



# Andy's Garden

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## DAYLILIES A GUIDE TO THE PERFECT PERENNIAL

Daylilies are readily becoming one of the more popular perennials for use in the home landscape. Little care and maintenance add to their appeal. Their main feature is the show of color, especially with the varieties that rebloom or have extended bloom periods. Although each flower lasts only a day, the plants seem to last a lifetime, virtually pest and disease free.

### DAYLILY TERMS

**Blooming habit** - refers to the time of day the bloom opens. Typically, daylilies open in the morning and close in the evening. Nocturnal varieties open in the early evening and close early afternoon of the following day. Extended bloomers bear flowers that stay open for 16 hours or more.

**Bloom time** - refers to the season in which the daylily blooms; early, mid-, or late.

**Rebloomers** - are varieties that bloom for a few weeks, take a rest period, and bloom again.

**Miniatures** - are daylilies with blooms less than 3 inches in diameter. The plant itself may be tall or short.

**Eyezone** - refers to a different color on petals and sepals near the center of the flower.

### FLOWER FEATURES

**Substance** - is the thickness of the tissue structure of the petals and sepals. This varies from thin and fragile to heavy, which holds up better in wind and rain.

**Texture** - refers to the smoothness or roughness of the flower segments. Smooth blooms reflect light better, giving more vivid color.

**Size** - Blooms may be miniature, less than 3 inches across, to large, over 4 1/2 inches.

**Height** - refers to the flower scape, rather than the foliage. Low - 6 to 24 inches. Medium - 24 to 36 inches. Tall - over 36 inches. Dwarf refers to any plant with scapes less than 12 inches and does not necessarily mean small flowered.

**Branching habit** - Refers to the way the buds form on the scape. Low branched - buds form near the base of the scape. Well branched - there is a good balance of buds on the scape (ideal). Top branched - buds form on the very top of the scape.

**Bud count** - refers to the number of buds on each scape.

### GARDEN USES FOR DAYLILIES

**Mixed borders** - remember to keep in mind height and bloom time of the plants.

**Mass plantings** - daylilies are one of the best plants to use on steep slopes. They need little care and are not invasive. They do need at least 5 hours of sun each day to bloom well.

**Edging** - they are great to use as an edging or along a path, or even as a low hedge. The foliage looks nice when plants are not in bloom.

**Foundation planting** - easily used instead of, or combined with shrubs. If planted under the eaves of the house, you will need to water more often.

**Containers** - great for use on patios, terraces or balconies. A minimum of 10 inches in both diameter and depth of container is essential. The larger the container, the better. Daylilies grown in containers usually grow faster, bloom earlier and dry out faster. Make sure the pot drains well and be sure to water often.

## ***DAYLILY PLANTING BASICS***

**When to plant** - spring is ideal, summer is fine as long as you keep the new plants watered, fall is great provided the plants have time to establish roots before winter. You may want to mulch for winter protection.

**Where to plant** - choose a location that gets at least 5 hours of sun a day. More sun is better, although some pastels and purples hold up better if given some shade for part of the day. It is best to avoid planting near trees or shrubs that would compete for water and nutrients.

**Soil preparation** - ideally, work up the area to be planted at a depth of 1 to 2 feet, adding organic compost, peat moss, and/or aged manure (amounts depend upon the condition of your soil). If this is not feasible, dig a hole 24 inches wide by 18 inches deep. Add organic matter and fertilizer with the soil from the hole. Do not work in wood chips with the soil as they will deplete it of nitrogen needed by the plants.

**How to plant** - when spacing, don't crowd the plants - 18 to 24 inches apart is best. Be sure not to set the plants too deep or too shallow. The crown, where the root clump meets the foliage, should be level with the top of the ground. Water in well, water every other day for a week or two, and then once a week until plants are rooted. Daylilies do not require heavy fertilizing. Liquid seaweed or fish emulsion once every other week or so is sufficient. Mulch for moisture retention, to slow weed growth, and to protect against soil erosion.

**Dividing** - this may be done by thrusting a sharp spade through the plant while it is in the ground or by digging up the plant and cutting it into sections with a knife.

## ***SOLUTIONS TO DAYLILY PROBLEMS***

### ***Not Flowering Well***

**Check shade and sun conditions.** You may need to move the plants or cut some branches off trees that may be shading the plants.

**Too much fertilizer.** The plants may be getting burned or perhaps they are growing too fast to bloom well. Very lush foliage but few blooms indicates that plants may be too well fed.

**Plants set too deep, or have sunk into the soil.** Raise the plants and reset.

**Too much lime** has locked up soil nutrients. Avoid applying more lime or wood ashes for a few years.

**Heavy seed production** the previous year may have weakened plants. Deadhead after blooming.

**Plants that are overgrown** may need to be divided.

**Plants are too small.** Give them a bit more fertilizer and another year.

**Roots are too dry.** Increase the mulch and watering.

### ***Not Growing Well***

**Plants are set too deep or not deep enough.** Reset.

**Plants are overcrowded.** Divide, or move them to a spot where there is more room.

**Weed or grass competition.** Remove it.

**Mulch is too thick or too close to the plants.** Make necessary adjustments.

**Need additional nutrients.** Apply manure dissolved in water or other liquid fertilizer. May also lack magnesium, add Epsom salts dissolved in water.

**Too much nitrogen.**

**Overwatered.** Cut back on watering.



***Making the world beautiful  
one flower at a time.***