

2027 EASTER LILY SCHEDULE

Weeks Before Easter	Date	Forcing method	
		Case-Cooled	Pot-Cooled (CTF)
		This schedule is designed to produce 16" lilies that bloom 1-week before Easter. Programming starts immediately but no later than 23 weeks before Easter. Prep for lily arrival and test soil. Inspect bulbs on arrival.	
23	Oct 18	Cool at 40-45°F for 6 weeks	Pot and allow roots to grow at 60-62°F for 3 weeks
20	Nov 8	---	Cool at 40-45°F for 6 weeks
17	Nov 29	For case cooled lilies, pot no later than 17 weeks before Easter Force in greenhouse at 60-62°F in pot.	---
14	Dec 20	Shoots start emerging ~0.5" tall and buds beginning to set. Start fertilizing and keep moist. For pot cooled lilies, begin greenhouse forcing no later than week 14. Maintain at 60-62°F in pot.	
13	Dec 27	1.25-1.5" tall. Keep lilies moist and use fungicide drench as needed.	
12	Jan. 3	2.25-2.5" tall. Run 60-62°F day/night during bud initiation. Check for bud set and begin leaf counting as soon as bud set is complete. Bud initiation coincides with stem root development.	
11	Jan 10	3-3.5" tall. Apply growth regulator as needed. Maintain temperature below 65°F until bud initiation is done.	
10	Jan 17	4-4.5" tall. Begin leaf counting and graphical tracking as soon as bud set is complete. Use temperature to control the rate of lily development for slow and advanced plants; use DIF to control height. ADT 65-70°F. Check for aphids and root problems.	
9	Jan 24	4.75-5.5" tall. Space lilies to avoid yellow leaves and stretching. Soil test and if leaf scorch is evident, use calcium nitrate (or 15-0-15) for balance of schedule otherwise maintain complete nutrition. Repeat leaf count on late batches of lilies.	
8	Jan 31	5.5-6.5" tall. Adjust temperatures as needed.	
7	Feb 7	6.5-7.5" tall. 42 days to sale. Buds can be felt. If buds are visible on early planting run 60°F until finish. Monitor for aphids and apply insecticide as needed.	
6	Feb 14	7.25-8.5" tall. Buds ~0.75". Lilies are about half final height. Buds should be visible no later than 30 days prior to sale. Grade for uniformity as buds become visible. Apply Fascination or Fresco if leaf yellowing is evident, or if cooling is anticipated.	
5	Feb 21	Lilies 9-10.25" tall. Buds 1.25" long.	
4	Feb 28	Lilies 10.5-12" tall. Buds 1.75-2" some bending down.	
3	Mar 7	Lilies 12-13.5" tall. Buds 2.75".	
2	Mar 14	Lilies 13.5-15.25" tall. Buds 4-4.25" long; some turning whitish. Stop fertilizing and apply clear water once before sale. Cool lilies at 35-45°F to hold. Apply Fascination or Fresco prior to cold storage.	
1	Mar 21	Final lily height 15-17" tall. Buds 6-6.25" long and at or near bloom. Shade lilies immediately after removing from storage. Use EthylBloc prior to shipping if needed. Ready to sell.	
0	Mar 28	Easter Sunday 2027	

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NOTES and COMMENTS ON THE 2027 EASTER LILY SCHEDULE

Easter 2027 Outlook: Easter falls on an early date in 2027 (**March 28**). This schedule allows enough time to complete the full 23-week program, however, there is little room for error.

Pot-cooled bulbs are normally potted and held for 3 weeks at 60-62°F before the six weeks of bulb cooling (at 40-45°F) begins. The bulbs then require 14 weeks of greenhouse forcing. This entire process requires 23 weeks from initial potting to Easter. This same process is used for both naturally cooled or pot-cooled (CTF) bulbs. Reduce the time the bulbs are held at 62°F if forcing time is limited.

Case-cooled bulbs require 6 weeks of cooling followed by 17 weeks of greenhouse forcing to flower in time for Easter. Be sure that commercially case-cooled bulbs arrive and are planted by Nov. 28nd 2026. If you cool your own bulbs, start as soon as the bulbs arrive, not later than Oct. 18th, 2026 (23 weeks before Easter). Grow the crop at warmer temperatures of 63-65°F until shoot emergence if bulbs arrive late.

Insurance Lighting: Insurance lighting may be needed this season to produce a long day photoperiod. The additional lighting can substitute for inadequate bulb cooling. Provide 1 day of insurance lighting for each day of lost cooling. Everyone should be able to complete the full 6 weeks (1000 hours) of bulb cooling before the designated greenhouse forcing date.

Fertigation: Start fertilizing using a 15-0-15 formulation when lilies emerge and continue to within 7 days of sale. If phosphorus was not added to the medium, 20-10-20 can be used on an alternating basis with a 15-0-15. Fertilizer rates should range from 200-250 ppm. Do not allow medium EC to exceed 3-3.5 mS/cm based on a Saturated Media Extract. Stop fertilizing just before sale. Provide one clear watering before shipping lilies to reduce salt levels and maximize shelf life. Do not withhold water or fertilizer to slow development but avoid over watering (i.e. water too frequently) or root rot problems may occur.

