TALL LILIES OF THE GARDEN: LINKS BINDING LANDSCAPE TO ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE: BY ALICE LOUNSBERRY

THE member of the garden which brings it into closest touch with architecture and sculpture is undoubtedly the lily,—the tall upright beauty unlike in appearance any other flower that grows. Of late it has not only entered the gardens of American homes more generally than ever before, but it has captured them, become their master, owing to its extraordinary personality and to the readiness with which it responds to simple cultivation.

The greater number of lilies that now glorify our gardens have come from Japan, America being formerly dependent on a few indigenous varieties, which though quaintly beautiful, deeply beloved by our grandmothers, had not the classic personalities of the wonderful foreign varieties, able to take the place of statues in gardens and to amplify architectural conceits. Fujiyama has given up her lily treasures, sunk deep in the lava fields, that American planting grounds might revel in the possession of their rare and wonderful beauty. Indeed it is with these flowers as it is with shrubs, vines and roses, the hardiest and the best now cultivated in America are natives of Japan.

From time immemorial, however, this desire to import plants from foreign countries has been a characteristic of garden builders. The early gardens of England, those which were copied by the settlers of this country and which we today refer to as old-fashioned gardens, were for the most part made up of bulbs and plants imported from Africa and Italy. Today it is unquestionably the Land of the Rising Sun that supplies the so-called “new features” for the gardens of both England and America.

In making the ascent of Fujiyama, the almost human mountain of Japan, botanists and plant gatherers regarded it as an event when they discovered there the bulbs of the golden-banded lily, *Lilium auratum*, which has since become one of the most generally planted in American gardens. Children too young to have studied geography, people so old as to have forgotten its importance, recognize this lily as
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one of their dearest possessions, awaiting its return to bloom each season with impatience. For the golden-banded lily makes a direct appeal to the affection. It stands as erectly, as tall as many men do, reaching under favorable conditions, six feet in height. Its fragrance catches the senses while the astounding size of its blooms, sometimes a foot in diameter, combined with extraordinary beauty and marked by the distinctive gold band, extending from the tip to the base of each petal, give to it so alluring a personality that even the most unobserv- ing of human beings is captivated.

The auratum is one of the Japanese lilies that prefers to grow under a certain amount of shade. Too strong sunlight has the power to wilt its buds and to prevent their free expansion. A favorite place for the golden-banded lily is among heavy plantings of rhododendrons, since the blooms are then capable of enlivening the whole planting ground after the flowers of the shrubs have faded. It is also frequently seen in hardy borders where, whenever possible, it should be set so as to catch the shade of tall shrubs.

A COMMON mistake in planting this lily, one equally true of other varieties of Japanese and European importation, is that the bulbs are not set deeply enough in the ground. Collectors who have gathered them in Japan relate that they have found them there buried ten and twelve inches deep in lava fields or elsewhere under the surface of the soil. By pursuing this system Nature protects the bulbs from the frosts of winter as well as from the droughts of summer, and usually it is found that to emulate her ways brings success.

While the golden-banded lily of Japan is the most strikingly beautiful of all those at present known, there are an infinite number showing stateliness, purity of line and exquisiteness of color; many in fact, that add unusual luster to various forms of planting. There are people nevertheless to whom the Madonna or Annunciation lily, Lilium candidum, is dearer than the gayer golden-banded variety. It is related of an elderly woman, whose hair had whitened under many sorrows, that things had so narrowed about her that she took pleasure on only two occasions in the year, her grandchild’s birthday and the season in which “the lily” came into bloom. “The lily” of her garden was the Madonna, snow white and spotless. In June it unfolded its first blooms, continuing to bloom throughout July, providing the good soul with the one pure ideal of beauty that she possessed. So like in appearance is this Madonna lily to the variety seen in churches at Easter-time, the Bermuda lily, Lilium Harrisii, that she probably felt as if she were having a spiritual feast within the intimacy of her own dooryard. This lily also had graciously increased the territory it held
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beside the old lady’s home, its habit being to produce its bulbs with great generosity. It gave her no trouble, just unalloyed joy. In it she had confidence. It never disappointed her in its return and gave to her through its own propagation infinitely more than she ever expected.

This satisfactory state of things existed because the original bulbs of the Madonna lily, that had been given to her, had been planted in ground that suited them. It may have occurred through accident, nevertheless it was efficacious. If many who through lack of knowledge are afraid to experiment with lilies, had seen those of this old lady’s dooryard they would have hastened to buy bulbs and to plant them wherever they had space or opportunity.

Beside a pool the Madonna lily sustains itself like a chiseled bit of marble; and in some deep green spot, confident of its seclusion, it is able to grow as freely as the average perennial. It will thrive in either sun or shade, while preferring the former. When used in an architectural way as a foundation plant for the front of a house where the intense sun of the June day shines upon its flowers, it gleams often amid the surrounding green like sculpture in an old garden.

