



PARKLAND PEONIES

June 2021

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

JUNE 2021, ISSUE NO.2



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OPEN GARDEN -- Registration Required

*Come visit, and see a **Concert of Colour***
Foothills, AB - 80181 338 Ave East

Parkland Peonies is excited to share with you a field full of peony blooms. This event is a registered event, and you must purchase a ticket online from our website www.parklandpeonies.com

Things to know:

Person Limit: 150 people per day (registration times will be per hour)

Cost: \$8.00 (help facilitate this event)

Peony Cut Flowers: will be available for purchase, cash sales.

Facilities: This is a private location, please respect the property, **NO pets allowed**, no cutting flowers, no washrooms or facilities.

Map: Once you sign up for this event, you will have access to the map.

[*Purchase a ticket online now!*](#)

PEONY DAYS
June 26th - 27th
July 3rd - 4th

Tickets need to be purchased for this event.

***No ticket,
 No entry***

We are restricted to the amount of people on the property.





Sugar n' Spice

The News

What's Blooming at Parkland Peonies

Another interesting spring for us here at Parkland Peonies. Some of the very early hybrid peonies started to show movement and push through the ground on April 7th. Was this to be an early season for peony blooms, or was Mother Nature going to fool us once again?

In the next 2 weeks the peonies grew slowly, as temperature remained below zero for most days. During this period we planted our spring garlic, planted some spring peonies that we had held over in cold storage, laid out the irrigation system for the upcoming season, and did general cleanup around the field. This season we also did a soil test on our field to determine what the soil was telling us. We will share our results and conclusions in our next newsletter on this topic.

Weather temperatures started warming during the day, and peonies started to grow. Everything looked like it was going to be a nice early spring, and we would have an early start to the peony season. It's interesting how quickly everything can turn in a 24-hour period, with sudden 8 inches of snow followed by freezing cold temperatures for a few nights, then lots of rain, followed by cold weather. The question in our minds was, how much damage this cold weather would have on the peonies, as they were about 6-8 inches in height at this time of year.

Peonies are tough plants, and after the freezing weather passed the plants bounced back. We did get hit with some botrytis and stem damage, but this was expected after such cold weather. We dealt with it in a timely manner. Now with normal seasonal temperatures the peonies are growing well.

On May 25th the blooming season started for us here at Parkland Peonies. First to bloom in our field this season was *p. tenuifolia*, and its hybrids; Nosegay flowered a few days later, with Early Bird, Little Red Gem, Wind Chimes, and *p. anomala* following close behind. Today we see Lady Gay, Dakota, *p. mlokosewitchii*, Royal Tot, Avant Garde, and Early Windflower in full bloom.

Having the early herbaceous hybrids and species really extends our blooming season on the front end of the season. I was able to make my first peony cross on May 27th this season. "Nosegay x Lemon Chiffon", this was from pollen I had saved from the previous season.

With some recent moisture in the field we are hopeful that we will have a great peony blooming season again. We are planning for our Open Field day, details below.



Early Bird

Your
perfect
shade
garden
awaits!



martagon seedling

Breeding Peonies

After purchasing our peony collection from Bob Yaremko in 2016, I have really come to admire and appreciate the beauty of the peony flower. Today after many years of working with peonies, I appreciate all the aspects of this amazing plant. Now when I think about peonies I consider many things like flower form, color, plant height, flowering time, foliage structure, plant type (herbaceous hybrid, lactiflora, species), fragrance and vigor. It is interesting what time and education can do to a person who loves horticulture.

As many of you might already know, I grew up on a farm in Ontario, and working on the land was more of a chore than a pleasure. However, that experience made me receptive and appreciative of the beauty of living plants.

For some reason I cannot sit idle, and in the last few years I started hybridizing martagon lilies with the hope of bringing new and cutting edge varieties to the market. With the help and direction from my friend and lily mentor Terry Willoughby, I am turning my hybridizing goals into reality. My breeding program with martagon lilies shows great promise for side and up-facing martagon varieties.

