

It's a beautiful day!

When I heard that *Hemerocallis* means "beauty for a day", I thought the daylily had been very well named, botanically speaking! Each lovely trumpet-shaped blossom lasts less than 24 hours, but an established plant can produce a succession of blooms for several weeks. Some varieties bloom in mid-June and others wait until late August to show off. A select few are rebloomers – displaying from June to frost!



Hemerocallis 'Cherry Cheeks'

The original daylilies imported from Asia were orange and yellow but hybridization has produced a range of additional colours from red to purple and every pastel shade in between, even almost pure white. Although we might think of them as six petals, each blossom has three petals and three sepals, which can be the same or different colours. Some blossoms have a contrasting throat or eye zone and some have a picotee – a frilly edge of a

different colour. So many choices!!

Daylily leaves are long and slender and make graceful arching mounds. Even late-blooming varieties are early risers in the spring, so by mid-May the sprouts are well up. In my garden, this emerging foliage provides a nice green understory for tulips and other spring bulbs and later it becomes the perfect camouflage for the unsightly but necessary fading bulb foliage.

A daylily growing in sun, in rich loamy soil with plenty of moisture, will reward you with a profusion of bud-bearing scapes which hold the flowers aloft, well above the foliage. But daylilies are very forgiving of less than ideal conditions. Their tuberous roots allow them to tolerate dry conditions and do well in heavy soils. Clumps grown in shade will bloom later so planting some in sun and some in shade can stretch the bloom period.



Hemerocallis 'Chicago Weathermaster', H. 'Satin Clouds', H. 'Heavenly Lace'

Daylilies are easy care! They have no significant pests in this climate – the dreaded red lily beetles leave them alone. Apply-

ing a balanced fertilizer early in the season will boost performance. I think daylilies look better with some grooming so a favourite morning ritual is visiting them to admire the new blooms and pinch off the withered ones.



Hemerocallis 'True North'

Daylilies spread, some more quickly than others, so they need division every few years. If a friend has one you like, put dibs on the next division. Your friend will be happy to share – I always enjoy seeing "my" daylilies blooming in a friend's garden!

Not all cultivars are equally hardy, but local nurseries stock those that thrive in this climate. For any size garden space, there is a daylily to fit – from miniatures with scapes barely ankle high and flowers less than 6cm across to large specimens with waist high scapes and blossoms 15cm across – and every size in between.

To be sure of the colour, choose when the plant is in bloom. Cultivar names often have nothing to do with colour, and the description and picture on the nursery label can be misleading. Pick some early, mid-season and late bloomers so you can enjoy these beauties for the entire summer!

Trowel Talk!

- Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton
- Volume 1, Number 6
- <http://mgottawa.mgoi.ca>
- trowel_talk_editor@rogers.com



Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

Where to find us this month for free gardening advice!

ONGOING:

Telephone Help Line: 613-236-0034

- Wednesday and Thursday 1–3 pm

E-mail Help Line: mgoc_helpline@yahoo.ca

- monitored daily
- send photos of garden pests, diseases or plants for ID

CLINICS:

Byward Market: Saturdays, May through June (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

Parkdale Market: Cancelled this year due to construction.

Carp Market: Saturdays, May through June (8 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

Lansdowne Market: Sundays, July through September (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

Plant Sale: Building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm, August 15 (9 a.m. – until sold out or 1:00 p.m.)

SPEAKING EVENTS:

Ponds & Water Features – June 17, 2010 – 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Mary Ann Van Berlo, Master Gardener

Vankleek Hill Community Centre, Vankleek Hill

Hosted by Vankleek Hill Horticultural Society (Guests welcome)



For information on arranging a lecture for your group: 613-836-1491

For more information on Master Gardeners, visit our website:

<http://mgottawa.mgoi.ca>

June TO DO List

- Deadhead spring flowering shrubs so they don't waste energy producing seed (unless the seed-head is a desirable feature of the plant)
- Prune spring flowering shrubs after they bloom. The reason for this is that they will start to form next year's blooms towards the end of this season, so you don't want to prune too late in the season.
- Stake and support tall plants and vines as they are growing. Encourage vine tendrils to cling to their supports.
- Raise the mower blade as summer approaches and active lawn growth slows down. Grass that is about 7.5cm tall will shade its own roots and not go dormant as quickly in the summer heat.
- Keep an eye out for pests and diseases – you can always call or e-mail Master Gardeners to help with identification and solutions (our contact info is to the right).

Tip of the Month:

Some shrubs can be propagated by a simple technique called "layering". Now is a good time to try this method since most plants are in their active growth phase.

Simply dig a small, shallow trench close to the shrub you want to propagate. Then take a low growing branch and gently lower it into the trench. Cover the branch with soil and place a rock on it to weigh it down.

After 8 weeks, check if the branch has rooted by removing the rock and gently lifting the branch. If there is resistance, the roots have started to form – do not lift the branch right out of the ground. Instead, using your secateurs, sever the branch from the main plant. Try to make the cut in a logical place such as above a branch junction to maintain the structure of the

parent plant. In the photo below, the arrow indicates where the cut would be made in this instance. Prune the end of the severed branch, close to the ground. Then put the rock back in place. Leave it for another 4 weeks or until next spring. This will give the newly rooted "shrub" a chance to establish stronger roots before transplanting.



Layering a *Magnolia stellata* – the parent plant is to the right.

If, when you do the gentle tug test, it hasn't rooted, just replace the rock and give it more time.

Some shrubs that respond well to this type of propagation are *Weigela*, *Viburnum*, *Magnolia*, *Fothergilla*, holly and honeysuckle.

Nicking the branch at the spot you are burying it, prior to putting it in the trench, will sometimes encourage faster rooting.

More on daylilies ...

There is a wide variety of daylilies available by mail order from nurseries in Ontario and beyond.

Check listings on the website of the Ontario Daylily Society (<http://www.ontariodaylily.on.ca>).

For more general information on the daylily, visit the website of the American Hemerocallis Society (<http://www.daylilies.org/>).