



Photos: Bay City Flower Company, Inc.

Miniature callas  
(*Zantedeschia New Zealand hybrids*)

### BOTANICAL NAME

*Zantedeschia* spp. (zan-te-DES-kee-uh)

### COMMON NAMES

- Calla and miniature calla (U.S.)
- Arum lily (primarily in the United Kingdom and Europe)
- Pig lily (in their native South Africa, where they're common roadside plants)

- Trumpet lily (a reminder of the archangel Gabriel and his trumpet)  
(For more information on common names, see "Fun Facts: Mistaken Monikers," Page 18.)

### DESCRIPTION

Calla inflorescences consist of funnel-shaped and recurved spathes (actually colored petal-like leaves) that surround fleshy fingerlike spikes, called spadices (singular: spadix).

Standard calla (*Z. aethiopica*) inflorescences vary from 5 to 10 inches in length, and stem lengths usually range from about 20 to 36 inches although they can grow as long as 48 inches. Miniature calla (New Zealand hybrids) inflorescences vary from about 3 to 5 inches, and stem lengths generally range from about 8 to 20 inches.

Calla stems are smooth and leafless; however, the flowers rise above a base of leaves, which are either arrowhead shaped or lance shaped and either solid

green or green/white speckled, depending on species and variety.

### COLORS

Standard callas are available in white, white-and-green variegated, and blush lavender/pink. Miniature callas also are available in white as well as a wide spectrum of lavenders, purples, pinks, "reds," oranges, bronzes, rusts, yellows, "browns" (deep brownish burgundy), "blacks" (deep reddish purple) and bicolors.

### DECORATIVE LIFE

Potted calla's flowers can last three to nine weeks, depending on variety, care and environment (see "In-store and Consumer Care," below left). Plants can be brought back into bloom in future seasons for several years although they become weaker every successive season (see "Repotting/Reblooming," below left).

### AVAILABILITY

Calla plants are available year-round, but peak season is spring and summer.

## in-store and consumer care

**LIGHT** Potted callas require lots of bright, indirect light (protected from direct sun).

**WATER** While in bloom, these plants require constantly moist soil; however, do not allow pots to stand in water. Allow soil to dry almost completely while plants are dormant.

**TEMPERATURE** When blooming indoors, potted callas prefer temperatures ranging from 60 F to 70 F in winter and spring and from 65 F to 75 F in summer and fall.

**HUMIDITY** Calla plants prefer moderately humid environments.

**FERTILIZER** Plant food is generally not required for potted callas at the retailer and consumer levels. Feed plants only during their regrowth stage, with a high-phosphorus plant food.

**GROOMING** Cut off flowers as they fade, and enjoy as a foliage plant for several more weeks, if desired.

**REPOTTING / REBLOOMING** Allow potted callas to go dormant after the first bloom



cycle. Let the plants dry out until the leaves wither, clip off the foliage and keep the pots very lightly moist in a cool (50 F), shady spot. Repot the tubers in late fall or winter (December through March) in well-draining soil, smooth side down, and coax them out of dormancy by gradually introducing them to higher temperatures, more water and brighter light.

## challenges

**PESTS** Watch closely for spider mites and aphids. Treat infested plants with insecticidal soap.

## fun facts

(See "Cut Flower of the Month" on Pages 18-19.)

## purchasing advice

- Select plants that look full and vigorous and have plenty of dark green leaves; avoid those with yellow or skimpy foliage.
- For longest life at the consumer level, choose plants that have some flowers and many buds but are not in full bloom. **sfr**

Some information provided by:  
 Bay City Flower Company, Inc.  
 Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson  
 Chain of Life Network®, [www.chainoflife.org](http://www.chainoflife.org)  
 Complete Houseplant Survival Manual, The, by Barbara Pleasant  
 Houseplant Encyclopedia, The, by Ingrid Jantra and Ursula Krüger  
 Stearn's Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners, by William T. Stearn