

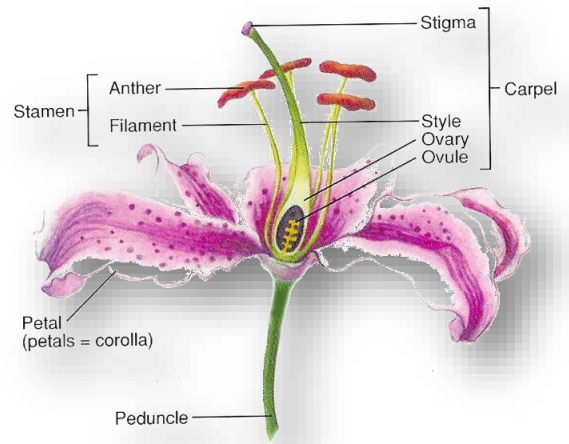
ORIENTAL LILIES



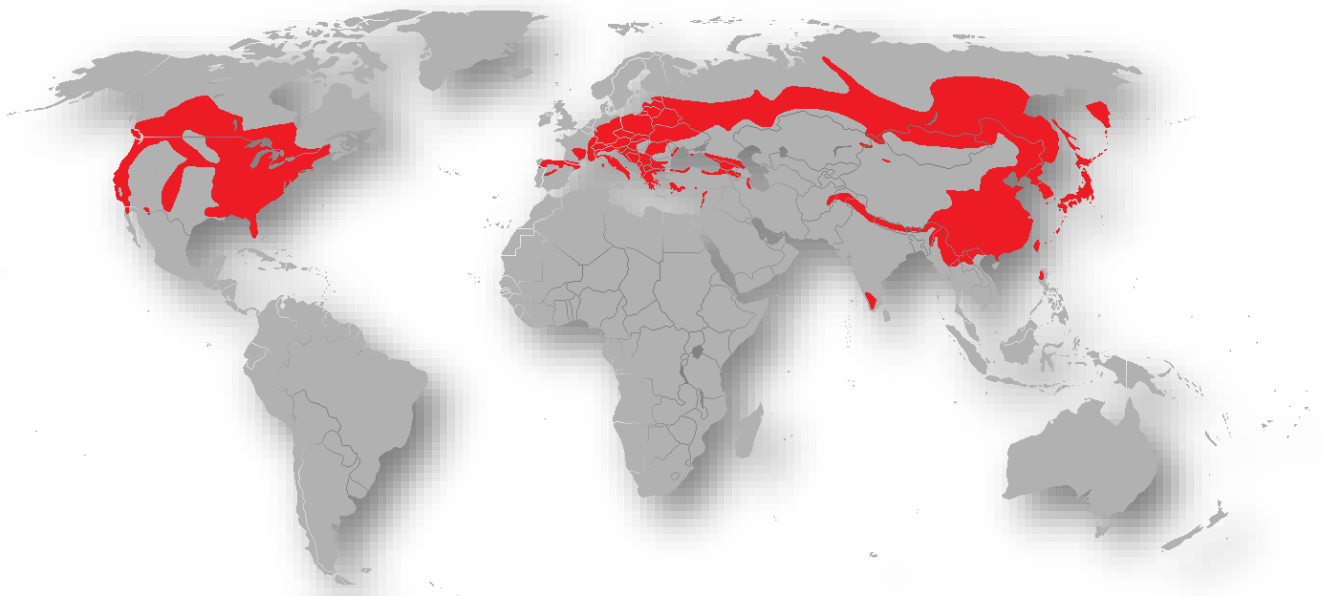
Each year, **Oriental Lilies** have become more and more popular as cut flowers. The name **Lily** is applied to many genera, but only those belonging to the genus *Lilium*, in the family **Liliaceae**, are true lilies. **Oriental Lilies** are hybrids, based on a number of *Lilium* species including *L. alexandrae*, *L. auratum*, *L. japonicum*, *L. nobilissimum*, *L. rubellum* and *L. speciosum*¹.

Characteristically, **Oriental Lilies** are tall growing perennial plants with long, strap shaped leaves with parallel veins, and large, **fragrant** flowers which **face outwards and upwards**. The flower parts of lilies are in 3s or multiples of 3:

- a. 6 large petals (3 petals and 3 petaloid sepals)
- b. 6 stamens
- c. superior ovary of 3 fused carpels
- d. fruit - a 3 celled capsule



The family **Liliaceae** is now considered to comprise about 850 species in 17 genera²; most of these come from the northern temperate parts of the world, from central areas of North America, across Europe to Asia, including Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines, and south to the Nilgiri Mountains of India³.



The greatest number of species can be found between Turkey and central-western China but eastern Asia, with 9 genera, can be considered the centre of greatest diversity, with 5 genera occurring in the Chinese Himalayan region⁴. Lilies commonly occur in woodland, grassland or montane habitats; a few grow in marshes and there are a few epiphytic species in southeast Asia³.



Lilium "Stargazer" or Stargazer Lily.
Photo by Skarg, Wikicommons



Lilium auratum var. *virginale* One of
the parents of Oriental Lily hybrids.
Photo: Wikicommons Denis Barthels

¹Wikipedia

²Goverts, R. 2012. World Checklist of Liliaceae. Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. <http://apps.kew.org/wcsp/>

³ZipcodeZoo.com: http://zipcodezoo.com/Key/Plantae/Liliaceae_Family.asp

^{4,3}Liang Song-yun. 1955. Chorology of Liliaceae (s. strict.) and its bearing on the Chinese Flora. *Acta phytotaxonomica Sinica* 33(1): 27-51.

Distribution map: Missouri Botanical Garden:

<http://www.mobot.org/mobot/research/apweb/orders/lilialesweb.htm>

Kevin Downing & Brian Atwell
Department of Biological Sciences,
September 2015