It is only natural that I have a strong passion to do hybridizing with peony plants too. I am fortunate to have Nate Bremer, who is one of the world leading hybridizers in peonies, as my mentor. Together with his knowledge and my passion I am excited to bring new peony hybrids to gardeners in the near future.

I am most interested in Advanced Herbaceous Hybrid peonies (AHH), and hope to work with Intersectional Hybrids (ITOH), in the near future. I feel that these two groups have great potential for advancement, and will keep me busy for years to come. Herbaceous Hybrid peonies are peonies created by breeding two or more species of peonies together. Advanced Herbaceous Hybrids are the result of breeding herbaceous hybrid prodigy, and also breeding back to species peony.



I am most interested in Advanced Herbaceous Hybrid peonies (AHH)

Intersectional hybrids or ITOH peonies, as they are most often referred to, are created by crossing tree peonies with herbaceous peonies. My interest lies in using existing intersectional peonies and crossing them back to herbaceous hybrids. This could be very difficult, as they are categorized as sterile, or as having mixed chromosomes. It is with time, that peony breeders will find the key that could unlock the intersectional peony. At one time in history, it was thought that the intersectional cross could not be possible, and today we enjoy a wide array of interesting intersectional peonies in our gardens.

In the last couple of years I have started, what I hope to be, a long and successful journey into my peony breeding adventure. I have started collecting a wide range of peonies that I feel have great potential and genetic advancement in creating great garden peonies. Currently my goals are simple, and I will fine tune them as I start to see seedlings from my program. I want to create something that has these qualities:

Breeding Goals

1. *Unique;*
2. *Disease resistant;*
3. *Upright strong stems;*
4. *Interesting foliage;*
5. *Versatile in many garden sites; and*
6. *Have fun along the way.*



Breeding Peonies

Breeding Peonies continued...

For the last couple of years I have enjoyed growing peony seeds, which I purchased from the Canadian Peony Society and the American Peony society. Each year these societies have a seed exchange when members donate seeds, which other members can purchase for a nominal fee. I started by growing seeds from these groups, and have developed a method of germinating and growing the seeds that works best for me. In 2019 I started breeding my own peonies, and planted out a couple hundred seedlings into the field in the last two years.

It gives me a great pleasure to see these peonies grow from a tiny seed, germinate and become a nice healthy two-year old seedling. The next exciting part is to wait for first flower - only a few more years to wait!

The American Peony Society has some great articles on hybridizing peonies if you are interested to get started. I encourage you to collect seeds and grow your own peonies from the ones you have in your home garden. Remember, only peonies that have significant advancement should be registered with the American Peony Society.

Hybridizing info:

<https://americanpeonysociety.org/learn/hybridizing/>

Herbaceous Hybrids:

These varieties are the result of crossing parents of two completely different species. Hybrids typically bloom earlier than garden peonies, usually lack side buds and most have no fragrance. However, hybrid peonies have a broader genetic background and, as a result, produce vivid blooms of either bright yellow, true red, stunning coral, luminescent pinks or flares of color that radiate from the inner petals.



Etched Salmon



Lemon Chiffon



Coral Sunset

Dividing Peonies

It is best to divide the peony plant in the fall, as at this time the plant is in a dormant stage, and not in active growth. This is ideal, as growing tips, also called “eyes” are small, and not easily damaged by the process of digging and division.

Does this sound familiar: Your peony has outgrown its current location in the garden and you need to move it, or you want to share a piece of your prized peony with a friend or family member, or maybe it was your grandmother’s peony, and you want everyone in your family to have this peony grown in their garden.

In all situations the process of dividing peonies is the same and quite easy. In the fall: here at Parkland Peonies we start digging our peonies in the beginning of September, as this is the time when the peony plant has finished its growing for the season and is in a semi-dormant state.



