Calla lily (Zantedeschia)

Sally Jacobsen, UMN Extension Crow Wing County Master Gardener Volunteer

Part of the Araceae (jack-in-the-pulpit) family, it boasts showy flowers in a rainbow of colors from white to deep purple. The dramatic, large chalice-shaped flowers with large leaves are native to South Africa. In warmer climates it is a perennial, but in Minnesota it is grown as an annual that must be planted in the spring, dug up in the fall, and overwintered inside. Calla lilies may also be grown indoors as a houseplant. Beautiful as a cut flower for arrangements. **Caution: All parts of the plant are toxic to dogs and cats.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Annual or as houseplants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardiness Zone</td>
<td>8 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Full sun; part shade - although it may not bloom as well</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloom Time</td>
<td>July to frost depending on variety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>1’ - 3’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spread</td>
<td>1’ – 2’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Easy to grow although they need to be kept watered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Features</td>
<td>Generally ignored by deer and rabbits</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Soil and Site Recommendations**

- Drainage: prefers moist rich soil
- Soil pH: alkaline soils with pH 5.6 to 6.5
- Placement considerations: beds, borders, containers; will grow near streams or water gardens

**Planting Recommendations**

- Type: rhizomes
- When to plant: spring; make sure the tips are pointing up
- Depth to plant: 4” - 6” deep
- Mulching: mulch to retain moisture
- Spacing: 12” - 18” apart
- Division/transplant tips: after fall frost, dig up, separate cormels (small corms), and store until spring planting.

**Maintenance**

- Watering: well-drained soil, moist but not soggy
- Fertilization: after planting, fertilize monthly with 5-10-5 or 5-10-10 fertilizer
• Pinching/deadheading: flowers should last 4 - 8 weeks; remove flower stem when bloom fades
• Annual maintenance: dig up in after fall frost; store rhizomes where they will not freeze with temperatures between 40 - 50 degrees F.

**Common Problems**

Disease: rhizome rot

Insects: Japanese beetles may eat the flowers and foliage

**Resources**

https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=276469&isprofile=1&basic=calla

https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/zantedeschia/common-name/calla-lily/

https://extension.umn.edu/flowers/calla-and-canna-lilies

https://www.gardenia.net/guide/learn-how-to-plant-and-care-for-your-calla-lilies

Questions or problems: “What’s wrong with my plant" for information on garden pests and diseases:

http://apps.extension.umn.edu/garden/diagnose/plant/

**Visit us at crowwingmastergardeners.org, on Facebook @CWCMasterGardeners and on Instagram @cwcmastergardener.**

**Common Varieties**

- **Zantedeschia albomaculata**
  - Calla Lily
  - ivory white flowers
  - height of 1’ – 2’

- **Zantedeschia rehmannii**
  - Pink Calla
  - pink with cream blush flowers
  - height 1’ to 1.5’

- **Zantedeschia elliotiana**
  - Golden Calla
  - yellow flowers
  - height of 2’ – 3’