



# Kathy's Garden: Seducing the Tempting Lily

Somewhere Confucius said (we garden writers are allowed to quote whomever we please) that the words of friends meeting at last after long difficulties & separation are as sweet & strong as the fragrance of wild orchids. I haven't wild orchids in bloom in my Piercy gardens now, but the lilies will do as a momentary & evocative substitute. The Asiatic lilies in their sunset colors are a faithfully returning pleasure, but it is the huge Oriental lilies that perfume the midsummer air. Like any obsessed

lover I keep repeating the name of my favorite in conversations, letters, & these columns: *Casa Blanca* is the one lily to plant if you only plant one. Pure white, up to ten inches in diameter, flocked with beguiling white dots like dotted swiss fabric, *Casa Blanca* is the star of the midsummer garden whether it is in shade or sun.

For so seeming frail a plant it is relatively easy to care for. **Plant the bulbs in autumn** or spring, depending upon when you manage to get them. If your soil is passably fertile & well drained & if you haven't lots of hungry gophers you will have blooms out of an Edwardian fantasy for years to come, wafting a sweetly poignant fragrance through the evening air.

You can grow pink & rose speckled & banded Oriental lilies as well. They are all spectacularly & deeply scented; one blossom on any of them perfumes my entire cabin. Indeed, in closed rooms the perfume of lilies can be, I think, almost too much of a good thing. But in the garden or along the forest paths the scent comes on the wind, mingled with the hot, slightly bitter fragrance of the fir trees; just seductive enough to make your mind wander to thoughts of temptation foregone and temptations yet to come.

**Star Jasmine** is another of the sultry midsummer performers. I have a wonderful specimen happily clambering up the east wall of my cabin, my

earliest romantic attempt to produce a vine covered cottage in the midst of the weeds. I planted red roses near the jasmine along the same wall. In a few years I realized that although theoretically that wall gets morning sunlight, in fact the big fir trees block most of the light. I moved the roses to a sunnier spot where they are living happily ever after, but I left the jasmine for its glossy leaves. It has never bloomed for me. When I crave the scent of jasmine all I need do is walk towards the north end of Garberville where the bank of happy star jasmine bakes in the sunlight near the Humboldt House Inn. This time of year you can smell the jasmine about two blocks away. If you'd like your own sweet constellations plant jasmine this fall. Your local nursery should have plants in pots. *Trachelosperum* is the official Latin, for, actually, star jasmine is not a true jasmine at all. It doesn't matter, does it? If you want a fragrant jasmine that is botanically recognized as such, two good ones are *Jasminum officinale*, poet's jasmine, and *Jasminum grandiflorum*, Spanish jasmine. Both have airy, fragrant white summer blooming flowers.

Honeysuckle is another plant eager to perfume the summer nights. Japanese honeysuckle, particularly the type called Hall's honeysuckle, *Lonicera japonica halliana*, is notorious for its ability to swallow entire buildings in a single bound; I think the fragrant flowers are worth it but I grow Goldflame honeysuckle instead (*L. heckrottii*, the profreader's bane). It is a more restrained but equally fragrant vine with coral & yellow blossoms that meanders happily through the blackcaps at the edge of my garden.

Having a little summer gazebo grown over with star jasmine & honeysuckle, surrounded by white lilies. The perfect spot for journey's end an over's meeting, don't you think?

~ Kathy Epling



## The Apple Loft

We have divided you, strung you to repetitions, mirror within mirror. You curl to your heart like the starfish, skin leathering the cut.

In four days we will take you from the rafters. You will touch yourself through the old scars, seeds like sharp tears.

They have fallen away. You are light; dry as ash. We seal only sweetness in our jars.

Kathy Epling

## My Mind is

my mind is no domestic flapping sheets, lightning to my inner sky, still

the house covers us like habit, or a paper mask with holes for seeing

who we are. become a juggler, love, awkward at the china

roses, breaking our rote to riddles; crazy sky pieces –

Kathy Epling

## Change of Address

I am living in the skin of a forest; through all my doors the trees shake their green heads like ghosts

at each step the eyes of the oak stare open, watching my feet; windows run their rivered sand

like smoke. Someday, I believe wild birds will fly from my pillows the heartwood crack, the stones roll home

Kathy Epling



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