

## LANDSCAPE RESULTS OF SEVERAL CANNA LILY CULTIVARS

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Canna lilies (*Canna x generalis*) have been a common sight in southern gardens for decades. The diversity of flower colors, leaf colors and plant height has made this tropical plant a welcome grower in southern hot humid climates. They are related to bananas and gingers, and their wide furled leaves come out of thick, multi-eyed rhizomes. The tropical shot (*Canna indica*) was hybridized and backcrossed with other *Canna* species, including the North American native golden canna (*Canna. flaccida*). These hybrids have been known a *Canna x generalis* for many years. They have been crossed too, and their distinction are now largely lost or forgotten. Nowadays there are hundreds of named cultivars ranging in height from 2' to over 8', in colors from cream to bright reds and with leaf colors of light green to purple.

Cannas are fairly easy to grow, performing well in USDA hardiness zones 8-12. They prefer full sun but will grow in partial shade. They thrive in moist soil and will even do well in boggy soil. They are easily propagated by dividing pieces of the rhizomes.

Thirteen *Canna* cultivars were planted and observed at the Southeastern Louisiana University Horticulture Center in Hammond, Louisiana. Bulbs were planted directly outdoors in a raised irrigated pine bark amended bed in full sunlight on March 12, 2004. All plants were evaluated for flowering date, height and overall appearance.

Short cultivars (2' or under in height) included Firebird, Wyoming Dwarf and Lucifer. Firebird plants produces crimson-red flowers and forest green foliage. Wyoming Dwarf plants produces large, brilliant orange flowers on 30 inch dark bronze red foliage. Lucifer plants produces scarlet flowers outlined in gold on green foliage with red edges.

Intermediate short cultivars (3' to 4' in height) included Salmon Pink, The President, King Gold, Cleopatra, City of Portland and Miss Oklahoma. Salmon Pink plants produced salmon pink gold streaked petals in a huge flower on 3' stalk. Rich yellow flowers were produced on the 4' King Gold plants. City of Portland plants have coral-pink blooms on a 3' plant. Hugh watermelon pink flowers are produced on Miss Oklahoma plants.

Intermediate tall cultivars (5' to 6' in height) included Tropicana, Conestoga and Bengal Tiger. Tropicana's brilliant striped foliage produces an orange flower. Conestoga produces a profuse bloom of lemon yellow flowers on a 5' to 6' plant and Bengal Tiger produces a deep orange flower on yellow and green foliage plants.

Red King Humbert One, a tall cultivar over 6' in height, was also planted. This giant cultivar produces orange-scarlet flowers.

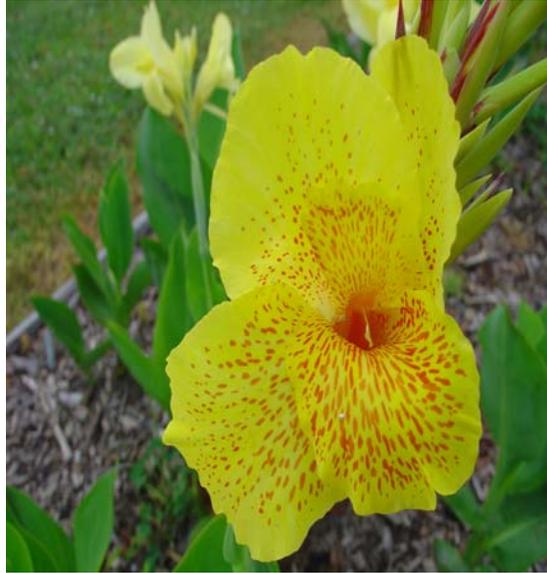
The earliest flowering cultivars were Conestoga and Cleopatra, requiring just 73 and 75 days respectively from planting to produce their first flower. These cultivars, also, were very consistent in producing flowers blooming all the way through the end of the observation period. In contrast, the last flowering cultivars were King Gold, Lucifer and Bengal Tiger took the longest, requiring over 120 days to first bloom. Table I shows all the cultivars, days to first flower and height at first flower.

**Table I: Days from planting to flower and height to first bloom of Thirteen *Canna* cultivars**

Cultivar	Days to Flower	Height at First Flower
Conestoga	73	18"
Cleopatra	75	20"
Firebird	83	22"
Miss Oklahoma	84	16"
City of Portland	90	24"
Red King Humbert	92	30"
Tropicana	97	17"
The President	103	14"
Salmon Pink	115	14"
Wyoming Dwarf	117	16"
King Gold	120	16"
Lucifer	121	25"
Bengal Tiger	122	26"

All cultivars did very well in the evaluation. Home gardeners would be advised to pick cultivars by leaf color, flower and height. Cannas do very well in mass plantings so choosing several cultivars to spread flowering dates would be advantageous. Also, removal of the spent flower head will allow plant to produce more flowers throughout the summer.

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**“Cleopatra”**



**“Conestoga”**