·**First task is to cut all foliage to about 1 inch from the ground level. This will be a good indicator as to how deep you need to re-plant your peony divisions after dividing.**

·**Next - dig your peony: It is best to dig about 6 inches away from the stems of your peony, dig deep, and all around the plant. This is required because your peony will have a large root structure, and you want as much root as possible. It is okay to cut through root structure during this process.**

·**Once you have dug all around your peony plant, pry the peony root out of the ground. I like the root ball to sit in the sun for 15-20 minutes before I start to divide, this allows the roots to soften a little, and easier to work with.**

·**If you have light sandy soil then you can just brush off all the soil from the root. Our soil is not sandy, so the soil sticks to the root, and we need to wash off all soil from the root at this time. With a garden hose, wash all soil from the root so you can clearly see all growing tips.**

·**With a sharp knife select pieces of the plant that contain at least 3-5 eyes and are attached to a section of root. Try to get as many divisions as possible, usually 3-4 divisions per plant depending on the size.**

·**Once divided, you can replant the divisions into the garden, the same level it was at, or 2 inches deep from the top of the eyes. If it cannot be planted right away, you can store it in a cool location like your refrigerator, in a plastic bag filled with lightly moist peat moss.**

·**After the peony is planted firm the ground over the peony, water it, label you location with the correct peony name. (“Experience tells me, you will otherwise forget the name of the peony overtime”).**

Now all your hard work has been completed, and your friends and family members are happy you shared your peony with them. Looks like all you need to do now is sit back and wait for spring to arrive to see your peony grow again. A word from the wise: Peonies restore vigor after it has been divided, this is because the peony goes into growing mode, rather than relaxation mode. Relaxation mode is when the peony relies on its large root structure to provide energy for above ground growth; while growing mode is when the plant puts all its energy into producing new root system. Don’t hesitate to divide your peony this fall, or you can order a healthy root division from us here at Parkland Peonies.

Ants and Peonies

It is a garden myth that peonies require ants to open, and that without ants you will not have peonies blooming. However, ants do benefit from the sticky residue, known as nectar that is created from the edges of the sepals. The sepal is the green wrapper that protects the bud. This nectar is produced days prior to the peony opening, and is a great food source for ants. In my opinion, it is the gardener who benefits, as the peony has a tendency to open sooner when the ants remove the nectar residue from the bud.

Gardeners often mention that they don't like to cut peony flowers and bring them into the house to enjoy because of the ants that are on the blooms. If you cut your peonies early in the morning when ant activities are lower, this might prevent ants in your house. Another way to avoid ants in your house for cut flowers is to cut the flowers at a marshmallow stage before the flower opens completely. Your cut flowers will last longer after cutting, and no ants.

Hopefully this has helped to solve the mystery of the ant and the peony.



The Blooms



Martagon Lilies

- *Plant a martagon this fall and experience the beauty of these amazing lilies for yourself.*



