

Questions

What is a daylily?

The scientific name for daylily is *Hemerocallis*, most recently considered to belong in the plant family Asphodelaceae. Notice that the preferred spelling is “daylily” as one word. Many dictionaries spell it as two words. The word *Hemerocallis* is derived from two Greek words meaning “beauty” and “day,” referring to the fact that each flower lasts only one day. To make up for this, there are many flower buds on each daylily flower stalk, and many stalks in each clump of plants, so, the flowering period of a clump is usually several weeks long. And, many cultivars have more than one flowering period.

Why is the daylily the perfect perennial?

The daylily is sometimes referred to as the perfect perennial because it is:

- Available in a rainbow of colors and a variety of shapes and sizes.
- Able to survive with very little care in a wide range of climates.
- Suitable for all types of landscapes.
- Drought tolerant when necessary, with relatively few pest and disease problems in most gardens. See descriptions of pests and diseases that may be encountered .
- Adaptable to various soil and light conditions.
- Known to bloom from late spring until autumn.

Where did daylilies originate?

The genus *Hemerocallis* is native to Asia. Since the early 1930s, hybridizers in the United States and England have made great improvements in daylilies. Originally, the only colors were yellow, orange, and fulvous red. Today, we have colors ranging from near-whites, pastels, yellows, oranges, pinks, vivid reds, crimson, purple, nearly true-blue, and fabulous blends. Many people are familiar with only the common yellow or orange daylilies which are often seen along roadsides. These daylilies are cultivated forms of the wild types of daylilies which have “escaped” and are growing as if they are wild. All the modern daylilies have been developed through a complicated history of hybridization among these and other wild types.

What are the parts of a daylily? What are the flower colors of daylilies?

Modern hybrid daylilies have a remarkably diverse color range, especially considering that the wild types from which they have been bred were only in shades of yellow, orange, fulvous (i.e., dull reddish yellow), and rosy-fulvous. Today, the only colors notably lacking are pure white and pure blue. Needless to say, hybridizers are avidly pursuing these two colors.

Basic Flower Colors

The outer portion of the daylily flower is considered to be the basic color of the flower. The present daylily color range includes:

- **Yellow** – all shades from the palest lemon, through bright yellow and gold, to orange.
- **Red** – diverse shades of scarlet, carmine, tomato-red, maroon, wine-reds, and blackish-reds.
- **Pink** – from pale pink through rose-pink to rose-red.

- **Purple** – from pale lavender and lilac to deep grape or violet.
- **Melon** or **Cream-Pink** – from palest cream shades to deep cantaloupe shades.

Notes: Buff, Brown, Apricot, and Peach are thought to be variations of pink plus yellow. Near-whites are found among the palest tints of yellow, pink, lavender, or melon.

Throat Color

The center area of the daylily flower is called the throat. In most daylilies, the throat color differs from the rest of the flower. Usually it is a shade of green, yellow, gold, orange, apricot, or melon.

Stamen Color

Like the throat, the stamens may be a different color from the basic flower color and the throat color. Or, the stamens may be of matching color. Usually they are light yellow to greenish. The anthers at the tips of the stamens are often darker in color – sometimes black.

What color patterns are found in daylily flowers?

Most of the following terms are illustrated in the [Daylily Dictionary](#) – just follow the links. Modern daylilies display a complex variety of color patterns that were unknown in the original wild types. The patterns include:

Self

The simplest pattern in which the flower segments (i.e., petals and sepals) are all the same color (e.g., pink and rose). The stamens and throat may be different.

Blend

The flower segments (i.e., petals and sepals) are a blend of two or more colors. The stamens and throat may be different.

Polychrome

The flower segments have an intermingling of three or more colors (e.g., yellow, melon, pink, and lavender). The stamens and throat may be different.

Bitone

The petals and sepals differ in shade or intensity of the same basic color. The petals are the darker shade (e.g., rose pink), while the sepals are lighter (e.g., pale pink). A **Reverse Bitone** has sepals which are darker than the petals.

Bicolor

The petals and sepals are of different colors (e.g., red and yellow or purple and gold). The petals are the darker of the two colors.

Eyed / Banded

The flower has a zone of different color or a darker shade of the same color located between the throat and the tips of the flower segments.

- It is an **Eye** if the zone occurs on both the petals and the sepals.
- It is a **Band** if the zone occurs only on the petals.
- It is a **Halo** if the zone is faint or only lightly visible.
- It is a **Watermark** if the zone is a lighter shade than the rest of the flower segments.

Edged

or

Picoteed

On some daylilies, the edges of the flower segments are either lighter or darker than the segment color. The width of the edge can range from a very narrow “wire-edge” to as much as 1/4 to 1/2 inches. **Tipped** The segment tips, or more frequently just the petal tips, are a different or contrasting color from the body of the segment (sometimes for as much as one third of the length). **Dotted, Dusted**

The surface color of the flower appears to be unevenly distributed over the background color of the bloom rather than being smoothly applied.

- It is **Dusted** if the color appears to be finely misted onto the surface.
- It is **Dotted** if the colors are clumped into larger pools.
- Other terms used to describe uneven coloration include: **Flecked, Flaked, Speckled,** and **Stippled.**

Midrib

This is the center vein running lengthwise through each flower segment. In some cultivars, the midrib is different in color from the rest of the segment. The midrib can be flush with the surface, raised above it, or recessed.

Diamond Dusting

Tiny crystals in the flower's cells reflect light, especially in the sun, to give the flower a sparkling or glistening appearance as if sprinkled with gold, silver, or tiny diamonds.
What flower forms are found in daylilies?

