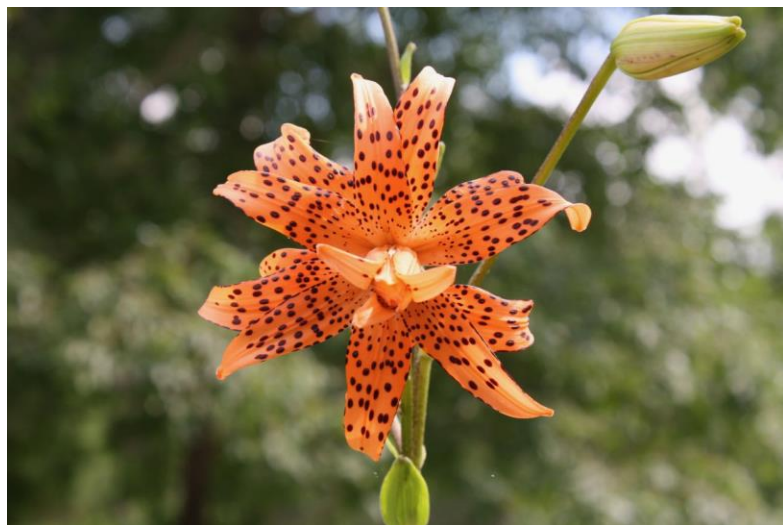


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## Tiger Lilies: The Unforgotten Gift

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Gardeners are notorious for sharing their prized plants with fellow gardeners, experienced and novice. Sometimes even non-gardeners receive these types of gifts. When I was in my early twenties, an older gentleman knocked on my door and shared some tiger lilies (*Lilium lancifolium*). He seemed so pleased to pass along his prized bulbs, stating they were easy to grow. He may have introduced himself, but I do not recall his name, and I never saw him again.

At the time, I gardened very little, and, concerned I would be unsuccessful, I am

not certain I even planted his gift. But his enthusiasm for these lilies have been in the back of my mind all these years. Finally, I decided to plant some tiger lilies in my garden.

The gentleman gardener was right. Tiger lilies are easy to grow. They are not picky about climate, growing in zones 3 through 9, in neutral soil, and in soil that leans to either acidic or alkaline conditions. Striking to see, they are bright orange with black spots, and a single and double form are available.

Bulblets grow on the stem above the leaves, an interesting way to multiply. These bulblets can be gathered and planted, the roots growing over the winter, with the plant flowering in a couple of years. They may also multiply naturally, the bulblets falling off beside the mother plant, forming a large clump.

If you have other lilies (*Lilium spp.*) in your garden, you will not want to plant tiger lilies anywhere near them. Tiger lilies are resistant to viruses, so they may thrive while your other lilies, with less resistance to the virus tiger lilies may bring in, decline and die.

To gardeners who love to share, I hope this encourages you to continue. Although it may seem like the gentlemen who first offered tiger lily bulbs to me failed in his quest, in the end he was successful in planting

the idea of gardening in my mind. I have never forgotten his generosity, and although it took several years, I finally have tiger lilies in my garden. I can understand his enthusiasm for these beauties and his desire to pass them along.

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