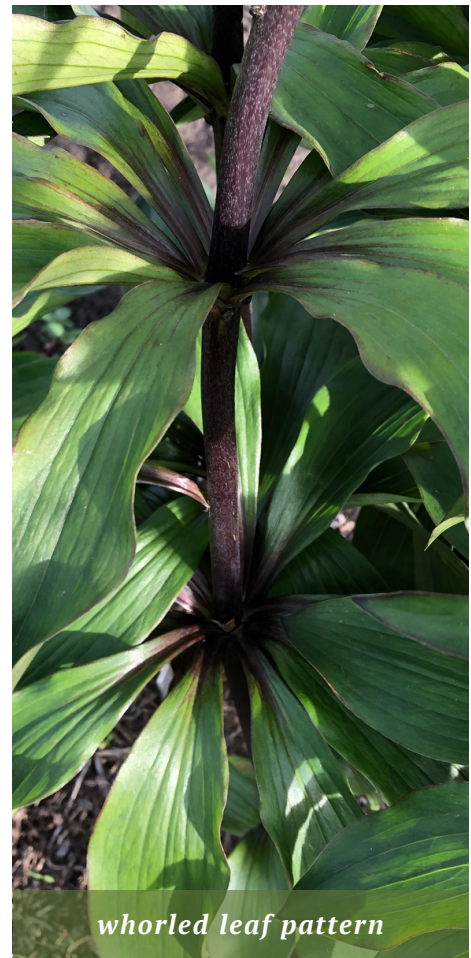
Martagon Seedlings

The Shade loving Lily...

The martagon lily and its hybrids are the first lilies to bloom in your garden, extending the lily season even further, plus they do well in a shade garden.

In the martagon lily group there are only 5 species and many hybrids from these species. The five species that make up this martagon group are *Lilium martagon*, *Lilium hansonii*, *Lilium tsingtauense*, *Lilium distichum*, and *Lilium medeoloides*. Each martagon species is distinctive in character and place of origin. In this article I will refer to both species and hybrid martagon lilies.

Martagon lily have been grown for many years, but we rarely see them in the average garden. This might be due to two things: cost and exposure. A single bulb can reach prices as high as \$50-\$100 per bulb. The price for martagon lilies have always been higher than the average garden lily because they have not been popular in the lily trade, as they have down-facing flowers, and because the martagon lily takes 5 to 7 years to bloom from seed. Garden lilies like Asiatic lilies usually take 2 to 3 years to produce flowering size lilies, and are up-facing and out-facing, which makes them very popular. This is still true today with martagons but many hybrids have been propagated in mass numbers, driving the prices down. Gardeners are realizing the true beauty of the martagon lily and the potential it has in our Alberta gardens. Note: when you purchase a mature bulb, it will usually bloom for you within the first 2 years.



whorled leaf pattern

There are many characteristics that define a martagon lily. They can be identified by:

- 1. Distinctive leafy pattern:***, referred to a whorls. Each plant has 3 sets of whorled leaves moving up the stem like a collar about every 6 inches, rather than leaves that are scattered around like other lilies.
- 2. Height:*** Once established, this lily can grow up to 4-6ft, and have a flower count of up to 40 flowers.
- 3. Flower Form:*** The flowers are distinctive as well, they are smaller than the average garden lily, and have thick petals, which are usually recurved upwards and many have a waxy sheen to them.
- 4. Color:*** Martagons and their hybrids come in every color possible except blue, and the number of buds vary from 1 to 40.
- 5. Orientation:*** The flowers are mostly down-facing, and the stem usually forms a triangular pedicel, which allows the flowers to hang down, and really show off their beauty. Some are side and up-facing.

The Shade loving Lily...

Martagon Lilies continued...

Many hybridizers are making great strides in producing up-facing and out-facing martagon lilies here in Alberta, and around the world.

Martagons like to be planted in a rich organic loam soil, but will tolerate heavier clay soil, as long as other conditions are met, such as good drainage and proper sunlight. This lily does well in a dappled shade environment, requiring at least 4 hours of sun per day. However, it also does well in a full sun location. Martagons for me are a great way to add a splash of color in a shaded garden, plus another benefit is the flowers seem to last longer because of the shaded area.

This group of lilies are very hardy, and will survive temperatures up to -40 C (zone 2), they are disease-resistant and will thrive in your garden for many years. Unlike other lilies, the martagon bulb does not need to be divided for many years, it will do better if planted and not disturbed, creating a large clump of martagons over time, the envy of every neighbor.

Plant a martagon this fall and experience the beauty of these amazing lilies for yourself.

distinctive yellowish bulbs



Martagon Species



Lilium tsingtauense



Lilium martagon



Lilium medeoloides



Lilium hansonii



Lilium distichum

All martagons in this article are from my breeding program



Advancement in Martagon Breedings

by: Adam Yakabuskie

My adventure with the martagon lily started almost 15 years ago, when I attended the North American Lily Society (NALS), convention in Edmonton Alberta in 2007. I was enamored with the beauty of this amazing shade loving lily.

