

# **PLANTING AND GROWING DAYLILIES AND MONTH BY MONTH DAYLILY CARE**

Daylilies are among the most satisfactory flowering perennials for Mississippi gardens. Few plants give so much color for so little effort.

The botanical name for daylily is *Hemerocallis*, derived from two Greek words 'beauty' and 'day', or beauty for a day. Individual blooms are open for only a day, but there are successive flowers for many days during the blooming season.

## **WHERE TO PLANT**

Most daylilies bloom best in full sun. They will tolerate partial shade, but require at least six hours of direct sun each day.

Any good garden soil is fine for growing daylilies. To get the soil in good condition, spade or till it deeply and work in generous amounts of organic matter, such as well-rotted manure compost, crushed pine bark or peat moss. This organic matter helps to hold moisture and sets as a storehouse for plant nutrients. For maximum performance, plant daylilies in well-drained soil.

## **WHEN TO PLANT**

Daylilies can be planted anytime from spring through fall. In the deep South, early spring or very late fall are the most desirable planting times.

## **HOW TO PLANT**

New plants should be soaked for a few hours or overnight in water or in a weak solution of liquid fertilizer. If you cannot plant immediately, place your plants in a pan of shallow water or cover their roots with moist sand and in a shady place. This will usually keep them safe for a few days.

Cut the foliage back to 6 to 8 inches and trim in an inverted "V" shape. (See attached illustration) Some growers also trim the roots to a moderate 8 to 12 inch length. This facilitates new growth after planting.

The soil where you plant your daylilies should be worked into a good loose condition to a depth of at least a foot before planting. Dig a hole larger than the root mass. Make a mound in the center of the hole. Set the plant in place with the roots spread on each side of the mound.

You should not plant the crown (the point where foliage and roots join), more than one inch below the surface of the soil. (See attached illustration) Firm the soil about the plant, and water well. When all the water has soaked in, finish filling in the soil, leaving a slight depression around the plant. Daylilies should be spaced between 18 and 24 inches apart on each side.

## **WATERING**

Water is essential for good performance. The amount of blooming and reblooming of daylilies depends directly on the wetness or dryness of the soil during the growing season. If natural rainfall is scarce during this time, flower quality will be improved considerably by a thorough soaking to a depth of 6 to 10 inches. This watering should be done each week when there is not a rainfall of at least one inch.

## **FERTILIZATION**

Daylilies do much better when fertilized even though they may flower for years without fertilization under some conditions. An application of a complete fertilizer (8-8-8 or 13-13-13) in the early spring, early March, is recommended. Many growers apply fertilizer again in early fall because daylilies have a brief rest after blooming and then a new surge of growth begins as the plants prepare for the next year 's bloom. Major daylily grower Earl Watts uses 16-4-10 Graco Fertilizer, slow-release in February.

## **MONTH BY MONTH DAYLILY CARE**

The following is a gathering of general tips in caring for a public daylily garden, on a monthly basis. These tips were gathered from many people, over a period of time. Because everyone does things somewhat different, you will note differences on when to do some items. Many months in spring call for fertilizing. This is because different growers fertilize at different times using varied fertilizers. *You must decide for yourself what works for you.*

### **September**

Work on daylily beds, amending soil with organic matter such as fine pine bark, mushroom compost, rotten manures, compost, etc. You can also use reground pine bark with 20% sand and lime for a pH of 6.5. Apply a light application of fertilizer (low nitrogen would be preferred) to stimulate root growth not flush of foliage. If cooled down enough in late Sept, start to divide overgrown clumps. If still hot, wait till October to divide. Dividing in the fall will promote better bloom in the spring. Water as needed. Check and spray for insects as needed.

### **October**

Continue to water as needed while new growth is evident. Continue September work. Apply light application of a low nitrogen fertilizer. You may want to collect and send off a soil sample. If you do not have an automatic irrigation system, now is a good time to lay out your plan for one and get started!

### **November**

Remove dead foliage from daylilies as they die back. Some recommend leaving dead foliage to insulate from frost and clean in spring.

### **December**

Check plants on warm days for insects. Aphids are prone to show up now, however the ladybugs may take care of these, if not get a good insecticide. Properly identify and control insects as needed. Aphids, and thrips are two insect pests that damage daylily plants. You will want to get someone to identify these and other pests, and recommend proper insecticide, that works best in your area.

### **January**

Check daylilies after killing frosts and remove any rotten or dead foliage. Some recommend keeping foliage to insulate from frost and clean in spring. Keep beds weeded and mulched. Continue checking plants on warm days for insects. Recommend spraying for thrips in mid-January.

## **February**

Continue January regiment. Spray again for thrips. Last 2 weeks of February, begin fertilizing with a complete fertilizer with minor elements and a slow release fertilizer. Start removing dead foliage if you have left it on. Major grower Earl Watts uses 16-4-10 Graco Fertilizer, slow release, in February.

## **March**

Remove dead foliage if you have left it on. If you haven't already, apply a complete fertilizer like a (10-10-10 or 8-8-8), a slow release fertilizer, or an organic fertilizer. Check for slugs and treat as needed. Divide clumps if necessary (remember you may disturb the full potential of your blooms by dividing in spring rather than fall) and not done in the fall.

