# **Growing Daylilies**





Daylily 'Star of the North'

Daylilies are often called the perfect perennial. They are hardy, vigorous, long-lived, soil flexible, relatively untroubled by pests and diseases, and of course beautiful. Providing them with at least six hours of sun daily, well-drained soil enriched with organic matter, a little bit of fertilizer and adequate moisture will reward with a stunning performance. They will bloom happily in an undisturbed clump for years; however, if you want more they are easily divided almost anytime during the growing season.

# **PLANTING LOCATION**

Daylilies prefer full sun but will tolerate some shade. Choose a spot that will receive a *minimum* of six hours direct sun daily. Light yellow, pink and delicately colored pastel blooms need full sun to bring out their colors. Darker colored daylilies may benefit from

filtered shade as their blooms absorb heat and don't withstand sun as well. Choose a location away from large trees (maples, oaks, birches, etc.) where they'll have to compete for light, water, and nutrients. Avoid poorly drained areas where standing water may linger. Although daylilies thrive with plenty of moisture, they resent wet feet. Raising beds 3 to 6 inches above ground level may be a solution in poorly draining areas.

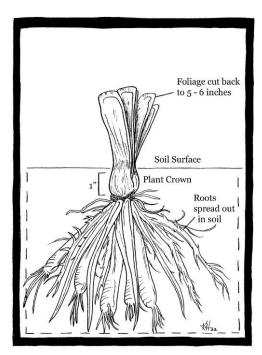
#### SOIL

Daylilies are not fussy about soil but will perform to their highest potential in well-drained soil which has been worked to a depth of one foot and amended with organic matter such as compost, leaf mold, aged pine bark, or peat moss. The soil pH should be between 6.2 and 6.8; 6.5 is ideal. A soil test is recommended to know exactly what your soil needs.

# CARE AND PLANTING OF YOUR NEW DAYLILIES

Dig a hole larger than your plant and make a mound in the center. Set the plant on the mound with roots spread out on all sides and with the crown (where leaves and roots meet) no more than one inch below soil level. Work the soil around and between roots as you cover the plant to avoid air pockets. Firm the soil and water well to settle. Finish filling in the soil and leave a slight depression around the plant. It is important to keep new transplants well-watered to a depth of eight to ten inches until new growth appears. Be careful not to overwater new transplants as this encourages rot.

If your plants were **freshly dug**, simply plant them the day you receive them. They should typically be planted at the same depth they were growing when dug. If you need to delay planting for more than a day or two, wrap the roots loosely in slightly damp newspaper and store in a cool, shaded place. They will be fine for several days this way. It is advisable to trim the leaves back to about six inches. New growth will quickly appear from the center.



**Bareroot plants** that have been washed, dried, and trimmed may be kept for up to week in a cool shaded location.

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**Potted dayliles** can be planted almost any time the soil can be worked (not frozen or waterlogged). Daylily roots grow quickly and may begin to circle the container soon after potting. Keep your potted daylily well-watered until ready to plant. Remove the plant from the pot and gently loosen roots so they will drape over mounded soil.

#### **SPACING**

Give plants 18 to 24 inches all around; larger varieties may need 30 inches or more. With proper care, large, beautiful clumps can quickly develop.

#### **FEEDING**

Fertilize lightly in spring and again after first flowering. Use compost, alfalfa pellets or a low nitrogen fertilizer such as Milorganite or 5-10-10. Too much nitrogen will give you more leaves and fewer blooms.

# **DIVIDING**

A clump may be left undisturbed for years unless flowering begins to decline. However, daylilies are easily divided to rejuvenate them. The best times to do so are early spring or immediately after flowering. Dig up the entire clump and separate into pieces with two or more fans and replant. Your hands or a large screwdriver will work for dividing for smaller clumps; use the two-fork method for larger clumps. Alternatively, you may simply take a shovel and remove a section of the plant leaving the parent plant undisturbed.

## **COMMON PROBLEMS**

Daylilies seldom get serious insect or disease problems in home gardens, although you might encounter a few issues. Foliage may be damaged by cold or late frost in early spring causing it to emerge distorted. This is often called "spring sickness", and plants will usually begin to grow normally with good weather and care.

**Thrips** can be controlled with a systemic insecticide (i.e.: Merit or Orthene) following manufacturers' instructions.

Another common problem is "**leaf streak**" **disease**. This appears as brown streaks in leaves. Remove leaves of heavily damaged plants to improve appearance and keep them healthy.

Rust-colored dots on leaf undersides indicate a type of **rust disease** specific to daylilies. This is similar to rust disease in other plants like hollyhocks and corn. Remove and destroy any infected leaves to reduce spread. Rust is a fungal disease that affects both the foliage and the flower scapes. Although rust causes an unsightly appearance, it will not kill the plant.

## **EXTENDING YOUR GARDEN'S BLOOM SEASON**

Daylilies bloom over an extended period from late spring until frost. When choosing which cultivars to plant, in addition to personal preferences for color, size, and form, choose those that either rebloom or choose a mix that blooms over a range of time. You can also add other hardy perennials like Japanese, Louisiana, and Siberian iris to lengthen your bloom season. Visit our nursery or website periodically during summer to find new and exciting additions to your garden.