So the adventure began, I started to collect as many martagons as my budget would allow, within the next few years I had acquired over 50 registered martagon varieties. I learned very quickly, it was not just the lilies that feed my passion, it was the friends and mentors behind these lilies that drove me to work further with this wonderful plant.

There have been many great lily personalities that have influenced my breeding of martagon lilies along the way, I am grateful for each mentorship, words of encouragement and advice from all individuals. Fred Fellner, Dr. Ieuan Evans, Dr. Eugene Fox, Bob Yaremko, Bryan Bennett and Terry Willoughby, to name a few.

It was the work of Terry Willoughby that had ready ignited my passion to work with breeding martagons, and more so with perusing out-facing and up-facing martagon orientation. Terry had been working with the species *Lilium tsingtauense*, and it's hybrids to create new and exciting martagon plants. My initial genetic gene pool, can from the work of Terry's seedlings. Terry allowed me to collect pollen from his garden over the years, which has really advanced my program to what it has become today.

After 12 year working with martagon lilies, I now select plants and genetics from my vast amount of seedlings that I have grown. Over the years I have fine-tuned my breeding goals to what they are currently.

OVER THE YEARS I HAVE FINE-TUNED MY BREEDING GOALS TO WHAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY:

1. *Out-facing and up-facing flower orientation*
2. *High bud count with secondary flowers*
3. *Novel color patterns*
4. *Larger and wider flat flower forms*
5. *Disease resistance*
6. *Longer arching pedicels that showcase flowers*
7. *Plant vigor*



As one of my mentors Fred Fellner always said, **"The best is yet to come"**.

Martagon Seedling Showcase:

Advancement in Martagon Breeding continued...

One should understand that breeding for out-facing and up-facing orientation is no small task. There are 5 species in the martagon group of lilies, and only 2 of these species shows characteristics of up-facing flower form, (*L. tsingtauense*) and another species of out-facing form, (*L. distichum*). All other species in the martagon group have down-facing, nodding, or pendant flower forms.

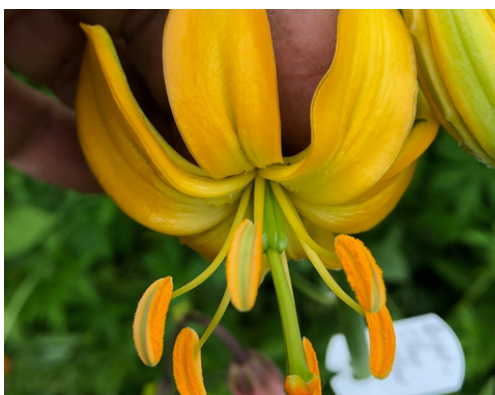
Currently, I am seeing great success in achieving many of my goals with martagon breeding. I am excited to share with you some of the work that has come from my breeding program over the years.

In 2010, I focused my breeding on *tsingtauense* hybrids, flower form, size of flower, and unique color patterns, today I am seeing many of my seedlings showing great promise, as I am achieving up to 20 flowers per stem, out-facing flower orientations, long arching pedicles with large symmetrical flower forms in many unique colors and flower patterns.

In the future I will be working exclusively with these promising martagon seedlings to see what further potential and possibilities I might be able to achieve. As one of my mentors Fred Fellner always said, **“The best is yet to come”**.



