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## Daylilies Good for Late Spring and Early Summer Color

Daylilies are one of the most popular flowering plants for late spring and early summer landscapes in Louisiana. Gardeners always want daylily information, says LSU AgCenter horticulturist Dr. Allen Owings.

Many new flower forms and flower colors are now available. Serious gardeners know daylily by its scientific name of *Hemerocallis*, Greek for "beauty" and "day." As the name implies, daylily flowers open for just one day, explains LSU AgCenter horticulture extension associate Anthony L. Witcher.

Daylilies are low-maintenance plants. Plant them in full to partial sun. Daylilies prefer a well-drained landscape bed but can tolerate poorer soil conditions. Make a slightly raised bed for daylilies by incorporating organic matter. Adjust the soil pH so that it is slightly acid (6.0-6.5) Fertilize in early spring and again in early summer, if needed, to promote plant vigor.

Many flower colors are available – white and blue are about the only exceptions. Flower shapes also vary, and multiple colors are common on a single bloom. Daylilies reach a mature height of 1-5 feet, depending on the variety. Flower size can range from small flowers no more than 2 inches across to large flowers 8 inches across.

Owings says daylily varieties are classified by several factors, including flower color and plant size. One important classification now commonly used is hardiness type – dormant, semi-evergreen or evergreen.

Dormant daylilies offer little if any resistance to low temperatures, and foliage will disappear in the winter until new growth emerges from the soil the following spring. Semi-evergreen varieties have foliage that dies down briefly in early winter, but new growth starts re-emerging slowly until more rapid re-growth starts in early spring. Evergreen daylilies are commonly used now in commercial landscaping efforts. These varieties maintain foliage through the winter in the warmer climate of the Gulf South.



This Black-eyed Stella is one of many varieties of the popular flower.

"One valuable benefit of daylilies in the landscape is their ability to multiply," Witcher says. Daylilies increase in size from year to year and can be divided almost any time of the year to produce new plants. A clump of two to three plants may not flower the first year after division, but a clump of five to 10 plants will flower well.

"It is hard to provide a recommended blanket list of daylily varieties," Owings notes. Local daylily society chapters may have lists of best performers for different states and areas.

A new program called All-America Daylilies is promoting certain varieties for exhibiting and landscaping. These include Frankly Scarlet, Plum Perfect, Bitsy, Black-eyed Stella, Judith, Leebea Orange Crush, Chorus Line, Lady Lucille, Lullaby Baby and Star Struck.

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