Daylily blooms have a wide array of different forms or shapes. Currently, the AHS officially recognizes the following forms for exhibition purposes: single, double, spider, unusual form, and polymerous flowers:

Single

Daylily flowers that have three petals, three sepals, six stamens and one pistil.

Double

Double daylilies come in several different forms. 'Hose-in-Hose' doubles have extra whorls (layers) of petals so that there appears to be a flower within a flower. 'Peony type' doubles have petaloid (petal-like) tissue on the stamens inside the normal petal whorl.

Spider

A flower whose petals have a length-to-width ratio of at least 4 to 1 (i.e., 4:1). Length is measured with the segment fully extended. Width measurement is taken as the flower grows naturally.

Unusual Form

A class of daylilies based exclusively on the shapes of the petals or sepals. These shapes include Crispate (pinched, twisted, or quilled), Cascade, and Spatulate. One or more of these shapes must be displayed on at least 3 petals or 3 sepals.

Polymerous

Polymerous is an adjective used to designate a daylily with more than the normal number of segments in each floral whorl, i.e., more than the normal three sepals (usually four or five) in the outer whorl and more than three petals (usually the same number as sepals) in the inner whorl.

Multiform

This term is used where the daylily in question has been registered correctly as exhibiting 2 or more of the forms spider, unusual form, polymerous, or double. Examples of a multiform daylily would be one that is both a spider and an unusual form, or a polymerous double.

Form characteristics that are collected on the current registration form, but that are not currently used for exhibition classification.

Sculpted

A term used to describe three-dimensional structural features involving or emanating from the throat, midrib or elsewhere on the petal surfaces. Sculpted forms belong to one of three different groups: Pleated, Cristate (formerly Crested) and Relief.

Other descriptive terms of daylily form or shape characteristics are:

Circular

When viewed from the front of a bloom, the flower appears round. Segments tend to be short, wide and stubby, and generally overlap, giving a full appearance. See also: Recurved

Flat

When viewed from the side of a bloom, flowers are perfectly flat except for the concave throat.

Informal

When viewed from front of bloom, flower segments have no definable shape. Segment placement may be irregular, widely spaced or floppy.

Recurved

When viewed from the side of a bloom, flower segments flare, but the ends of some segments roll back or tuck under. When the sepals are all recurved, and the petals are not, the result is a triangular form, when both sepals and petals recurve, the result is often the round form.

Star

When viewed from front of bloom, flower segments tend to be long and pointed. There is space between the segments, and the shape looks like a three-pointed or six pointed star.

Trumpet

When viewed from side of bloom, flower form resembles a true lily. Segments rise from throat in an upward pattern with little flare.

What other characteristics are used in describing daylilies?

Other characteristics often used in describing daylilies include:

Texture

Texture refers to the surface quality of the tissue structure of the daylily bloom. There are three main types of texture in daylilies: smooth, creped, and ribbed.

Substance

Substance is the thickness of tissue structure, or the ability of the flower to withstand the elements. Substance varies from delicate (i.e., a thin, fragile appearance, but still durable) to heavy and leathery.

Size

There are three categories of bloom size in daylilies:

- **Miniature** – Flowers that are under 3 inches in diameter.
- **Small** – Flowers that are from 3 inches up to 4 1/2 inches in diameter.
- **Large** – Flowers that have blooms 4 1/2 inches and over in diameter.

Branching

Daylily scapes with no branching have slender shoots with a cluster of buds at the top. Branching allows one scape to bear from 10 to 100 buds. Branching may be described as multiple (i.e., a number of side branches) or “three-way” with the “three” (or other appropriate figure) indicating the number of branches per scape. There are three types of branching:

- **Top Branched** – where the branching occurs only near the top of the scape.
- **Well Branched** – where the branching begins near the top of the foliage.
- **Low Branched** – where the branching extends into the foliage.

Blooming Habits

Most daylilies bloom for a single day, beginning in the early morning and lasting until the evening. There are three terms necessary to describe the normal and the atypical bloom habits found in daylilies:

- **Diurnal** – which is the normal day-blooming daylily type.
- **Nocturnal** – where daylilies open late in the afternoon, remain open all night, and close the following morning or early afternoon.
- **Extended** – where individual daylily blooms remain open at least 16 hours. Both diurnals and nocturnals may be extended bloomers.

Blooming Sequence

Daylilies bloom from early spring until frost, depending on the coldness of the climate. To indicate when a particular cultivar blooms during the season, daylily growers use the following terms and abbreviations (or symbols):

- **Extra Early (EE)** – These daylilies are the first to bloom, and vary from March or April in the extreme South, to May or June in the North.
- **Early (E)** – These daylilies bloom three to five weeks prior to the mass of bloom at midseason.
- **Early Midseason (EM)** – These daylilies bloom one to three weeks before the height of bloom of most cultivars.
- **Midseason (M)** – These daylilies bloom at the peak of the daylily bloom in your own garden. This ranges from May in the South to July in the North.

- **Late Midseason (LM)** – These daylilies bloom one to three weeks after the height or peak of bloom in your garden.
- **Late (L)** – These daylilies bloom when most others have finished blooming, usually four to six weeks after the peak of the season.
- **Very Late (VL)** – These daylilies are the last to bloom, often late in the summer in the South, fall in the North.
- **Rebloomer (Re)** – These daylilies bloom more than one time during a single season. Some of these bloom early (e.g., May or June) and then repeat in the fall. Others have a succession of bloom periods, one shortly after another for several months.