**Agapanthus orientalis**

Edward F. Gilman

**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 (Fig. 1). Flowers make a wonderful display in mass plantings. They can also be used as accents in a small garden or by the patio.

**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 (Fig. 2)

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

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

**Origin:** not native to North America

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

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

**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

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**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

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**Culture**

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

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

**Drought tolerance:**

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 inches

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**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

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

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

**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 ground cover 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.

Pests and Diseases

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