

Did you know . . .

The Easter Lily

Easter often evokes many memories in us...beautiful church services, fancy outfits, chocolate bunnies, egg hunts...and, of course, the Easter lily. Its beautiful trumpet-shaped flowers symbolize purity, hope, and life, the spiritual essence of Easter and promises of spring.

Louis Houghton, a World War I soldier, is most likely responsible for the popularity of the Bermuda lily better known as the Easter Lily. In 1919 he brought a suitcase full of hybrid lily bulbs to the southern coast of Oregon and gave them to family and friends to plant. The climate there was ideal for growing this lily, a native of the Ryukyu Islands of Japan. Despite a short sales window of only approximately two weeks each year, Easter Lilies are the fourth largest potted plant crop in the U.S., ranking among poinsettias, mums, and azaleas as America's favorite blooming plants.

One of the most famous Biblical references to the lily is in the Sermon on the Mount, when Christ said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Often called the "White-Robed Apostles of Hope," lilies are said to have been found growing in the Garden of Gethsemane after Christ's agony.

In early paintings, the Angel Gabriel is pictured extending a branch of pure white lilies to the Virgin Mary, announcing that she is to be the mother of the Christ Child. In other paintings, saints are pictured bringing vases full of white lilies to Mary and the infant Jesus. Tradition has it that when Eve left the Garden of Eden she shed real tears of repentance, and from those remorseful tears sprung up lilies. The spiritual principle held here is that true repentance is the beginning of beauty.

A mark of purity and grace throughout the ages, the regal white lily is a fitting symbol of the greater meaning of Easter. The flowers embody joy, hope and life. At Easter, Churches use the beautiful Easter lily to commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and hope of life everlasting.

Whether given as a gift or enjoyed in your own home, the Easter lily serves as a beautiful reminder that Easter is a time for rejoicing and celebrating. [Adapted from: April 11, 2017 Blog by Lani At Mayfield Florist]

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