

Blackberry Lily Botanical Name: *Iris domestica* formerly *Belamcanda chinensis*



Photo by & grown by: John Brandauer

Description: Blackberry Lily, has a deceptive name. It is actually not a lily but a member of the iris family. The foliage is sword-like, similar to an iris, and matures to 3' tall. In the heat of the summer, this perennial has deep orange tropical flowers with red spots. Though the individual flowers are small, each stem produces many flowers. The name Blackberry Lily is actually in recognition of the cluster of black seeds. The seedpods can be left in the garden for more plants or cut and used in floral arrangements. In addition to propagating plants by seed, mature clumps of Blackberry Lily can be divided and shared with others. Although non native, they are heirlooms, Thomas Jefferson grew these in his garden at Monticello, in 1807, there descendants persist.

Common Name: Blackberry, Leopard or Candy Lily **Family:** Iridaceae

Growth Rate: Fast

Soil Preference: Well drained. zones 4-10

Light Requirements: Full sun to partial shade.

Pests and diseases: prone to crown rot, if kept wet.

Care: Easy. Tolerates drought and poor soils. Maybe some bone meal in the spring. I do not.

Size: 2 –3 feet high, perhaps taller in moist soil.

Native habitat: native to China and Japan.

Blooms: Orange, with red spots, mid summer to early fall (cultivars exist in yellow, which we have, and purportedly red, which I am seeking)

Propagation Methods: By dividing the root ball, from seed; (stratify, slow germination) Seedlings may bloom their first year.

Dangers: Seed is poisonous if ingested. Parts of plant are poisonous if ingested.

Wildlife Benefit: Nectar, pollen, seeds may be eaten by birds.

Invasiveness: Has escaped cultivation, but minimally invasive.

Information compiled from the web, supplemented by our experiences.

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