



# calla



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Photos courtesy of Bay City Flower Co., Inc.

*Zantedeschia* spp.  
Calla, Arum lily, Pig lily, Trumpet lily

### BOTANICAL NAME

*Zantedeschia* spp. (zan-te-DES-kee-uh)

### COMMON NAMES

Calla and miniature calla (U.S.); Arum lily (primarily in the United Kingdom and Europe); Pig lily (in their native South Africa, where they're common roadside

plants); and Trumpet lily (a reminder of the archangel Gabriel and his trumpet)

### DESCRIPTION

Calla inflorescences consist of funnel-shaped spathes (actually colored petal-like leaves) that surround fleshy spikes, called spadices. The actual "flowers" are the tiny "bumps" on the spadices.

Callas' stems are smooth and leafless; however, the flowers rise above a base of leaves, which are either arrowhead shaped or lance shaped and either solid green or green/white speckled, depending on species and variety.

Standard callas have a head size of about 6 inches and stem lengths ranging from about 20 to 48 inches. Miniature callas' head sizes vary from about 3 to 5 inches, and stem lengths range from about 8 to 20 inches.

### COLORS

Standard callas are available in white, white/green variegated and blush pink. Miniature callas also are available in white as well as a wide range of pinks, reds, yellows, oranges, rusts, lavenders, purples and bicolors.

### DECORATIVE LIFE

Potted callas' flowers can last three to nine weeks, depending on variety, care and environment (see "In-store and Consumer Care"). Plants can be brought back into bloom in future seasons for several years although they become weaker every successive season (see "Repotting/Reblooming").

### AVAILABILITY

Calla plants are available year-round, but peak season is spring and summer.

## in-store and consumer care

**LIGHT** Potted callas require lots of bright, indirect light (protected from direct sun).

**WATER** While in bloom, these plants require constantly moist soil; however, do not allow pots to stand in water. Allow soil to dry almost completely while plants are dormant.

**TEMPERATURE** When blooming indoors, potted callas prefer temperatures ranging from 60 F to 75 F in winter and spring and from 70 F to 85 F in summer and fall.

**HUMIDITY** Calla plants prefer moderately humid environments.

**FERTILIZER** When they're actively growing and/or in bloom, feed potted callas every three weeks with a high-phosphorus plant food. Stop fertilizing after the plant has bloomed.

**SOIL** Any good quality potting soil that drains well is ideal for callas.

**GROOMING** Cut off flowers as they fade, and enjoy as a foliage plant for several more weeks, if desired.

**REPOTTING/REBLOOMING** Allow potted callas to go dormant after the first bloom cycle. Let the plants dry out until the leaves

wither, clip off the foliage and keep the pots very lightly moist in a cool (50 F), shady spot. Repot the tubers in late fall or winter (December through March), smooth side down, and coax them out of dormancy by gradually introducing them to higher temperatures, more water and brighter light.

## challenges

**PESTS** Watch closely for spider mites and aphids. Treat infested plants with insecticidal soap.

*Some information provided by:*  
Botanica, by R.J. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson  
Chain of Life Network®, [www.chainoffifenetwork.org](http://www.chainoffifenetwork.org)  
The Complete Houseplant Survival Manual,  
by Barbara Pleasant  
Dictionary of Plant Names, by Allen J. Coombes  
New Pronouncing Dictionary of Plant Names  
by Florists' Review  
Stern's Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners  
by William T. Stern



## fun facts

**WHAT'S IN A NAME** Some histories suggest that the genus name *Zantedeschia* was given in honor of Francesco Zantedeschi (1797-1873), an Italian botanist, priest, physicist and professor. Other records say the genus was named after Giovanni Zantedeschi (1773-1846), an Italian botanist and physician.

**FAMILY MATTERS** Despite their common names, callas are not related to lilies (*Lilium*); rather, they are members of the Araceae (arum) family, which includes *Anthurium*, *Caladium*, *Philodendron*, *Dieffenbachia* (dumb cane), *Spathiphyllum* (peace lily), *Aglaonema* (Chinese evergreen) and *Arisaema* (jack-in-the-pulpit).

**CALLA VERSUS CALLA** The *Zantedeschia* genus also is different from the genus *Calla*, which consists of a single species that grows in boggy areas and is commonly known as water arum, bog arum, wild calla or water-dragon.

**HOME SWEET HOME** Callas are native to South Africa. **sfr**

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