



J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift and Garden Center

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Daylilies (Hemerocallis)

Few plants are as rugged, widely adapted, or versatile as daylilies. The Chinese have long cultivated daylilies, both for their beauty and as an ingredient in some of their recipes. Only three varieties of daylilies were widely grown in American gardens before World War II.

Today there are at least 20 species of daylilies and more than 25,000 varieties and cultivars that are being bred and collected by enthusiasts.

Each blossom lasts only one day, accounting for the plant's common name as well as its botanical name, Hemerocallis, "Beauty for a day." The flowers open early in the morning and wither during the night. A typical plant can produce thirty or more flowers on each flower stem during its blossoming season. A six year old plant could produce as many as 400 to 800 flowers in one year.

Unlike most perennials, daylilies are well-suited to many different uses in the garden and landscape. The shorter, more compact varieties work well planted directly into perennial borders, where their blooms provide a welcome mid-summer boost. In groups of 3 or 5, daylilies are ideal for small landscape plantings, especially when paired with ornamental grasses and small shrubs. They are also the perfect plant for mass plantings along a fence or walkway, where they'll form a dense, colorful display.



Description

Daylilies are one of the easiest perennials to grow. They are extremely hardy and very forgiving plants.

Daylilies are perennials with tuberous, and somewhat fleshy, roots. They can be deciduous (they die to the ground each winter); semi-evergreen (they stay green in mild winters); or evergreen (their leaves stay green during the winter - in mild climates) depending upon the variety. They produce large clumps of arching, sword-shaped leaves.

Daylilies have lily-like flowers in open or branched clusters at the ends of their flower stems. These flower stems can grow well above the foliage (one to six feet tall). Daylily flowers can be three to eight inches across.

Daylily blossoms are categorized as **miniatures** (flowers less than 3 inches across), **small** (from 3 to 4 1/2 inches), and **large** (over 4 1/2 inches).

Flower shapes are categorized as **plain, pinched, rounded, and ornamental**. Daylily flowers may also have ruffles on the edges. Some daylily flowers are single, others are double, depending upon the variety.

Daylilies are available in a wide variety of colors and shades, except pure white and true blue. They are available in different shades of red, scarlet, carmine, tomato-red, maroon, wine-reds, blackish-reds, orange, yellow, pink, buff, apricot, creamy white, vermilion and many bicolors.



Blooming Season

Most daylilies have a distinct, three- to four-week bloom period in early to late summer, although some varieties continue to bloom sporadically all season long.

Some of the new cultivars have been selected for re-

peating blooms, after their initial cycle. Reblooming varieties require regular removal of old flowers to perform at their best. **Repeat (RE)** blooming varieties may flower for six to eight weeks.

Daylily blossoms open in the morning and begin to wither and close by evening. A few of the new hybrid varieties will bloom a full twenty four hours. These are classified as **Extended (EXT)** blooming varieties.

Some of the extended blooming varieties start blooming in the evening (**Nocturnal NOC**) and then the flowers fade the next evening. Flowers will continue to open as long as new buds are formed.

On all types of Daylilies, spent flowers should be snapped off daily and the entire flower scape should be cut off after all buds have passed.

The blooming season is commonly divided into three seasons, although considerable overlapping occurs.

Early (late May and June),

Midseason (July and early-August),

Late (mid-August into September).

A modern hybrid daylily may produce as many as thirty blossom stems during its blooming season. By selecting early, midseason and late blooming varieties it is possible to have flowers throughout the summer.

Daylilies are exceedingly long-lived plants and the clumps will expand indefinitely. They are easily restrained in growth. They are permanent plants.

They are not invasive, and they compete well with the roots of trees and shrubs.

Hybrid varieties of daylilies generally will not reseed.



Propagation

Most daylilies are grown and planted from roots. Daylilies can be planted any time of the year. The best time to divide daylilies is early in the spring, but they may be divided later in the summer or fall if they are watered well and mulched for the winter.



Daylilies can be grown from seed but it takes special care to produce viable seed. Many gardeners like to hybridize and breed daylilies by seed.