Lily Timing: Monitor lily development each week (use leaf counting to accurately gauge crop timing). Adjust temperature to keep plants on schedule. Use average daily temperatures of 70-75°F to speed development, use temperatures of 55-60°F to slow development.

Bud Initiation: Run 60-62°F day and night during bud initiation. **The final critical date is Feb 14th. This marks 6 weeks before Easter.** To maintain a normal schedule, you should be at visible bud by this date.

Decrease Leaf Yellowing and Delay Flower Senescence: To prevent early-season leaf yellowing (7 to 10 days before visible bud) and mid-season leaf yellowing (7 to 10 days after visible bud) spray Fascination or Fresco at 10/10 ppm. Apply only to lower leaves and cover thoroughly. To prevent late-season leaf yellowing and post-harvest flower senescence, thoroughly cover all foliage and buds with spray at 100/100 ppm to thoroughly cover all foliage and buds. Apply when buds are 3 to 3 ½" long BUT NOT MORE than 14 days before shipping or cooling. This protects leaves from yellowing for up to 14 days. Note: Avoid direct contact of spray to immature leaves during early- and mid-season applications or increased stem stretch will result.

Disease and Pest Control: Before planting, clean bulbs of debris by removing any damaged scales or scales that show evidence of infection. Once potted, root and stem rots associated with *Rhizoctonia*, *Fusarium*, and *Pythium* are a concern. Bulbs can be dipped on arrival. Drench immediately with Banrot, or a broad-spectrum tank mix of compatible fungicides. You can also treat to control these diseases separately by selecting from the fungicides specifically registered for *Rhizoctonia*, *Fusarium* and *Pythium* control on lily. Materials registered for *Rhizoctonia* stem and root rot and/or *Fusarium* root rot include 3336, OHP 6672, Chipco 26019, Heritage, Mural, Pageant Intrinsic, Postiva, Spirato, and Terraclor. Materials registered for controlling *Pythium* include Alude, Banol, Subdue Maxx (beware of using mefenoxam exclusively because of widespread fungicide resistance issues with this active ingredient), Segway O, and Truban/Banrot. Check with manufacturers regarding compatibility when tank mixing fungicides. Re-apply fungicides later in the crop as needed, check labels for guidance. Preventative biological fungicides include RootShield, Rootshield Plus, Cease, Actinovate, Mycostop, Companion, Lalstop, and Triathlon BA may be applied at planting for disease suppression. Check with company or product label information for safe time intervals between application of biological and chemical fungicides.

Aphids, fungus gnats and bulb mites are a major concern. Many chemicals are listed for aphid control, including Safari, Flagship, Altus, Tristar, Enstar AQ, Kontos, Endeavor, Aria, Mainspring GNL, Pradia, Rycar, Ventigra and XXpire. Fungus gnats can be controlled with some of these same chemicals as well as Citation, Distance, Adept, Azatin, Pylon, insect parasitic nematodes (Nemasys, NemaShield, Entonem) and Gnatrol WDG. Bulb mites, *Rhizoglyphus robini*, represent one of the more troublesome insect pests on lilies and effective management requires an integrated approach. Bulb mites are a secondary pest commonly associated with decay caused by fungus gnat damage and soil-borne fungal pathogens. Note: Registration of pesticides varies by state so consult and follow labels for registered use. To avoid any potential phytotoxicity or residue problems, spot test before widespread use.

Controlling Lily Height: Monitor lily height regularly during forcing. If height exceeds the target size, run negative DIF or use a growth retardant such as A-Rest, or Sumagic (thorough coverage needed) to slow stem elongation. If height is less than the target size, run positive DIF or use a gibberellin PRG such as Fascination or Fresco to increase stem elongation. Split applications of PGRs provide the best results. You can apply any of the PGRs at ½ to ¼ the normal rate (or even less) and use multiple applications as needed. Reduce the concentrations of Sumagic used when combined with DIF. Use DIF, or cool morning DIP, to control lily height. Equal day/night temperatures, high night/low day temperatures or a cool morning temperature dip will produce a DIF effect and keep lilies short.

Lily Storage: Lilies can be stored for up to 14 days in the dark at 35-45°F when buds turn white but before they open. Spray for Botrytis control prior to moving lilies to cold storage. Fungicides labeled for *Botrytis* include Affirm, Astun, Disarm, Decree, Medallion, Pageant, and Postiva. Always follow label instructions. Test fungicides on a small group of lilies for damage to or residue on lily buds before using on the entire crop. Water Easter lilies thoroughly before starting cold storage. After removing from the cooler, place lilies in a shady location to avoid excessive wilting.

Please read the pesticide label prior to use. All pesticides listed are registered for suggested uses in accordance with federal and Connecticut state laws and regulations as of the date of printing. Trade names used herein are for convenience only; no endorsement of products is intended, nor is criticism of unnamed products implied. Registration of pesticides varies by state so consult and follow labels for registered use. To avoid any potential phytotoxicity or residue problems, spot test before widespread use.

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