

Belamcanda chinensis Blackberry Lily¹

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Introduction

A beautiful, upright grass-like herbaceous perennial related to the irises, blackberry lily has strap-like leaves to 18 inches long borne on short, upright stems no more than about 2 feet long (Fig. 1). Throughout the warm months, bright orange-yellow flowers are produced at the top of the canopy and fill the landscape with warm color. Individual flowers last a day or two but new ones come out the next day during the bloom period. Fruit pods split and curl, revealing clusters of black seeds, hence the common name. Plants die back in the winter months only to emerge again in the spring.



Figure 1. Blackberry lily.

General Information

Scientific name: *Belamcanda chinensis*

Pronunciation: bel-am-KAN-duh chin-NEN-sis

Common name(s): blackberry lily, leopard flower

Family: Iridaceae

Plant type: perennial; bulb/tuber

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 10A (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: foundation; cut flowers; mass planting

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

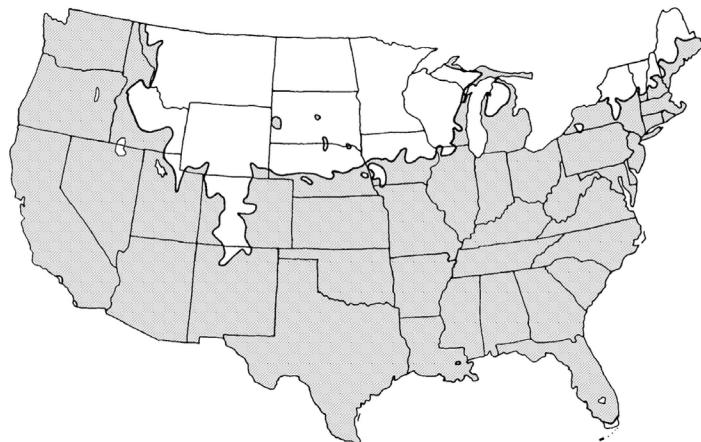


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: 2 to 4 feet

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Plant habit: upright

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: not applicable

Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; spring flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Blackberry lily makes an outstanding addition to any landscape. It makes a nice accent plant in a shrub border, and can stand alone in a low, ground-hugging ground cover. Plant it along a walk or in a mass near an entry way to attract attention. A large number of blackberry lilies massed in a landscape bed can make a dramatic impact on a landscape design.

Although flower production is best in full sun, one outstanding feature of the plant is its ability to produce abundant flowers in partial shade. Space adjacent plants about 3 feet apart to form a dense grouping. Several light fertilizations during the year will help growth and flowering.

A hybrid, *x Pardancanda*, usually called candy lily or leopard lily, has yellow, purple, rose, or white flowers.

Pests and Diseases

Crown rot can kill plants if the soil remains too wet. Scorch causes the upper parts of leaves to brown and wither in the summer in the full sun without adequate soil moisture supply.