Location

Daylilies are highly adaptable and will grow almost anywhere. Daylilies are perhaps the only perennial grown in all 48 states. They perform best in well-drained soil with average fertility. They tolerate both sun and shade well, however, the delicate colors tend to fade quickly in full sun while the dark red colors produce their best color in the heat.



Use daylilies in borders with bearded iris, as center features with daisies, or as a background with peonies. Daylilies look great as mass plantings on banks, hills or slopes. They grow well under high-branched trees, along driveways or roadsides. Plant dwarf daylilies in rock gardens, as edgings, or as low ground covers.

Planting

Since daylilies are long-lived plants and do not need to be divided very often, take time to prepare the soil before you plant your daylilies. The most important consideration in planting daylilies is good drainage, they do not grow well in heavy or wet soil.



Spread two or three inches of mulch (**Bumper Crop**, manure, compost or soil pep) over the garden. Apply one pound of **16-16-8 Multi-Purpose fertilizer** per one hundred square feet of garden. Rototill this mixture into the soil as deep as possible.



If you are planting bare roots, soak the plants in water for several hours before planting them. Spread out the roots and place the crown firmly on a mound of soil so no air pocket is left.

Bury the crown -- where the leaves meet the roots -- just under the soil surface; no more than one inch deep. Shallow planting is best since daylilies grow down into the soil.

Fertilize with **Dr. Earth Root Starter** as soon as you plant them. Apply root starter every two or three weeks for the first two months. Potted daylilies don't need to be soaked, otherwise plant them just like you would plant a bare root daylily. Plant the dwarf varieties eighteen to twenty four inches apart. The tall varieties can be planted thirty to thirty-six inches apart.



Spring and Summer Care

Water daylilies sparingly after the first year. Watering is most important in spring when the plants are making scapes and buds, and in the summer during the bloom season.



Do not let them dry out while they are blooming or the blossoms will not be as prolific.

Be careful not to over water them.

Fertilize daylilies sparingly every spring with **16-16-8 Multi-Purpose fertilizer**. Too much fertilizer will make the plants grow too tall and the blossoms will not be as attractive. An occasional application of **Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer** during the summer will help keep the leaves looking great. Remove the flower stalks after their blossoms are spent to improve the appearance of your plants.



If foliage becomes unsightly, cut it back to the ground, water well, and in time new foliage will appear.

The stems are strong and do not require staking. Most varieties can be left alone permanently, although some of the more vigorous varieties bloom better if they are divided every six to seven years.

As you can see, daylilies are one of the most self-sufficient perennials in the garden. They are easy to grow and fun to take care of.

Fall and Winter Care

Make sure that summer mulch is pulled away from the plant crowns at least an inch. This is also advisable for most perennials.



Do not remove the old dead daylily foliage in late fall unless you see 1/4" black fungal spots (called sclerotia). The black spots are the over wintering stage for leaf spot fungi. The old daylily foliage helps hold the winter mulch, or snow, in place for winter.

Daylilies and most perennials may be covered with two or three inches of straw, soil pep, or leaves. Make sure the leaves do not mat down or they may smother and kill your plants.

If you have ever seen evidence of mice or voles, poison mouse bait scattered under the winter mulch is advisable.

Winter mulch should remain in place from the time the ground begins to freeze until the middle of April.

In April, the winter mulch, and the old daylily foliage can be removed. Because spring can be early or late from one year to the next, a good rule of thumb is to wait until the forsythias are in bloom before removing the winter mulch.

If winter mulch is removed too early, and a severe cold snap freezes new foliage, wait until the leaves thaws to remove the injured leaves with scissors.

Newly planted or divided daylilies should be covered with a little extra mulch for their first winter.



Winter mulch definitely helps perennials survive winter. This is due to four factors.

First, extra organic matter is added to the soil.



Second, the winter mulch insulates plants from extremely cold winter temperatures.

Third, winter mulch insulates plants from a warm January thaw. January thaws can warm the soil enough for plants to begin to grow. They can be severely damaged when cold temperatures return. This is what kills many 'hardy' perennials. Mid-winter thaws can also heave new plants out of the ground, exposing their roots to cold, dry conditions.

Fourth, many perennials continue to develop new roots between the time their foliage turns brown and the ground freezes solid. This is true for daylilies. Winter mulch extends the time for daylilies to produce roots in the winter.

