

Agreeable Agapanthus, Love Flower

by Yolanda Wilson

The name *Agapanthus* is derived from the Greek agape, meaning love, and anthos, meaning flower; thus, *Agapanthus* is sometimes called "Love Flower." Although *Agapanthus* is originally from South Africa, the fact that it is sometimes called "Lily of the Nile" suggests that *Agapanthus* was traded beyond its original territory. It is also called "African Lily."

Most Northwest gardeners associate *Agapanthus* with California because it grows abundantly there, blooming in the spring. In the Pacific Northwest *Agapanthus* goes dormant in the winter, and slowly come alive, blooming from July to October and multiplying steadily. I started three in a clump three years ago and when I dug them out last fall, came up with about twenty starts.



Until I saw how blue *Agapanthus* flowers attract hummingbirds, I used to think hummingbirds sought out only the red-flowering plants in the garden. Blue-flowering plants certainly come in second. In addition to light and dark blue, agapanthus blooms can be purple, white, or white with purple.



Agapanthus needs a place where it can bathe in sunlight and have good drainage. It can survive 10 degrees if it is dry. I have not lost *Agapanthus* planted in hot sunny spots but I bring those in containers indoors during winter to be safe.

Agapanthus gets crowded in 5 to 7 years, in which case it can be dug up any time of year. Make sure that each division has both an eye and some roots. Replant promptly, three inches deep, in good soil amended with compost, orienting the pointed side of the bulb up.

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