Unless for some special purpose, tall lilies should not be planted as single specimens. Their stems are too slender and meager in foliage to give a desirable basic effect. In groups, not necessarily of more than three or five, they gain sufficient body however to appear well even in places where there is a scarcity of surrounding growth. The illustration of *Lilium sulphureum*, one of the tallest that grows, shows a few of these lilies forming a solitary group, one which it cannot be gainsaid is strikingly beautiful. Large trees at a distance form the background, while the borderlike planting of shrubs at the base of the group is too low to interfere with the individuality of each one of the lilies.

The great objection to planting tall lilies in this way is the possibility of danger from high winds. The large blooms are heavy, the stems slender; conditions which necessitate staking. No matter how well this work is done, best of all with stakes painted green and hidden as much as possible among the foliage, the artificial supports invariably deprive the plant of its apparent freedom. There are besides, winds so high that a tall stake to which a slender lily is fastened cannot withstand it and in its fall it drags with it ignominiously the whole plant. The natural solution of this difficulty is to back lilies with shrubs taller than themselves and to give them shorter shrubs as foreground plants.

Fortunately many lilies are intermediate in height, besides blooming in July and August, a time when innumerable shrubs and plants have shed their flowers. If planted in front of a group or line of
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shrubs including the weigelas, spiræas and forsythias, those which are through flowering by the first of July, and behind peonies, the bloom of which also passes early, many lilies can give to a whole planting ground, during July and August, the benefit of their flowers, making the onlooker cease to regret the earlier ones that have had their day. This method of employing the very tall lilies is perhaps the best one that has yet been devised, for it cannot be denied that many of their stems are lacking in sustaining power and in any particular grace.

THE so-called speciosum types of Japanese lilies of which the best known varieties are Lilium speciosum rubrum and Lilium speciosum album, are somewhat branching in their habit of growth and for this reason are not as dependent upon background and foreground plants as those which raise a tall, slender stem topped with a crown of large flowers. The stems of the speciosums seldom reach over three and one-half feet high and their foliage is very handsome. Among it, stakes can be fairly well hidden, while the large size and brilliancy of the flowers catch and hold the eye above all else. In gardens, also in hardy borders these lilies are very useful provided that they are grouped with plants the bloom of which does not interfere with their colors or distinct personalities. Probably they are the most generally planted of any of the Japanese lilies and not without reason, since they grow with the greatest ease, multiplying themselves by means of bulblets. After they have been given place in the garden or border they should be left in undisturbed peace for three or four years when their bulbs should be divided as a means of extending the plantation. The red variety, speciosum rubrum, does best when partly shaded, as by rhododendrons or other shrubs: the white variety, album, likes however, the full sun. While therefore the two come into bloom at the same time in late August and September, after the golden-banded lily and many others have faded, they should not be planted side by side but rather in separate locations where the sun touches them differently.

So hardy have these lilies been found by many flower-lovers that they have been planted indiscriminately about homes and in various sections of gardens. One man hugging to himself the sole fact that the red speciosum liked to grow in partly shaded places, planted its bulbs throughout a strip of light coppice where he had gathered many beautiful wild flowers. There, in accord with his expectations, it thrrove amazingly. He showed it with pride to all his neighbors, happy in his innocence that such a planting site was altogether out of harmony with the personality of the lily. There is something too highly
THE GOLDEN-BANDED LILY OF JAPAN, LILIUM AURATUM, AS SEEN ON A SIDE HILL INTERMINCED WITH HEAVY PLANTINGS OF RHODODENDRONS.
THE MADONNA OR ANNUNCIATION LILY, LILIUM CANDIDUM, STANDING NOT FAR DISTANT FROM A POOL WHERE IT REVEALS GREAT PURITY OF TEXTURE; THIS IS THE MOST FRAGRANT OF ALL THE LILIES, AND IS ONE OF THE FEW WHICH SHOWS TO AN INTERESTING ADVANTAGE PLANTED IN CLUMPS; A FEW STALKS OF THE MADONNA LILY FURNISH WHEN IN BLOOM A FEATURE OF ALMOST ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE IF RIGHTLY PLACED NEAR POOL OR HILLSIDE.

HERE WE SEE THE BEAUTY TO BE GAINED BY MASSING THE MADONNA OR ANNUNCIATION LILY AGAINST THE FOUNDATION OF A HOUSE; THE EFFECT IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTING WHEN, AS IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE, THE WHITE AND GREEN OF THE LILIES ARE A REPEITION OF THE COLOR SCHEME OF THE HOUSE; THERE IS A CERTAIN FORMAL QUALITY IN THIS PARTICULAR LILY THAT MAKES IT DESIRABLE FOR PLANTING VERY CLOSE TO A HOUSE WHERE IT SUPPLEMENTS THE ARCHITECTURAL BEAUTY.
The Red Speciosum Lily planted where its beautiful flowers appear well outlined against the lustrous leaves of a bank of Rhododendrons.
THE SPECIOSUM LILIES AS SEEN AGAINST THE STONE FOUNDATION OF A HOUSE PARTLY COVERED WITH BOSTON IY, THE LILIES HAVING TALL RHODODENDRONS AS THEIR IMMEDIATE BACKGROUND AND WILD VIOLETS AT THE BASE AS A GROUND COVER.

