'Starburst Sensation' Lily

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Lilies (*Lilium* L. Liliaceae) are a popular garden herbaceous perennial throughout temperate and subtropical regions of the world. The species of the genus *Lilium* are classified botanically into seven sections (Comber, 1949), while the various types of cultivated lilies are divided into nine horticultural divisions (Royal Horticultural Society, 1964). Cultivars of the Aurelian and Oriental horticultural divisions constitute a large portion of cultivated lilies. Aurelian hybrids are considered quite reliable plants for northern gardens; however, most Oriental lilies are late-flowering and fail to mature in the northern zones.

The objective of the lily breeding program at the Morden Research Station is to incorporate the disease resistance, hardiness, early flowering, and the yellow to yellow-orange flower color of the Aurelian division with the large, red-purple flowers of the Oriental division. There are few existing hybrids between these two sections due to intersectional breeding incompatibilities (W.G. Ronald, unpublished data). 'Starburst Sensation' is a new lily obtained by embryo rescue culture following a wide cross between the Aurelian and Oriental divisions.

Origin and description

'Starburst Sensation' originated from a cross made in 1975 between an Aurelian trumpet lily hybrid *L.* x 'Damson' *L. leucanthum* (Bak.) (section 6, *Leucolirion*) (Comber, 1949) and an oriental cultivar *L. speciosum* Thunb. x 'Tornado' (section 4, *Archelirion*) (Comber, 1949). The original plant was obtained by embryo rescue. 'Starburst Sensation' was released in 1985 (selection no. RSM 75-9-8) as breeding germplasm (Ronald and Collicutt, 1985). Since then, it has performed well outdoors and we decided to formally name the clone as a unique and well-adapted cultivar.

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Plants average 76 ± 8 cm in height when grown at the Morden Research Centre. Stems are yellow-green (RHS 144A) (Royal Horticultural Society, 1986) with a gray-purple (RHS 187) overlay. Leaves are 10.8 ± 2.7 cm long, 1.8 ± 0.4 cm wide, and are yellow-green (RHS 146A). Flowering continues for 2 to 3 weeks in late July to early August in Manitoba. Mean petal length is 10.8 ± 0.7 cm and mean width is 5.0 ± 0.5 cm. Mean sepal length is 11.3 ± 0.5 cm and mean width is 2.7 ± 0.4 cm. Both sepals and petals are slightly reflexed and sepals may have a slight twist. Flowers are out-facing with a red-purple midthroat (RHS 60C, 58A fades to 71B, C) (Fig. 1), white outer perianth margins (RHS 155D), and yellow-green throat (nectary) (RHS 145B). A few papillae are located in the inner third of the flower and are red-purple (RHS color as listed for midthroat). Stigmas are purple (RHS 79D) and pollen is gray-orange (RHS 169C, 175A, 166A). Flowers are very fragrant and plants are resistant to *Botrytis* spp.

'Starburst Sensation' is a hardy intersectional lily hybrid with unique flower form, color, and a later bloom date than many lilies now grown in colder climatic zones (Canadian

Plant Hardiness zone 3; Ouellet and Sherk, 1967).

'Starburst Sensation' can be propagated by standard methods of division and bulb scaling. Plants also have been generated by tissue culture propagation using lily multiplication medium (Carolina Biological Supply Co., Burlington, N.C.). Small bulblets up to 11 cm developed in 4 to 8 weeks in tissue culture. Flowering-size bulbs can be produced from scales or small bulblets in 1 to 2 years, depending on growing conditions.

Availability

'Starburst Sensation' is registered with the International Register (Royal Horticultural Society) and the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation (652 Aberdeen Ave., North Bay, Ont. P1B 7H9, Canada). Agriculture Canada reserves the right to collect royalties from this cultivar.

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Fig. 1. *Lilium* 'Starburst Sensation'.