

# Eucomis Aloha Lily Series

DEMAND FOR THIS SPECTACULAR PLANT IS ON THE RISE. NEW VARIETIES CONTINUE TO EXCITE GROWERS, RETAILERS AND CONSUMERS ALIKE.

By Neil Meshorer

**A**loha Lilies continue to be an exciting collection of eucomis species hybrids from Golden State Bulb Growers (GSBG) as mentioned in the August 2012 edition of *GPN*. GSBG's extensive breeding and hybridization program is turning out some exciting new varieties to its Aloha Lily line, which were recently shown at OFA Short Course in Columbus, Ohio.

'Aloha Lily Leia' was the first variety offered in commercial release from this developing series. Leia is a multi-flowering magenta beauty with a pleasant fragrance, naturally compact foliage and impressive indoor postharvest shelf life. GSBS's Aloha Lilies were developed to produce increased bloom count, brighter color and improved fragrance as compared to the species types.

## Variety Information

New complementary forms and colors coming down the pike include Nani, Maui, Kona and Tiki. Nani has beautiful soft pink flowers that are very pleasing to the eye and willingly offer a sweet, tropical fragrance. Maui puts out multiple spikes of striking pure white flowers that pop in the evening shade. Kona offers a wonderful array of complimentary darker burgundy-colored flower spikes. Tiki is another burgundy variety and looks very tropical with its leopard-like spotted leaves. The series' low input requirements and high profit margins are a winning combination. Just like Leia, these new varieties provide an extended show of color across three stages as colorful buds open into blooms, from which attractive berries develop.

Aloha Lilies are grown from true bulbs that produce large rosettes of lancelet leaves. Flowers are



*Aloha Lily eucomis are robust growers that produce high bloom count, bright color and improved fragrance.*

born on strong, erect stems that carry a dense raceme of star-shaped flowers. A tuft-like "crown" tops the stems giving them a "pineapple-like" appearance.

## Communication is Key

When planning your crop and ordering your bulbs, it is critical to let your broker know your plans for the finished product. Target size, bloom date and purpose are all important in procuring the right bulb for your needs. Over the last 10 years,

GSBG has developed scientific techniques that it uses to fill orders according to the specific needs of a customer. Bulbs will respond differently depending on harvest date, temperatures, length of storage and other important variables.

Aloha Lilies are not sensitive to photoperiod, nor do they require PGR treatments to induce bloom. Recently, our top breeders have perfected a way to produce bulbs that can produce flowering plants throughout the year. Eucomis are no longer limited to summer production. Golden State Bulb Growers with its proprietary techniques is able to offer bulbs throughout various times of the year. That means retailers are able to offer eucomis to the consumer for spring holidays starting this shipping season.

## Growing Aloha Lily

Finished Aloha Lily plants can be enjoyed indoors or outdoors, and with a blooming shelf life of six to eight weeks they are an excellent choice for retailers. There has been increasing popularity for the crop as a potted plant. Aloha Lilies perform quite well in containers and are a superb choice to be used as a focal point or as accent plantings. Additionally, Aloha Lilies perform very well in the landscape and are capable of returning year after year.

Growers who have not grown Aloha Lilies before should request samples and learn how this crop performs in their location. Working with experienced brokers who are able to assist growers with their individual needs and requirements is recommended. Depending on the time of year and weather conditions, Aloha Lilies will take an average of 13 to 16 weeks to reach marketing stage from the time of planting. When estimating sales/shipping readiness of flowering pots, consider that when flower buds



just become visible deep in the rosettes of leaves, 85 to 95 percent should be ready in four to six weeks. Keep in mind that Aloha Lilies prefer deep, well-draining soil and a pH of 5.5-6.5. Aloha Lilies withstand a wide range of light conditions. Although the plants

can grow and flower in partial shade, high light levels promote naturally compact and durable growth. The use of shade cloth is recommended when grown outdoors where temperatures are expected to regularly exceed 85° F; 30 percent shade is generally ideal for

this purpose. Under lower light conditions, PGRs may be necessary to promote compact growth.

Aloha Lilies are robust growers that tolerate a wide range of temperatures, even handling high heat when paired with ample humidity. Optimum temperatures for plant growth and flowering are achieved with daytime at 60 to 85° F maximum and with nights at 40 to 60° F. Aloha Lilies are somewhat tolerant to brief and light frosts, however foliage will not withstand prolonged freezing temperatures. Bulbs planted in the landscape regularly overwinter in areas as cold as Zone 6, with reports of bulbs re-growing in Zone 5 when planted deep and mulched. Aloha Lilies benefit from moderate to high relative humidity. Note that air movement is important in enclosed conditions to prevent overly soft growth.

Aloha Lilies are low to moderate feeders. Too much fertilizer can result in stretched plants and/or slight leaf tip burn. A 30 day release pre-plant charge of nitrogen and potassium (containing little or no phosphorous) can be incorporated into the media. This will produce good early establishment of roots and improved early vigor. While it is unnecessary to apply PGRs during growth period when proper cultural practices are followed, it has been proven that a post-harvest Bonzi treatment will enhance shelf life and prevent stretching when plants are displayed indoors. Detailed cultural information from GSBG can be provided along with your order.

Aloha Lilies are naturally resistant to most soil borne diseases. If occasional root issues are observed, preventative fungal drenches, particularly for Pythium, have proven to be beneficial. They are naturally deer resistant, and will tolerate some neglect. Aloha Lilies have also been bred to be resistant to most common greenhouse insects.

Aloha Lily plants are low input, naturally dwarf, floriferous, fragrant, long lasting, pest-resistant and tropical in appearance: a winning combination for growers, retailers and consumers alike! ☺

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