76 INCHES: DAVID'S GOLIATH (TBR)



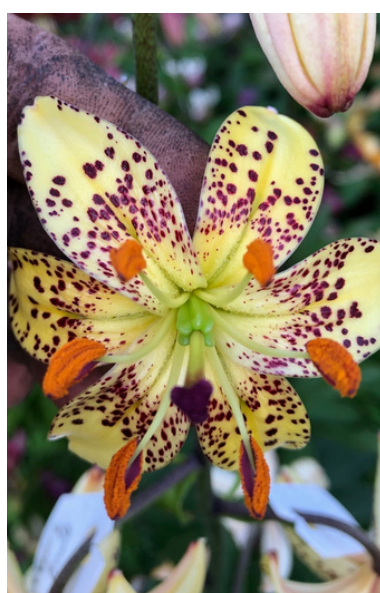
Martagon Seedling Showcase:



Martagon Seedling Showcase:



Adam Yakabuskie, Terry Willoughby, & Fred Fellner



Secondary Buds



Martagon Seed !!!

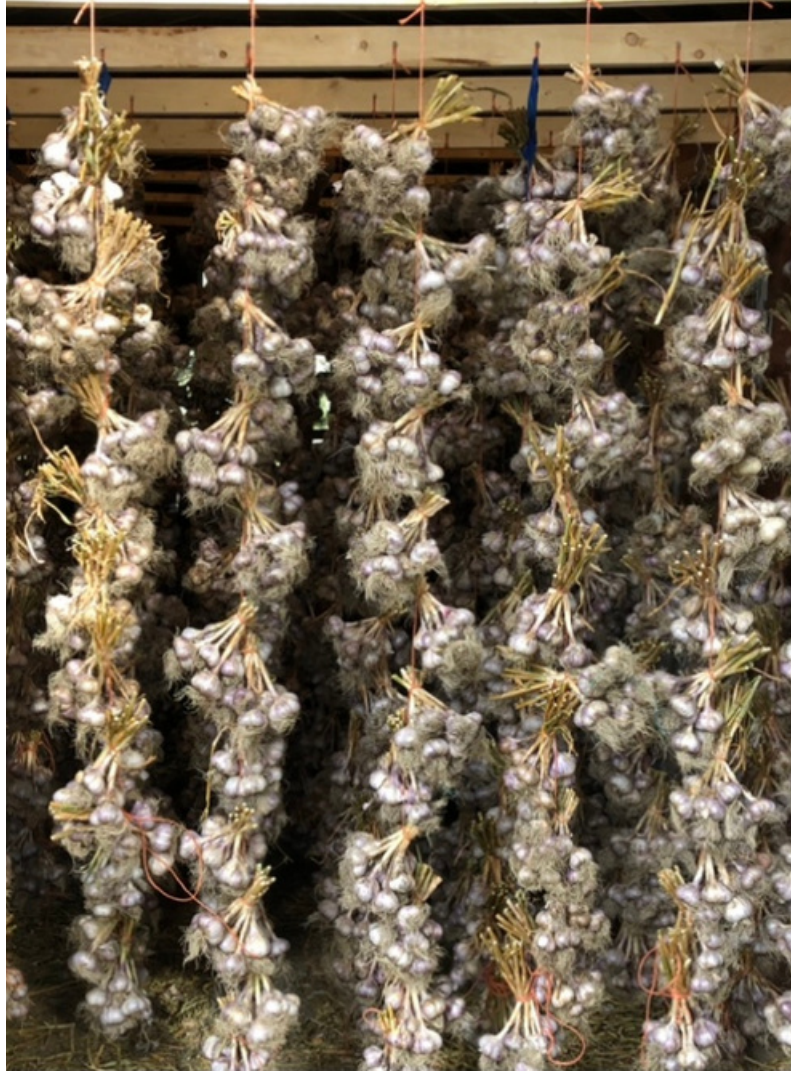


Fall Newsletter Sneak Peak

Up Next:

- *Harvesting Garlic*
- *Collecting Seed*
- *Digging and Dividing Peonies*
- *Planting Peonies*
- *Shipping Peony Orders*
- *Preparing field for winter*
- *Soil Test*

Garlic Drying



Dividing Peonies

