

# Agapanthus orientalis Agapanthus, African Lily, Lily of the Nile<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Clusters of large, blue, funnel-shaped flowers appear atop long stalks in summer and early fall, rising above the coarse, strap-like, green leaves. Flowers make a wonderful display in mass plantings. They can also be used as accents in a small garden or by the patio.



Figure 1. Full form—*Agapanthus orientalis*: agapanthus, African lily, lily of the Nile.

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Flower—*Agapanthus orientalis*: agapanthus, African lily, lily of the Nile.

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## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Agapanthus orientalis*

**Pronunciation:** ag-uh-PANTH-us or-ee-en-TAY-liss

**Common name(s):** Agapanthus, African lily, lily of the Nile

**Family:** *Amaryllidaceae*

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Figure 3)

**Planting month for zone 9:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year-round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

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**Uses:** mass planting; container or above-ground planter; groundcover; accent; edging; attracts hummingbirds; suitable for growing indoors

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** blue; lavender; purple

**Flower characteristic:** summer-flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** no fruit

**Fruit length:** no fruit

**Fruit cover:** no fruit

**Fruit color:** no fruit

**Fruit characteristic:** no fruit

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:**

**Soil salt tolerance:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Growing in full sun or partial shade, *Agapanthus* is usually left undisturbed for several years and will form a large clump, making an attractive groundcover or accent plant. *Agapanthus* prefers moist, organic soil conditions but can endure drought once established. Plant about 18 to 24 inches apart for a thick groundcover effect.

Available cultivars include: 'Albus,' white flowers; 'Flore Pleno,' double flowers; 'Variegatus,' with striped leaves; and 'Nanus,' a dwarf, compact form.

Propagation is by division or seed.

Disease-resistant selections are available for humid climates.

Problems include chewing insects, maggots, and borers.

## Design Considerations

The strap-like leaves and large blue flowers of the agapanthus make it perfect for highly visible spaces in the landscape. Use with plants that are softer with small foliage and mounding or spreading forms. Dark green and/or burgundy foliage in the companion plants will highlight the clusters of blue flowers and soft green of the leaves. New agapanthus cultivars also have white, dark blue, and violet-blue flowers. When pairing with other flowering plants use white, and warm colors such as pinks and corals and soft

yellows and light orange with the blue-flowered agapanthus. The white-flowered variety can be used with any other color to brighten the space.

## **Pests and Diseases**

Botrytis can devastate a planting, especially in humid climates in the eastern US. Try the disease-resistant selections in the East.