

# Summer lilies work well in pots



**Gardening**  
Carol Savonen  
Guest columnist

**Question:** I don't have a lot of garden space, but I do have a nice large sunny patio. I'd love to grow some showy lilies out there. Is it possible to grow lilies in containers? Any advice would be appreciated. Thanks much.

**Answer:** In my experience, showy summer lilies grow well in containers. In fact, over the years, I've had much better luck growing these beauties in containers on my deck than when I plant them in the ground. With the proper care, they will come back for several years.

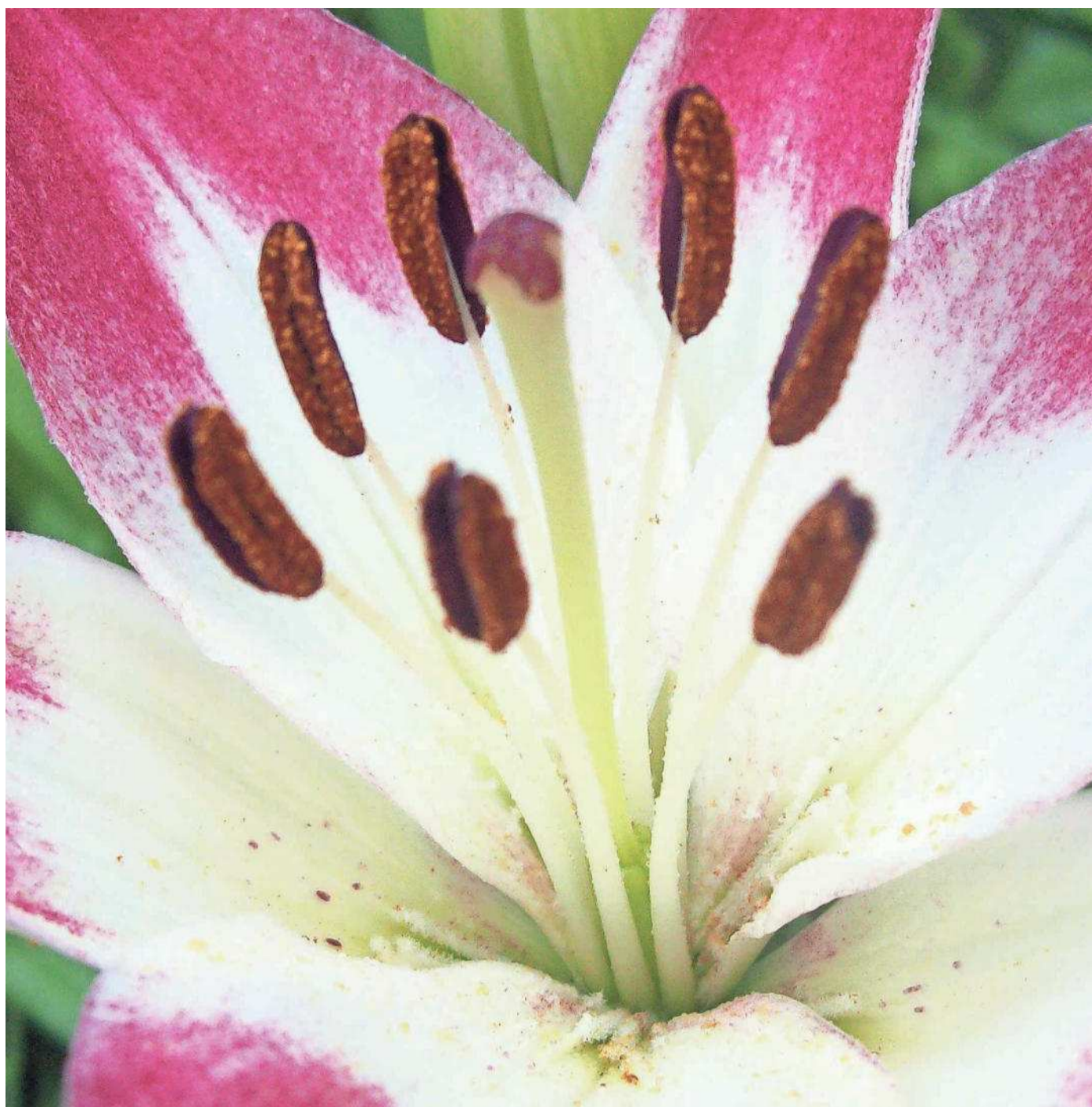
Hardy true lilies are your best bet for summer-blooming lilies here, as they will survive our winters to bloom again the following year. These include Asiatic, trumpets, aurelians, Orientals and hybrids.

Late winter into early spring is the time to buy your lily bulbs for this summer's bloom. You can find them in most garden centers. If you want large premium bulbs, I'd recommend these mail order nurseries: White Flower Farms ([whiteflowerfarm.com/lilies](http://whiteflowerfarm.com/lilies)) or the Lily Garden in western Washington ([thelilygarden.com](http://thelilygarden.com)). You may pay a bit more, but you'll get more blooms for more years from these larger bulbs.

You can plant a variety of lily types for a colorful bloom sequence from June to August. Asiatic lilies bloom first in our area, beginning around early June. Turk's caps follow. Then there are the scented trumpets, Orientals and their hybrids and species lilies, which bloom into August. To learn what these look like, visit the websites mentioned above.

