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## Pennies in the Grass

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Copper lilies (*Habranthus tubispathus*) pop up when least expected, in the most unusual of places, and shimmer like pennies scattered in the lawn.

They seem to appreciate being ignored. I planted some in a garden bed several years ago. Mine have naturalized in the grass; almost none remain in the bed where they were originally planted. If you know what to look for, you can occasionally find them in the most unlikely of places. I have seen them in a neglected grassy area on the corner of two busy highways, and I have found a

large patch of them blooming on a hillside along a country road. They are always a surprise and delight to see because they flower for such a short period of time, with blooms that last only a day or two.

Native to East Texas, copper lilies are dormant most of the year. Their short grass-like foliage is often overlooked, disappearing into their surroundings. But late in the summer and during the fall, they emerge on miniature leafless stalks after a rain. Although each lily is tiny, a mass of copper blooms can make the entire yard glow.

Copper lilies are named because the golden flowers are backed in red, giving them a copper hue. Do not expect a big lily to emerge. The flowers bloom on stems that can be as low as six inches, with a flower that is as small as a dime.

If you like to grow unusual plants, want to have blooms in the lawn, or have a fairy garden, you may want to grow copper lilies. They would also make the prettiest hat for a stylish fairy. Although they may sparkle like pennies, the joy they bring to an enchanted gardener is priceless.

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