

DAYLILY INFORMATION

Daylilies are very nearly the perfect perennials. They are easy to grow, need little maintenance and adapt to many growing conditions. They are the heart of the perennial garden, usually blooming at the peak of the summer sun's intensity. They are named daylilies because each bloom lasts only a day, however, plants produce many buds and will be in bloom for several weeks.

Daylilies grow best in full sun in a moisture retentive soil. Our heavier clay soils should be amended with sphagnum peat moss and compost.

Individual plants should be spaced 24" apart. Water thoroughly in dry periods and remove flower stalks after the blossoms are spent. Clumps of individual plants will increase from year to year. The plants grow from finger-like fleshy tubers. These can be divided to provide more plants but this usually isn't necessary for 4-5 years, or as long as they are flowering well. When dividing, the entire clump should be lifted and separated. For very large clumps use the two spading fork technique for greatest ease and least damage to roots (see back for illustration).

A light application of a general fertilizer may be applied in the spring but this usually isn't necessary. Adding too much fertilizer or enriching the soil too much will result in prolific foliage and fewer blooms.

An added note of interest: the tubers, buds and flowers of this plant are edible. The tubers may be peeled, sliced and added to salads. The dried buds are sold in Oriental markets for use in hot and sour soup. Fresh flowers are used in batter-fry recipes and as beautiful, edible garnishes.

Daylilies need little protection during the winter. The foliage may be cut back during the autumn and a mulch of shredded leaves or bark laid around the perimeter of the plants. Some gardeners prefer to allow the dying foliage to 'self mulch' the plants. However the decaying foliage can become a breeding ground for botrytis or other disease organisms.

Glossary of Terms:

Tetraploid: Having twice the usual number of chromosomes generally stronger growers with larger flowers.

Extended bloom: flowers open for at least 16 hours.

Repeat bloom: plant will usually have a repeat bloom period.

Early bloom: late June

Mid season: mid July

Late: August

Nocturnal: Flowers begin open period during evening.