

Zephyranthes spp. Rain Lily¹

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Introduction

These dainty, funnel-shaped blooms pop up seemingly overnight after a heavy rain when grown in the wild, appearing in various shades of white, yellow, pink, rose, red, or orange (Fig. 1). In cultivation, rain lily will flower throughout the year if kept alternately wet and dry with the majority of blooms produced in late summer or early fall. The narrow, grasslike foliage blends in well in rock gardens, borders, or it can be used in containers.

General Information

Scientific name: *Zephyranthes spp.*

Pronunciation: zeff-fer-RANTH-eez species

Common name(s): rain lily

Family: *Amaryllidaceae*

Plant type: bulb/tuber; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 11 (Fig. 2)

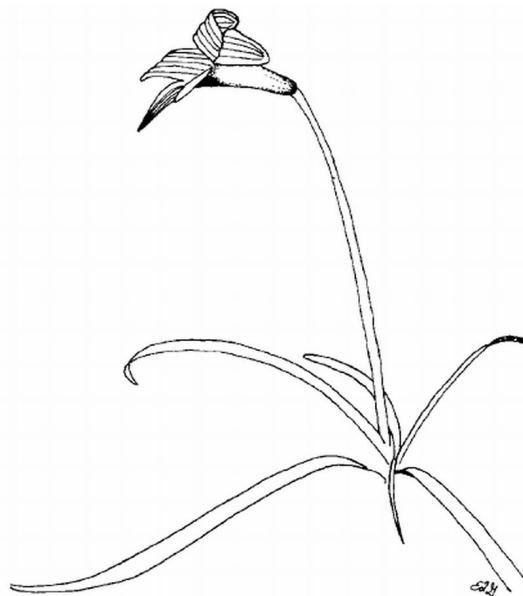


Figure 1. Rain lily

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

1. This document is FPS-621, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date October, 1999. Reviewed May, 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: naturalizing; edging

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: .5 to 1 feet

Spread: .5 to 1 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches; 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: orange; pink; red; yellow; white; rose

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

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; clay; sand; acidic; loam; slightly alkaline

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Growing in full sun or partial shade, rain lily is tolerant of various soils and is moderately salt-tolerant. Bulbs can be left in the ground over winter if they are mulched heavily, or they can be lifted and replanted in the spring.

Zephyranthes candida has dainty, white, late-summer to spring blooms; *Zephyranthes rosea* has rose-pin blooms in late summer; and *Zephyranthes sulphurea* has soft yellow, mid-summer blooms.

Propagation is by seed or division.

Problems include maggots and chewing insects.

Pests and Diseases

Botrytis may be a problem.