

Lecture IV: Cultivation of canna

Family: Cannaceae

Origin : Tropical America

B.N.: *Canna indica*.

Cannas (Indian Shot) are very important and popular perennial flowering plants and grow abundantly in the humid tropical regions throughout the world. The flowers have many shades of colour, appear throughout the year and make a wonderful display of colour which can hardly be surpassed by any other perennial plant. Cannas are frequently grown in private gardens but more extensively in the public gardens. As the flowers do not last long as cut flowers and are very common garden plants, visitors do not show much interest to pluck the flowers or damage the plants. Cannas alone with their various shades of colour can make a garden quiet attractive. The genus *Canna* has about 50 species, native of Tropical America and Asia. The following three species of *Canna* are considered to be the parents of the present cultivated varieties.

Climate and soil: *Canna* prefers sandy, loamy to clay soils. It prefers moist soil. Soil should be rich in organic matter, well drained. Plants have survived temperatures down to about -5°C overwinter. This species is often grown as a summer bedding plant, especially in sub-tropical bedding schemes.

Cultivars: American Beauty, Apricot, Carmine king, Mrs Herbert Hoover, The President, Golden Wedding, Golden Wedding, Dorris

Propagation

Canna is commonly propagated by rhizome. Seeds are used for raising new varieties through hybridization. The seeds have hard seed coat and take a long time to germinate, if the seeds are not treated with hot water or rubbed on sandpaper.

Soil preparation

The soil is prepared by digging at least 50 cm deep, breaking the clods and mixing in fresh stable manure at the rate of 100 kg to a bed of 10 sq. meter.

Planting:

The rhizomes are collected in the month of May and then planted to get the full benefit of the Monsoon and a strong clump forms before the winter. The rhizomes are buried 3 cm below the surface of the soil and thoroughly flooded. If the weather is hot and dry, shade is provided for a few days. Planting is done at a distance of 30-40 cm between the rows and the plant. *Canna* can be grown in 20-25 cm pot and compost should consist of 1-part stable manure and 2 parts garden soil. The potted plants are replanted every 6-9 months as the roots become pot bound. Cannas respond favourably to moderate, frequent fertilization. Fertilize early in the spring and continue on a monthly basis to assure prolific growth and flowering.

Cultural Operations

To assure continuous bloom, remove the part of the stem that bore flowers after the flowers have withered. Finally, when all shoots finish flowering, remove the entire stem and leaves at or slightly above ground level because no more flower shoots will grow from these stems. This will reduce the leafy appearance of the plant and will permit more light for other developing and flower-bearing stems to develop on the same clump. In addition, this will reduce crowding and competition for nutrients.

Diseases and insect pests

Canna Leaf Rollers: These are solitary types feed on leaves by rolling, folding, or tying them together before eating them. Affected leaves can be cut off and destroyed or unrolled and cleaned (by removing the caterpillar), though some gardeners prefer to use an insecticide. Imidachloropid @ 0.02 % will help to control insects and worms in cannas.

Thrips: These are tiny insects that cannot be seen without a magnifying glass. They are dark,

slender, and about the length and size of the lead exposed on a sharpened pencil. They suck the juices from the flowers, causing them to wilt.

Spider Mites: These are microscopic members of the spider family that make their living by sucking the sap out of plants.

Canna Rust: A fungus resulting in orange spots on the plant's leaves. Rust infestation is facilitated by high humidity and high soil moisture. The fungus can affect both the foliage and the flowers.

Botrytis Blight: The flowers are sometimes affected by a gray, fuzzy mold under humid conditions; it is often found growing on the older flowers. Remove the old flowers so that the mold does not spread to the new flowers.

Rhizome Rot: It causes rhizomes to decay and stems to rot at the base. A cottony fungal growth may be present when rhizome rot is present. Selection of healthy rootstocks is advised to avoid the rot. Damaged roots should be discarded.

REFERENCE

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