Growing requirements for lilies are pretty basic. They need deep, well-drained fertile soil, at least a half a day or more of sun and adequate water during dry summer months. Your containerized lily bulbs should be protected from extreme cold, soggy and freeze-thaw action in the winter. I manage to do this by merely pulling my lily pots under the eaves of my house.

When choosing pots for growing lilies, err on the large side. Lilies need quite a bit of soil per bulb to be healthy — plan for about a gallon of rich potting soil per large bulb. Pots for lilies should be at least 15 to 18 inches deep for opti-



Asiatic lilies bloom first in the Mid-Valley, around the beginning of June. ROB ZIMMER/FOR POST-CRESCENT MEDIA

mal bulb root growth. The bulbs should be planted at least 8 to 12 inches deep, plus there should be at least 6 inches of soil below the bulb. I like to grow three bulbs to a large and deep 5-gallon pot.

Larger pots allow for you to grow other small herbaceous plants around the lilies after they finish blooming. I have grown nasturtiums, phacelias and other creeping summer annuals around lilies

in pots with good results.

Be sure there are adequate drainage holes in the bottom of your pots. Lilies tend to rot in soggy soil. You can put some styrofoam packing peanuts at the bottom of larger pots to improve drainage and lighten their weight.

I prefer to grow my lilies in lightweight pots so I can easily move them out of the way after they bloom. There are many types of pots that are lightweight these days. Plastic, fiberglass or vinyl work just fine. Double walled or foam pots have better protection from temperature extremes but are more costly.

Plant your bulbs with the pointed stem side up, root side down. I like to label my lilies on a plastic tag because once the blossoms have dropped off, it is hard to keep track of what bloomed there. I like to add some bloom-encouraging, phosphorus-rich organic fertilizer, such as bone meal, to the soil before I plant my bulbs.

Plant your bulbs as soon as you get them. They tend to dry out easily and perish if not planted soon. Or put them into damp peat moss until you can get them planted.

Don't fill your pot to the brim. You'll need a couple inches of empty pot for watering capacity. Water your new bulbs in until you see water draining out the bottom. Then, do not water often.

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Wait until the top few inches of the soil feel dry.

When the first shoot emerges, fertilize again with a flower-promoting fertilizer such as a rose formula. Next, when flower buds form, fertilize one more time. You can mulch with compost as well, in summer's heat.

Once your bulbs have finished blooming, clip off the seed capsule. But let the leaves photosynthesize until they die back in the fall. Keep watering after blooms are done, as the bulb is storing food produced by the leaves until the leaves fade. Then cut stems off.

*Carol Savonen is a naturalist and writer. She is an associate professor emerita at OSU and tends a large garden in the Coast Range Hills west of Philomath with her husband and dogs. She can be reached at [Carol.Savonen@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Carol.Savonen@oregonstate.edu) or c/o: EESC, 422 Kerr Admin. Bldg., OSU, Corvallis, OR 97331.*

## Miller

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been fishing at St. Louis Ponds for about a year.

He really got hooked when he caught and landed a monster hatchery brood rainbow trout, a stocking bonus occasionally delivered during the fall and winter.

"Oh yea, oh yea," he said, grinning. "We caught a 24-, 26-inch rainbow out here."

But it's a good time regardless of what you catch, or don't, Seeley added.

"I'm just down here today goofing around," he said about a recent sunny day. "If I catch something, that's great. If not, no big deal."

Cooley's fishing buddy, Rick Martell, also of Portland, said that the pair have been regulars since learning about the accessibility a half-decade ago.

"We found out about it online," he said. "It's a really nice place to come; easy access for him. We try to come as much as we can."

Cooley and Martell were wetting their lines from an accessible fishing platform on Pond 6, the largest and most frequently stocked.

But there are enough paved trails and fishing options to accommodate a lot of anglers without overcrowding, Martell said.

"There's so many choices here," he said. "If there's too many people in one place, you can go to another one."

And there are other tempting fishing options once the water warms later in

the year, Martell added.

"We haven't gotten into the panfish, yet," he said about the wealth of other species from bluegill, sunfish and crappie to bass and ...

"I want to try the catfish," Cooley said.

If there was a consensus among the trout anglers, it was about the bait of choice.

"Oh, PowerBait, usually. Usually green with the sparkly stuff in it," Seeley said. "Some people use corn, but I don't know about that."

Cooley's winner was "corn (scented) PowerBait fished off the bottom, 18 or 20 inches off the bottom."

St. Louis Ponds is tough to beat for those who are physically challenged, he added.

"Anybody who's disabled would be missing out if they didn't come down and try it," Cooley said.

Posted park hours are 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. No floating craft are allowed, and swimming and wading are prohibited.

To get there from Salem, take Highway 99E north to the Gervais, turn at the stoplight at East Douglas Avenue NE. Go through Gervais, where the road becomes St. Louis Road. Watch for the St. Louis Ponds sign on the left at Tesch Lane NE just before the railroad tracks.

Or from Keizer, take River Road N/French Prairie Road NE about 11 miles to the St. Louis Road, turn on the right and turn right on Tesch just after the tracks.

*Henry Miller is a retired Statesman Journal columnist and outdoor writer. You can contact him via email at [Henry MillerSJ@gmail.com](mailto:HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com)*

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