Growing Martagon Lilies by Gene Fox, Past President North American Lily Society

If you have never grown a martagon species or martagon hybrid lily before, you may be in for a surprise. Clumps of martagos have been known to exist in one site for over 100 years. So, once happily established, they can be problem-free for a lifetime. Some other facts:

1. Martagos cost much more than Asiatic, Trumpet or oriental lilies. It takes an average of seven years to grow one from seed. It takes about four years to grow a saleable bulb from bulblets.
2. Martagos need a shady “home” with filtered sunlight or a site with only a couple of hours of full sun. Complete, heavy shade is not suitable. Remember to mulch the first year.
3. Bulbs should be planted within about 4 inches of soil over the top of them. Add well-rotted manure or compost to the soil when planting.
4. Martagos may take 1 to 2 years to adjust to their new site after transplanting.
   - The first year:
     A. They may grow weakly or only 1-2 feet tall and only have 2-3 blooms.
     B. They may start to grow, then abruptly turn brown, the tops will die back.
     C. They may not appear above the ground AT ALL the first year.

The above possibilities are normal for martagos. The bulbs will send up a fairly normal flower stalk in year two. The thing to do is to leave the bulbs alone for year one. Few people can do that. They dig up the bulb to see if it is doing all right. Digging it up sets it back another year, or may even kill it.

**MARTAGON BULBS MUST BE LEFT ALONE DURING YEAR ONE AFTER TRANSPLANTING!**

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