

## **Stop 386 Adult Tour – Calla Lily, Cool Temperate House**

Often associated with the religious holiday Easter, the elegant but toxic calla lily is popular as a cut flower because of its long-lasting nature. You've probably seen it at weddings or other special occasions. And it has captured the eye of many a photographer or artist. Georgia O'Keeffe portrayed the flower so many times that she was at one time called the "lady of the lilies."

Although the calla is called a lily, this native of South Africa is more closely related to the philodendron, dieffenbachia, and Jack-in-the-pulpit – all members of the arum family.

A distinctive characteristic of this family is how the tiny flowers are clustered together along a central spike called a spadix. What you perceive as a single flower is actually many small flowers grouped together and surrounded by a colorful trumpet-shaped structure, which although it looks like a petal, botanists classify as a modified leaf called a spathe. In addition to the traditional white you see here, Calla lily colors can range from yellow to orange to dark maroon.