

# North Star Lily Society

## Lily Divisions -- A Quick Guide

In the 1960's the Royal Horticultural Society of Great Britain, recognized as the authoritative source on this subject, settled on the lily classification system used today. Lilies are grouped into nine "Divisions" and the Divisions numbered by Roman numerals. Division IX includes all species lilies. Divisions I through VIII include all the hybrids. Divisions I through VII group hybrids by their species group parentage (see Chart 1). Division VIII includes those hybrids with parentage from more than one species group. Chart 2 provides information about some of the more popular Division VIII lilies available today.

<b>Lily Divisions</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Zone 4 Hardy?</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Division I</b>	Asiatic Hybrids	YES	Most popular, most easily grown, least expensive lilies for Minnesota. Large species group provides wide variation in hybrids.
<b>Division II</b>	Martagon Hybrids	YES	Most shade tolerant (part to nearly full shade), tall spikes of many smaller flowers. Becoming much more popular. Expensive.
<b>Division III</b>	Euro-Caucasian Hybrids	NO	Not hardy in Zone 4.
<b>Division IV</b>	American Hybrids	NO	Not hardy in Zone 4.
<b>Division V</b>	Longiflorum Hybrids	NO	Not hardy in Zone 4. (Longiflorum is the Easter Lily.)
<b>Division VI</b>	Trumpet and Aurelian Hybrids	YES	Tall. Need full sun. Some need staking. Very fragrant. Recommend mulching over winter in zone 4.
<b>Division VII</b>	Oriental Hybrids	YES	Fragrant and attractive. Need for acid soil and short growing season can be a challenge for year to year return. Can treat as annual.
<b>Division VIII</b>	Interdivisional Hybrids	Varies	Comparatively recent development, primarily due to embryo rescue techniques. Wide variety of cultivars. See Chart 2.
<b>Division IX</b>	Species	Varies	Suitability to zone 4 is similar to their hybrids.

**Chart 1: Lily Divisions**

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Until the 1960's, it was assumed that it was not possible to “cross” lilies outside of their Division. Embryo rescue allowed these interdivisional hybrids to occur. As a result many new plant and flower forms have been created and have become popular.

With interdivisionals, it is customary to classify them not only as Division VIII but also by the initials of the Divisions of their parentage. For example, an interdivisional with Longiflorum and Asiatic parentage would be an “LA” so that is a “Division VIII LA” or just an “LA” for short. Similarly, a lily with Oriental and Trumpet parentage would be an “OT.” As it happens, these two Division VIII types are by far the most popular interdivisionals in the market. See Chart 2 for more information.

Division VIII Examples	Short Name	Hardy in Zone 4?	Comments
<b>Longiflorum Asiatic</b>	LA	YES	Enormously popular. Vigorous. Most have upfacing flowers, most slightly larger than the average Asiatic. Slightly fragrant. Sometimes sold as “Scented Asiatics.” Triploid, so have slightly greater substance than most Asiatics which are diploid. Multiply quickly. Appear more like Asiatics than Longiflorums. Have become as inexpensive as Asiatics.
<b>Oriental Trumpet</b>	OT	YES	Enormously popular. Some more hardy than either Orientals or Trumpets! Fragrant. Wide selection of plant and flower forms. Some have huge flowers. Some have many (40) flowers. Some are short. Some are tall (to 7 or 8 feet – “Lily Trees”). Wide price range.
<b>Asiatic Trumpet</b>	AT	YES	More a curiosity than a popular type. Some appear more like Trumpets; some more like Asiatics. Some of the Trumpet-like forms have sold well.
<b>Longiflorum Oriental</b>	LO	YES*	Enormous flowers, some more trumpet shaped than others. Fragrant. Are starting to gain some popularity. Expensive but coming down in price.

\*With some care

**Chart 2: Interdivisional Information**