Pests, Insects and Diseases

Daylilies have no serious pests or diseases, therefore they do not require much spraying. Aphids and Thrips occasionally feed on buds or flowers, distorting the blooms and causing cork-like lesions on the flower spikes. Spider mites can infest the foliage during hot, dry weather; wash them off with a forceful water spray regularly, or use an appropriate insecticide.



They are listed as deer-resistant, but in some areas when there is nothing else to eat in the fall, they will eat daylilies. Deer will eat anything if they are hungry. Fortunately, deer damage is usually just aggravating to homeowners, it will not kill the daylilies.

Gophers and voles generally leave daylilies alone, and are just a nuisance. However, they can be a problem if there are too many, so it is best to keep them under control.

Even being trampled by kids or dogs, or being run over by a lawnmower doesn't faze them for long.

Edible

Before you attempt to eat any wild edible, you need to be absolutely certain you can identify it with 100% certainty.



For centuries, daylilies have been a staple food in many parts of Asia. All throughout the growing season the daylily can provide a variety of tasty foods including flowers, buds, leaf shoots, and potato like roots.

While the original daylily is edible, and daylilies are listed in virtually every foraging book as edible, don't presume that all daylilies are edible.

Many are, but don't assume so. Some people have severe allergic reactions to them. In fact,



some people can eat them for years with no problem then suddenly develop an allergy. Also, don't go overboard eating any part of the plant. They are nature's laxative. Incidentally, they are toxic to cats, including the plant's pollen.

Varieties

Plant breeders continue to expand the color palette available in daylilies, which includes yellow, orange, red, white, and purple flowers. Varieties with multicolored blooms, often with a contrasting "eye," or center, are especially popular.



Just to Name a Few:

Apricot or peach-colored: Bertie Ferris, Calumet, Doll House, Dress Circle, Little Rainbow, Naomi, Ruth, Ruffled Apricot.

Bicolor: Addie, Branch Smith, Becky Lynn, Bold One, Chicago, Picotee Queen, Close Up, Frans Hals, Karen Sue, Painted Lady, Sea Warrior, Shady Lady, Bo Peep, Siloam, Virginia, Henson, Toma Gold, Golden Chimes, Golden Gift, Golden Milestone, Golden Prize, Golden Trinkets, Ringlets.

Lavender to purple: Chicago Knobby, Little Grapette, Little Lassie, Mountain Violet, Prairie, Blue Eyes, Russian Rhapsody, Sebastian, Summer Wine, Two Bits, Velvet Shadows, Weathermaster, Purple D'Oro, Bela Lugosi, Nosferatu.



Orange: Carrot Top, Leprechauns, Pixie Parasol, Rocket City, Sombrero Way, Primal Scream, Spellbinder, Tuscawilla Tigress.

Pink: Barbara Mitchell, Cathrine Woodbury, Chicago, Candy Cane, Evelyn Claar, Fairy Tale Pink, Halls Pink Lullaby, Baby, Mariska, Siloam, Double Classic, Wind Frills, Windsor Castle, Elegand Candy, Sweet Tart, Strawberry Candy.



Red: Carey, Quinn, Chicago, Hearts Afire, Oriental Ruby, Premier, Red Mittens, Sigudilla, Ruby Spider, Chicago Apache, Pardon Me, Stella D'Oro Red, Ruby Stella.



White and near white: Ice Carnival, Joan Senior, May, Serene, Madonna, So Lovely, Gentle Shephard, Sunday Gloves.



Yellow: Bitsy, Brocaded Gown, Golden Prize, Happy Returns, Hortensia, Hyperion, Lollypop, Mary Todd, Mini Stella, Paradise, Prince, Raindrop, So Sweet, Stella D'Oro, Buttered Popcorn, Fooled Me, Stella Supreme, Going Bananas.

*Daylilies have been called
"The Perfect Perennial."*

More Information

<http://www.daylilies.org/AHSFAQsNew.html>
http://www.daylilies.org/ahs_dictionary/
<http://www.daylilies.org/AHSfaq2.html>
<http://ccenassau.org/resources/-daylilies>

