

Oriental Lily (Lilium Oriental Hybrid) as a locally produced cut flower for Northern Ireland

Summary technical note, 2009

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Introduction: Oriental Lilies are a high value and popular cut flower and are included within the top 10 list of favourite cut flowers by the UK consumer. Between 2005 and 2008 CAFRE, Greenmount Campus has evaluated and demonstrated the successful production and scheduling of a range of Oriental Lily varieties suited to cut flower production in polytunnels and glasshouses under Northern Ireland climatic conditions.

Technology project findings: CAFRE, trialled & demonstrated the production of cut flower Oriental Lilies. The project has demonstrated that high quality Oriental Lilies can be successfully grown in unheated ventilated tunnels & glasshouses to flower each week from July to October.

Technology grower adoption: A number of growers and farmers have adopted the technology of cut flower Oriental Lily production between 2005 and 2008 to supply NI and RoI markets.

Obtaining planting material: Bulbs of varieties suitable for commercial production are available from a number of Dutch based bulb suppliers.

Planting density: Plant bulbs either directly into the soil or into lily compost within plastic crates at a density of 40 to 64 bulbs per m² depending on the bulb size planted. The bulb sizes being planted range between 14/16cm and

18cm+ circumference. 14/16cm bulbs can be planted at 56 to 64 m², 16/18cm bulbs at 48 to 56 m² and 18cm+ bulbs at 40 to 48 bulbs m².

Expected Yield: Oriental Lilies will produce 36 to 64 stems per m² depending on the bulb size planted.

Harvest period: June to November for glasshouse production and late June/early July to late October/early November for natural season tunnel production.

Vase Life: Anticipated vase life of 10 day to 2 weeks.

Facilities and equipment required: Oriental Lilies can be grown in a side ventilated polytunnel or a well ventilated glasshouse. Use overhead irrigation to water and establish the crop and ground level or compost level trickle-tape irrigation for watering the crop after the first 2 to 3 weeks of the cropping schedule. Use 1 layer of wire support to keep stems straight for weak stemmed varieties (no wire support required for stronger stemmed varieties). Use circulation fans to prevent botrytis. Use a cold store for post harvest storage of stems.

Marketing opportunities: Oriental Lilies can be marketed to local wholesalers, retail florists, local shops and farmers and town markets and retail multiples.

Advantages of selling locally produced Stock over imported stems: Low carbon footprint, stable pricing throughout the season, stronger more robust stems and flowers, extra freshness, stronger more robust stems, glossier deeper green leaves, longer vase life, more fragrant flowers, can mix colours to suit local clients specific requirements, wide range of niche varieties and colours produced locally, can adjust picking stage to suit specific customer requirements.

Interested to know more about cut flower Oriental Lily production?

If you would like to find out more about growing cut flower Lilies please contact David Davidson, Ornamentals Development Adviser, CAFRE, Greenmount Campus on **email** david.davidson@dardni.gov.uk ; **tel: 028 37 515605**.