

Lily Culture

Three years ago the Lily Committee of the American Horticultural Society was organized for the purpose of promoting the culture of lilies in the gardens of North America. The general plan was to set up an organization after the pattern of the Lily Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society which would not be too formal in its organization and would stimulate interest through publication of its yearbooks and holding of annual field days. To date, two yearbooks have been published and two field days held. The purpose of the present BULLETIN is to make available to amateur gardeners the latest and most essential information regarding lily culture in the garden in the hope that with a better understanding of this group of plants and their requirements greater success can be attained. There are, of course, a number of good books on lily culture and the Lily Yearbooks of the Royal Horticultural Society and the American Horticultural Society. There is also much information of technical nature that is available in scattered publications. The value of this BULLETIN, therefore, is that it makes more readily available the essential facts of lily culture in as simple a way as possible and still be useful and practical.

WHAT ARE LILIES?

This BULLETIN is concerned only with the true lilies belonging to the genus *Lilium*. The word "lily" as commonly used includes a great variety of plants in no way related to each other. Among these may be mentioned the day lilies (*Hemerocallis*), the water lilies (*Nymphaea*), a number of genera in the Amaryllis family, and nearly 50 other less commonly known kinds of plants.

The best distinguishing characteristic of the true lilies as a group is the nature of the bulbs. These are of various shapes and sizes, but in all kinds are made up of fleshy scales which over-lap each other like shingles. They are thus quite different from the tunicated bulbs of the tulip and narcissus, and from practically all other sorts of bulbs. In a few of the North American lilies the scales are not much flattened and terminate a short rhizome or underground stalk. These bulbs do, however, fall into the general description of scaly bulbs. *Lilium pardalinum* and some other west coast lilies have bulbs of this kind. Another characteristic of the true lilies is the position of the six floral parts (sepals and petals) which are inserted below the pistil which develops into the seed pod. The ovary is thus superior as contrasted with the plants of the Amaryllis family in which the floral parts are attached at the top of the ovary.

The genus *Lilium* is very large and diverse, consisting of nearly 100 species and several times that number of botanical varieties and clones. Their natural range covers almost the entire northern hemisphere from close to the Arctic circle down to the tropics. They are found in all manner of habitats from dry, hot plains and rocky slopes to swamps and in many types of soil.