

## Delightful Daylilies

by Toma Collingsworth\*

May 16, 2002

“*Hemerocallis*,” the botanical name for day lilies, means “beautiful for a day” in Greek, because an individual bloom lasts only one day. However, the scape (flower stem) will produce a repeat bloom of the same flower several times throughout the growing season.

However the scape (flower stem) will produce a repeat bloom of the same flower several times throughout the growing season.

The outstanding changes and advancements in the kind and quality of day lilies has generated an increased interest in the flower. There are more than 40,000 registered named varieties of day lilies. This number is growing daily because day lilies are easy to breed.

Many people create their own by a few named varieties and cross-pollinating them: It isn't uncommon for new introductions to cost \$100 to \$200 each. But in a few years, most plants fall in a price range that makes them affordable for anyone.

Day lilies range in color from brilliant, purples, roses, pinks, yellows to almost, solid white and black. New varieties are accentuated with contrasting colors in the middle of the flower. The most recent, introductions have spectacular ruffled edges. They range from 1 3/4 to 10 inches diameter.

### Planting day lilies:

By careful selecting your daylilies. You will have continual, blooming long after most other perennials have retired for the summer.

You can plant, them almost; anywhere. They grow well in sandy soil, heavy clay, and alkaline or acid soils. They can tolerate salt, which makes them one of the few perennials to bloom near the coast. Day lilies love sunshine, the more the better. But they do adapt well to up to a half-day of shade.

They are categorized in three divisions:

- Evergreen refers to, those varieties that keep their foliage until the heaviest freeze.
- Semi-evergreen foliage recedes partially (but not at all in the warmest climates).
- Dormant means the foliage dies back to the ground each winter.

In our area, day lilies can be transplanted anytime of the year. Be careful not to plant them too deep; allow the soil to cover the top of the roots. They will feel like they are about to fall over but they root quickly. Space them 12 – 24 inches apart depending on the size of the variety (16 inches apart is typical). Early spring and mid-summer fertilizations with a good 16-4-8 fertilizer works well on our day lilies. Just be careful not to get it on the plants. Keep them well-watered.

To learn more about the remarkable day lily, join the [American Hemerocallis Society](http://www.americanhemerocallis.org/). You'll receive a subscription to the Daylily Journal, which features spectacular color pictures of new introductions. Tallahassee has a wonderful daylily club where you can learn a great deal about daylilies. For more information about joining, visit the web site at <http://www.thsgardens.org/>

Another way to learn about daylilies is to attend Sunday's Daylily Show at the Tallahassee Mall. Several out-

## Delightful Daylilies

of-town and local growers will be competing in many categories. the number of entries, is usually between 400 and 600 cultivars After judging, the public may view flowers from 1 – 5 p.m. Daylilies will be on sale starting at 11:00 a.m.

Free educational material on daylilies will be available, and experts will be on hand to answer any questions you might have. For more information on how to grow daylilies, where to buy them, and how to join the local society, call Donna Warlick at 422-1577

*\*Toma Collinsworth is a member of the University of Florida IFAS Leon County Extension Advisory Committee.*

[\[Back\]](#)