

# GROWERTALKS

## Culture Notes

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## Aloha Lily Eucomis: Tropical Color and Fragrance Year-Round

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The Aloha Lily series of dwarf eucomis from Golden State Bulb Growers (GSBG) is a horticulturist's dream come true. Aloha Lily Eucomis are exotic, fragrant, drought tolerant once established, are nearly disease and pest free, are low input and have an extended shelf life. GSBG has developed cultural practices that make Aloha Lily varieties available year-round. There are currently three varieties available in the Aloha Lily series: Leia, a burgundy-purple; Maui, a pure white; and Nani, a soft pink.

Aloha Lily Eucomis do well over a wide range of environmental conditions and can be grown as potted plants or in-ground.

They're grown regularly in areas as cold as USDA Zone 6, with reports of bulbs planted several inches deep in Zone 5B re-blooming for the past three years.

### Planting

Plant bulbs 0.75 to 1 in. (1.9 to 2.5 cm) deep in containers or up to 4 in. (10 cm) deep in beds.

### Growth and development

#### Light Levels

- High light levels (full sun) can result in darkened ("bronzed") leaves and dark blooms. Higher light can be tolerated during cool and humid periods.
- 30% shade often provides optimal light levels.
- Low light levels can result in stretched (elongated) leaves and blooms. Growth regulators may be required to produce high-quality plants in low-light conditions.

#### Temperature

Aloha Lilies are robust growers that tolerate various temperatures, but truly prefer moderately cool-to-warm conditions. Optimum temperatures for plant growth and flowering are as follows:

- Days at 60F to 85F (16C to 29C), while preferably cooler than 75F (21C) maximum. Nights at 40F to 60F (4.5C to 15.5C) with an optimal range of 55F to 60F (12.5C to 15.5C).
- A diurnal (night to morning) drop in temperature yields the best results.
- Cool nights and clear days promote stronger and shorter stems and leaves.
- High daytime temperatures, such as in hoop houses, lead to soft and stretched growth.
- Aloha Lily plants are hardy to 28F to
- 32F (-2C to 0C), while bulbs are hardy to 10F (-12.2C). Foliar injury can occur in temperatures below 38F (3.3C).
- Growth regulators can prevent elongation that can be caused by non-optimal temperatures.

### **Forcing**

An initial forcing phase can improve uniformity of emergence by using a flat 60F to 62F (15.5C to 16.7C) until the plants emerge.

### **Finishing Time**

Finishing time typically ranges from 13 to 16 weeks. The time required to finish Aloha Lily plants depends on the bulbs' storage duration and local growing conditions. GSBG has developed programming information on finishing time based on these factors.

### **Water Management**

- Water freshly planted bulbs thoroughly.
- Maintain soil moisture until sprouts emerge.
- Keep soil moist, but not saturated, until blooms develop and then decrease moderately.

### **Fertility**

Aloha Lilies are low to moderate feeders. Too much fertility can result in leafy or "grassy" plants with slight leaf tip burn.

- Incorporate a slow-release pre-plant fertilizer (containing little or no phosphorous). This will produce good early establishment of roots and improved early vigor.
- At approximately 3 to 4 weeks, begin a liquid feed at 50 ppm N using 20-10-20 plus minor elements. Apply the liquid feed at every third irrigation. Salt accumulation from overuse of fertilizer can lead to leaf tip burn.
- Fertigation should stop once topknots begin to develop. Additional fertilizer during raceme development may lead to leaf tip burn.

## **Height control**

### **Height Control During Growth**

Cooler nighttime temperatures—below 60F (15.5C)—can help in the production of compact plants.

Low light intensities can promote plant stretching. Current research has shown some benefits from a pre-plant dip in a solution of paclobutrazol at 45 to 60 ppm for one hour. Allow bulbs to dry for 24 hours prior to planting.

This treatment may increase finishing time by 1 to 2 weeks. Contact your broker to keep informed on the latest research.

### **Post-Harvest Height Control**

Aloha Lily varieties have extended post-harvest shelf life. Plants will continue to grow on the shelf. If plants are to be marketed in low light conditions, use of a plant growth regulator drench to prevent stretching is recommended.

- Apply a single Bonzi (paclobutrazol) application at 7.5 to 10 ppm.
- Timed when “almond-sized” topknots are observed in leaf rosettes. **GT**

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