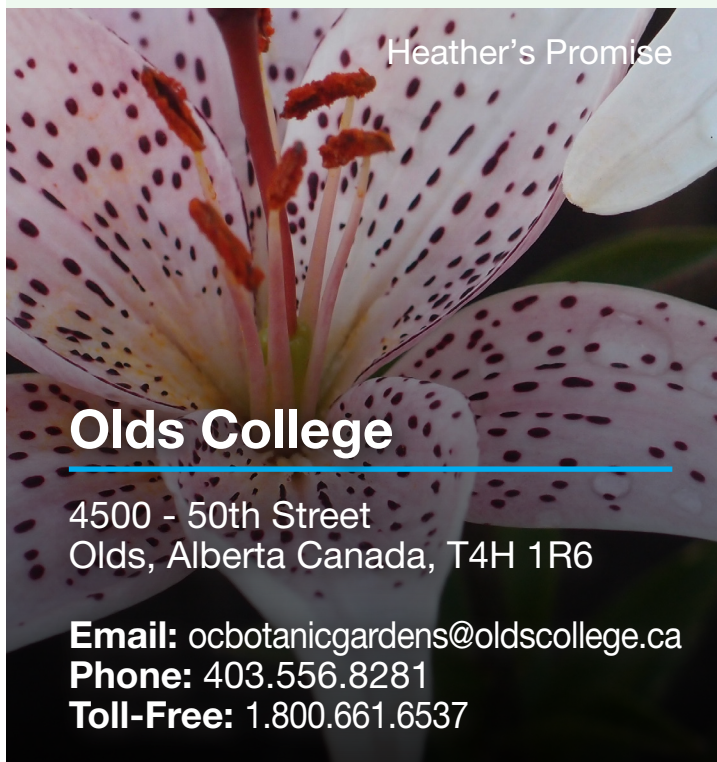
Lilies require full sun or dappled shade – some varieties can handle more shade than others.

## Additional Information

Lilies are resilient to heat and cold, and do not usually need staking. Once well established they can handle periods of drought, but in general its best to keep lilies consistently moist.

There are varying opinions, but if lilies are grown in good, rich soil they should not need additional fertilizers.

Once blooming has finished, cut stems back to below where flowers were formed but be sure to leave enough foliage to continue feeding the bulb. Once the leaves and stem have browned in the fall, they can be cut back further leaving enough stem to help locate the bulbs in the spring before they emerge.



Heather's Promise

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## Lily Basics

Tips and information for growing lilies in the prairie garden.



Donna Sylvester



EST. 1913

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Olds College Botanic Garden  
Alberta Regional Lily Society





Aphrodite

## Why Grow Lilies?

Lilies offer tremendous value with minimal effort. Many types are hardy in Alberta and easy to grow. They take up little real-estate in the garden, but provide fabulous colour and impact.

Lilies display incredible diversity with variation in bloom size, shape, arrangement, number and colour. Gardeners can choose from a wide range of bloom times and plant heights. There is a lily for virtually any situation and with a bit of basic knowledge, anyone can grow them successfully.

## True Lilies

True lilies are in the genus *Lilium* in the Lily Family (Liliaceae). Other genera in this family include *Tulipa* (tulips), *Erythronium* (fawnlily), and *Fritillaria* (mission bells, fritillary). By contrast, lily of the valley is in the *Convallaria* genus in the Asparagus Family (Asparagaceae) and day lilies are in the *Heimerocallis* genus in the Aloe Family (Xanthorrhoeaceae). They are not true lilies.

## True Bulbs

Lilies are true bulbs belonging to the group of plants technically known as geophytes—plants that survive at least a portion of the year below ground in a dormant state.

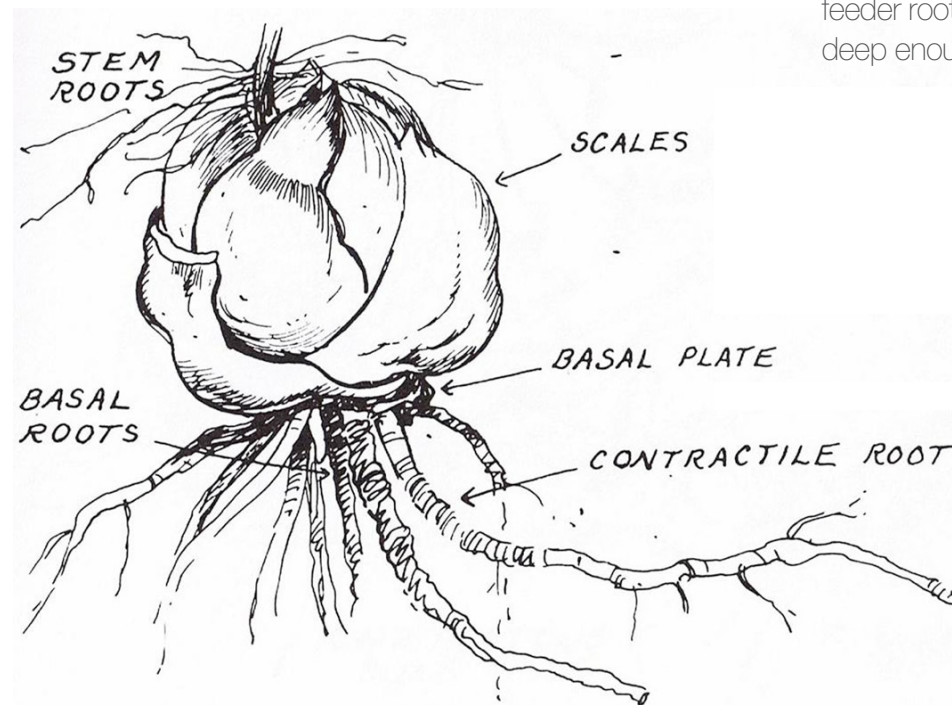
The fleshy, underground structures have a basal plate (the modified stem) at the base from which roots emerge.

These roots anchor the plant into the ground, providing access water and nutrients.



Marjorie Linda

Layered scales above the basal plate are actually fleshy leaves, storing food and providing energy for growth. At the top of the bulb is the new growing tip, from which the flower stem will emerge. This flower stem also forms roots which become the main feeder roots. It's important to plant bulbs deep enough that these roots can develop.



Lily bulbs must be handled and stored carefully. Avoid knocking or damaging the growing tip. Lily bulbs lack the protective papery skin found on other true bulb such as tulips or daffodils, making them susceptible to drying out. To store, clean them carefully and place in a plastic bag with peat moss, wood shavings, vermiculite or something similar, and keep cool and moist.