



## Uncanoonuc Mt. Perennials

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### DAYLILIES

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Daylilies are hardy, adaptable, beautiful perennials. The Latin name, *Hemerocallis*, means "beautiful for a day" in reference to the fact that each individual blossom lasts but a day. The multitude of buds on each plant ensures color for at least three weeks. Some varieties bloom longer and two - 'Stella D'oro' and 'Happy Returns' - bloom practically all season. Thoughtful selection can give the gardener daylilies blooming from June to frost.

Daylilies are in the lily family (Liliaceae) but are very different from true lilies (*Lilium*). *Daylilies* have plump, finger-like root systems topped with mounds of gracefully arching lance-shaped foliage. *Lilies* have bulbous root systems from which emerge upright stems that are encircled with narrow strap-like foliage.

Daylilies thrive in full sun or light shade. Give them a minimum of four hours of direct sun a day and remember, for heaviest blooming, six or more hours is better. Daylilies will grow in many different soil types, their only requirement being good drainage. (Don't plant where water pools on the soil surface.) They will respond with increased vigor and heavier blossoming when grown in soil that has been generously amended with organic matter such as compost, peat moss or rotted manure. Fertilize your daylilies each April with a balanced fertilizer like 10-10-10 (sandy soils) or 5-10-5 (clay soils). In a normal season another feeding in late June or early July is often helpful. DO NOT fertilize if drought conditions exist. Mulching your daylilies will help maintain soil moisture and keep the weeds down. Winter mulching is necessary only for plants moved in the very late fall. Like a lot of other perennials, daylilies respond with increased lushness and bloom if given generous amounts of water. For best performance, water deeply once a week if you don't get a soaking rain. The general rule of thumb is that an inch of water a week from the sky or a sprinkler is ideal. Removal of the flowering stems (known as scapes) after the blossoms are spent increases the attractiveness of the garden (and for repeat bloomers, encourages heavier flowering). Cutting back the foliage to 3 - 4" can be done in the fall after hard frost or in the spring before the new growth emerges.

Daylilies are tough - they can be transplanted anytime the ground isn't frozen. Early spring or fall are excellent times. Plants moved during the summer and receiving adequate water will survive without being cut back BUT faster rooting will occur if the foliage is cut back to 3 - 4". We recommend it.

Every four or five years your daylilies will benefit from being divided.\* Lift the clumps, shake the soil away from the roots and pull or cut the rootball into smaller clumps. (see diagram) A spade or sharp knife can make short work of this job. The divisions should have 3 - 4 fans (clusters of leaves) to flower well the next year. To increase a favorite variety the plants can be cut down to single fans, but it will take longer for these smaller starts to make a show in the garden.

\*Everbloomers perform best with more frequent division; every three years is recommended.



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