LILIUM SULPHUREUM, A COMPARATIVELY NEW AND LOVELY LILY, ITS FLOWERS LONG AND TUBULAR, RICH YELLOW INSIDE AND TINTED OUTSIDE WITH ROSE BROWN: LIKE THE MADONNA LILY, THIS SPECIES IS VERY ATTRACTIVE PLANTED IN A CLUMP OF A HALF-DOZEN STALKS: IT IS ESPECIALLY INTERESTING GROUPED THIS WAY AT THE EDGE OF A LITTLE WOOD OR NEAR A STONE WALL, OR JUST AT THE ENTRANCE TO AN ESTATE; IT HAS AN AIR OF BEING QUITE COMPLETE WITHOUT OTHER PLANTS OR SHRUBS NEAR IT, AND IF SUFFICIENTLY ISOLATED HAS ALMOST THE EFFECT OF A BIT OF RARE GARDEN SCULPTURE.
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cultivated in the air of these tall lilies to permit them to mingle well with the more delicate flowers of the wild. A Japanese lily amid naturalistic planting at once proclaims itself a foreigner to the soil, the surroundings and above all else to the sentiment of the place. The lily student longs to carry it away and to plant it where the work of man is in evidence, where in fact, it can come into contact with some architectural scheme and where in the greater number of cases its beauty will appear magnified. In a wild garden it is as out of place as would be an American Beauty rose. The rose has been spared such misplacement because it is known to be dependent upon sunshine, while the lily has met with such lack of comprehension many times, it being scheduled as partial to shade.

Indeed the tall imported lilies are in every sense of the word true garden plants. The member of the tribe that appears at home in places where naturalistic planting predominates is the wild red, or wood lily, _Lilium Philadelphicum._

ALL of the lilies imported either from Japan or other parts of the world as well as the few that are natives of this country require to have their bulbs planted where the drainage is good. For unlike many Japanese irises they will give no results if allowed to settle in water. To ensure good development they should be planted in light, loamy soil without a superabundance of clay. In many cases the average garden soil is suitable for their growth.

When a lily bed is especially prepared the soil should be dug out to a depth of about two feet and the space then filled in with a mixture of light, rich leaf-mold, sand and well-rotted manure. A handful of sand, moreover, should be wrapped about each bulb that any possibility may be avoided of its coming into contact with the manure, which works quickly toward its destruction. This preparation of the soil for lily bulbs is seldom arduous. In places, however, where doubt as to the perfect drainage of a planting ground is entertained, the bed should be dug deeper than usual and filled in for about a foot with cobblestones. In the autumn or as soon as the bloom is over and the stalks have turned yellow, they should be cut down; and while not absolutely necessary, it is a wise precaution to cover at this time the whole bed with a mulch of old manure.

By collecting different varieties of lilies their bloom can be seen in a garden from the middle of May until well on in September, and while all of the varieties have more or less stateliness they are soon found to vary greatly in details. The old-fashioned tiger lilies, _Lilium tigrinum_, more hardy and enduring than almost any other flowers, can uphold a planting ground since their color is one that demands a
certain apartness from all others. Red lilies gleam startlingly bright amid green masses; the browns, yellows and buffs which are among the newer introductions, work invariably for special effects, while the wonderful pure white ones give not only the beauty of sculpture to many gardens in the daytime, but appear, as daylight fades, to turn a cool evanescent shade of blue, holding long the twilight.

ART AND HEART

"I ALWAYS say to my young friends," says Adelina Patti, "not can you shake, can you trill, can you imitate a mocking-bird—but can you sing a simple ballad in honest, straightforward fashion, such a ballad, for instance, as 'Home, Sweet Home'? That is the real test."

Patti knows. And it is worth observing that what she says of singing applies also to every other work in life.

Naturalness is the soul of art.

No two things are more closely akin than art and heart.

Architecture, with all its grandeur, had its beginning and will have its ending in the humble building of a home.

The highest attainment in painting and sculpture is the representation of the elemental emotions. The greatest picture in the world is of a mother and her baby.

In literature, the greatest works are not those of the eagles of genius on far-circling flight, but of the sweet cooing doves that nest under our eaves.

The great songs are not the grand oratorios, but the simple ballads that sing themselves. The great music is not the complex compositions which only a few masters may interpret, but the soul-whispered harmonies which everyone must feel.

The fancy stunts are very well for practice, for development of skill and confidence; but they are only means to an end. The end is true interpretation of human feeling.

The truest art lies in directness.

The great message is always a simple one.

CHARLES GRANT MILLER.