



calla



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Photos courtesy of CallaCo, a Division of Golden State Bulb Growers

Zantedeschia 'Flame'—Miniature calla

BOTANICAL NAME

Zantedeschia spp. (zan-te-DES-kee-a)

COMMON NAMES

Calla, Miniature calla, Calla lily, Arum, Arum lily, Pig lily, Trumpet lily

DESCRIPTION

These elegant flowers are made up of a long, funnel-shaped spathe that surrounds a yellow, fingerlike spadix. Glossy green leaves are often shaped like arrowheads and sometimes speckled with white. *Zantedeschias* grow from tubers and are perennials.

COLORS

Callas' hues include white, yellow, orange, pink, red, lavender, purple, black, green and bicolors. They tend to color different-

ly under varied growing conditions, so two flowers of the same variety may have slightly different coloration within a bunch or from planting to planting. Retailers should think in terms of a "color range" when ordering.

VASE LIFE

Callas last from four to eight days.

AVAILABILITY

Callas are available year-round from domestic and foreign sources.

SIZES

Standard callas have a head size up to about 6 inches and stem lengths ranging from 20 to 48 inches. Miniature callas' head sizes range from about 3 to 5 inches and stem lengths range from 8 to 32 inches.

vase-life extenders

PROCESSING Carefully remove callas from packaging to avoid bruising the flowers. Cut at least 1 inch from the bottoms of the stems—avoid removing all of the white stem end if possible—and place the flowers immediately into a clean container partially

filled with properly mixed flower-food solution. Callas do not benefit from the sugar in flower-food solutions, but they do benefit from the biocide. Leaving part of the white stem ends, the portion that was underground, helps with water uptake and vase



Zantedeschia 'Diva Maria'—Standard calla

life while reducing the chances of stem splitting or curling.

REFRIGERATION Store callas at 33 F to 35 F.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY Callas are not ethylene sensitive. Contrary to popular belief, callas do not produce significant quantities of ethylene and can be stored safely with other flowers, according to the **Society of American Florists' (SAF) Flower & Plant Care** manual.

WATER Check the nutrient solution level daily, and replenish as needed. Recut the stems every two or three days. **sfr**

Some information provided by:

Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson
CallaCo, a Division of Golden State Bulb Growers
www.callaco.com

Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifenet.org
Flower Council of Holland, www.flowercouncil.org
Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center
www.bulb.com

The Society of American Florists' (SAF)
Flower & Plant Care manual

Reach "Cut Flower of the Month" writer Amy Bauer at abauer@superfloralretailing.com.

fun facts

WHAT'S IN A NAME The genus is named for Italian botanist Francesco Zantedeschi, who wrote about Italian plants around 1825. The word "calla" is Greek for "beautiful."

FAMILY Callas are members of the *Araceae* (Arum) family. Relatives include *Anthurium*, *Caladium*, *Dieffenbachia*, peace lily (*Spathiphyllum*), Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema*), arrowhead (*Syngonium/Nephtytis*) and elephant's ear (*Alocasia*).

HOME SWEET HOME Callas are native to South Africa.

MISTAKEN MONIKERS Although often called "calla lilies," these flowers (*Zantedeschia/Araceae*) are not related to lilies (*Lilium/Liliaceae*). *Zantedeschias* also are not the same as the actual genus *Calla*, which consists of a single species of perennial that grows in boggy areas and is commonly known as the water arum or bog arum.

quality checklist

WHEN TO BUY Purchase flowers at the stage of openness desired for sale or use. If cut too tight, flowers may not open properly, if at all. Buy callas close to the time they are needed.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR Blooms should be free of spots, blemishes or splits, and the stems should not be soft or slimy. Note that flowers shipped dry may arrive a little limp, but they will revive after being recut and hydrated.

quick fixes

■ If callas' stems are curved and need to be straightened, wrap them loosely in newspaper, like tulips, and store them upright in a tall bucket, vase or container.

■ Often, the stem ends of callas will split and curl. To minimize this, wrap the stems near their ends with waterproof tape. To make splitting and curling less likely, don't cut off all of the white portion at the end of the stems.