## **April**

Fertilize if not already done. Be sure to water. Early in the month spray or drench plants with a water soluble fertilizer (like a 20-20-20) per directions. Repeat at 2-week intervals throughout bloom season. Weed as needed and mulch well. Check for insects & spray as needed. As blooms start, be on the lookout for daylilies that don't perform well. Flag and replace these in Fall with better performing daylilies.

## **May**

Continue foliar fertilizer program started in April. Weed and remove spent blooms as needed. Supplement rainfall so daylilies receive at least 1 inch per week. Increase during full bloom. Check for insects & spray as needed.

## **June**

Continue to drench or foliar spray with water soluble fertilizer. Remove unwanted seed pods and spent scapes (stalks). Weed as needed. Check for insects & spray as needed.

## **July**

Avoid fertilizers and excessive watering as daylilies tend to rest after blooming (especially dormants). Remove brown outer foliage, old scapes and unwanted seed pods. Check for insects & spray as needed. Gather your "wanted" seeds and plant. Now is a good time to plan and start brand new daylily beds!

## **August**

Continue July regiment until new leaf growth appears then increase watering. Review your "daylily wish lists" and start to plan on where to plant. Check which daylilies you have flagged for replacement because they did not perform well and select their replacement from your list.

**Deadheading** – During the blooming season, generally April through August, each day there will be dead flowers from the day before. These 'deadheads' need to be removed so the new blooms each day will have maximum exposure and visibility to the public.

*Note: Prepared as a courtesy of the Hattiesburg Area Daylily Society  
<http://www.hattiesburgdaylily.com/>*

Illustrations about planting and dividing daylilies are on following pages ...

## Tips for Planting and Dividing Daylilies.



**1. Loosen soil approximately one foot below ground level.**



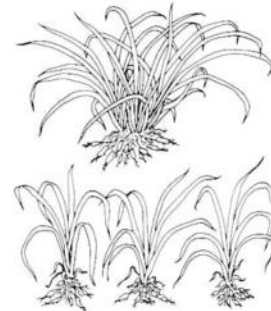
**2. Fashion a cone shape slightly below ground level.**



**3. Spread the roots over the cone, then cover with about 1" of soil.**



**4. Root bound daylilies should be dug out of the ground and separated into individual clumps .**

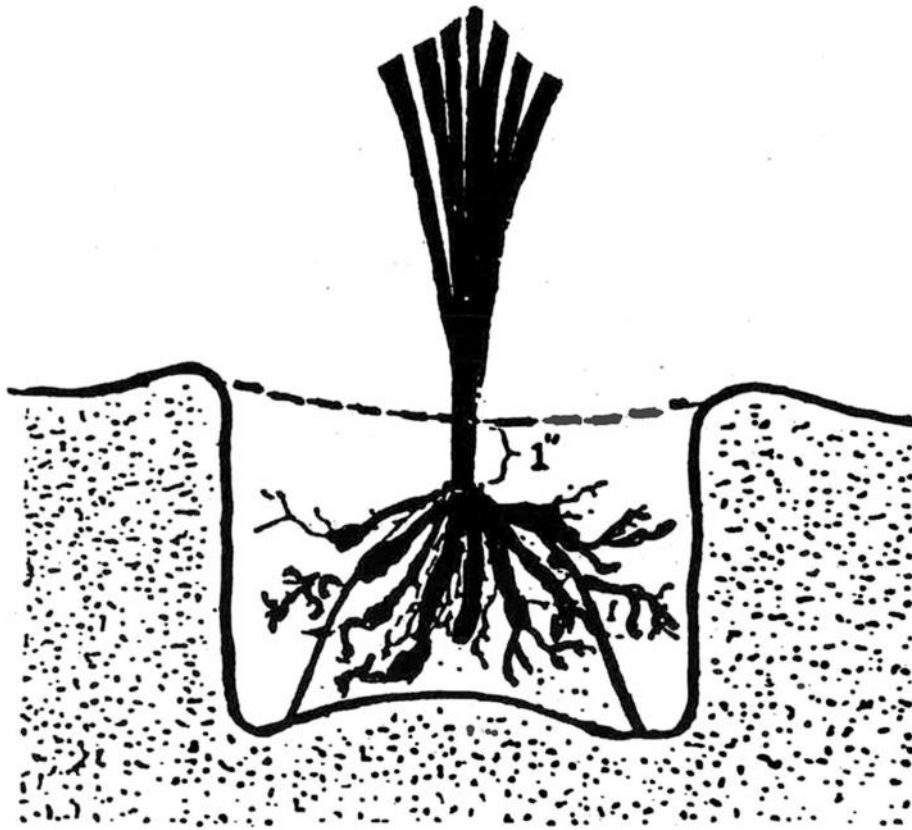


**5. Separate carefully by hand or use a sharp knife.**

# *Planting Daylilies*

Courtesy of

*Hattiesburg Area Daylily  
Society*



It is recommended that daylily roots be spread over a mound of soil and then covered with soil. By spreading the roots in this way it is possible to eliminate air pockets. If air pockets are left around the roots, there is a chance that rot may occur.