

# OVER THE GARDEN GATE

The Newsletter of the Valley Gardeners Club

June 2017

Page 1

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Valley Gardener's Club. There are purposely no pictures in the newsletters to allow for less expensive black and white printing. Always looking for submissions, critiques or suggestions. Send to: Editor: Donna Crawford, [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto:sparrowsong@eastlink.ca).

## LOOKING AT DAYLILIES

Day lilies have been called "flowers for the intelligent idler". In this day, when we have so little time to spend on our gardens, but may want to make an impression, they are the perfect choice. They are among the most forgiving in soil type and maintenance, harbour few pests and diseases, have lush foliage when not in bloom and an infinite variety of size, shape and colour when they are in bloom.

Daylilies have a distinguished history. Chinese descriptions of daylilies date from about 3000 BC, and were mainly grown for their nutritional and medicinal qualities. It took a long time for them to reach Europe, where John Gerard first used the term daylily in his 1597 herbal. After that it travelled fast and was in the Americas only 100 years later.

Settlers beautified their homesteads with the tough, easily propagated transplants from the old country, mainly two of the wild species - tawny (*fulva*) and lemon (*liliasphodelus*). These escaped and are familiar roadside plants in many parts of the country. The term *Hemerocallis* did not appear until 1793 when Linnaeus borrowed from the Greek meaning 'beauty for a day'.

There are an ever-growing number of species *Hemerocallis* coming from the wilds of Siberia south through China, Japan and Korea. The known species have grown from a dozen at the turn of the 20th century to more than double that now. For a plant that has been around for so long, it wasn't until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that real strides in knowledge and breeding began.

Although the British started the hybridization of the daylily with George Yeld in 1892, it fell to the Americans to make great strides in the modern hybrid. This is primarily due to the pioneer efforts of Dr. A.B. Stout. In 1911 he joined the staff of

the New York Botanical Garden and starting in 1920 performed some 50,000 crosses resulting in the introduction of approximately 100 cultivars. From his legacy we now have thousands of hybridizers and in excess of 48,500 registered named cultivars - a collector's dream .

A day lily grows from fleshy roots, in a grassy clump with many scapes(or stems) bearing multiple blossoms each of which lasts one day. Modern breeding has given us more or less blooms on each scape or stem. The bud count or the number of buds on each scape can range from 10 to over 50. Older cultivars tend to set all their buds at once and open off and on til none are left. Newer types are bred to produce buds throughout the blooming season and will probably cover the plant over the blooming season. These are called bud builders.

Collectors and breeders can get carried away with having every cultivar and doing many crosses. But for you and I, the ordinary gardener, I recommend that you decide the colour and height you would like to see in the spot you have chosen to display your daylily, then find a reliable nursery and pick one or five as close as possible to your needs. The closer the nursery to where you live, the better the chance your choice will live happily in your area, and even better if you can see the plant in bloom. You know all about the colour in pretty pictures....

To get the full benefit of bloom throughout the summer, note that daylilies are classed in catalogues as early, mid season, late, etc. Don't worry about whether it says dormant or evergreen or anything in between. With the snow we have, most are dormant in the winter anyway but most evergreens do better in the south.

Also don't worry about diploid and tetraploid - it refers to chromosome counts and who cares? The tets have taller stronger stems and brighter colours but many the dips are more elegant, with softer colours. Both have a place in your garden.

Daylilies are good for just about any use in your landscape. However, a good rule of thumb is that simplicity produces the greatest impact. Good planning, care and taste is essential to any landscape plan. For example, one of the most impressive use of a daylily I have seen was a single clump of fiery red blossoms seen across a wide expanse of lawn and backed by tall evergreens. It drew your eye like nothing else. Massed planting of a single colour are also particularly stunning.

If massing, keep to single flowers of one light colour. Dark colours tend to disappear into the shadows. Double or ruffled blooms are intriguing but tend to

hang on the plant and look messy and the last thing you want to do is dead head a mass planting every day.

The lush foliage of the daylily softens hard edges along a road or driveway, as a low hedge to divide the lawn from the play area or as a foundation planting against the house, outbuilding, or along a line fence.

When edging a long path where people tend to saunter and observe, use your most special bicolour or other treasures interspersed between complimentary solid colours. For short paths it is better to stay with a single colour.

As a foundation planting, you do not have to worry about snow falling off the roof as you do with evergreens or shrubs. The only rule is to keep the plants away from the roof drip line or the blossoms will be a soggy mess. If you plant under the overhang, be prepared to do a lot of watering.

As a mass planting of daylilies does not have a good show of foliage in early spring, it allows you the pleasure of tucking spring bulbs in amongst them. Daffodils and crocus are great as they are long lived; tulips and hyacinths are a pain as it takes work to keep them blooming and the point of daylilies is low maintenance gardening.

Of course daylilies are only in blossom from mid to late summer which makes them a great no care plant for the cottage, but not great in a garden where you want all season colour.

In this case you will need a little planning. Spur of the moment purchases at the garden centre or plant sale do not always work in a mixed planting. Avoid the hodge podge effect with plants stuck in here and there and think about such things as :

- Does the spot you choose for your daylily need a tall plant or a short one.
- What other plants will be blooming at the same time . You want complimentary colours; you don't want a bright red and yellow gaillardia beside a peach daylily with a purple eyezone.
- Can the spot stand the bold statement of a daylily with a distinct eyezone or bicolour.
- If you have multiple bright daylilies, tone them down with some whites or other neutral colours blooming at the same time.

Short daylilies and miniature are wonderful in the rock garden. They are also great for container planting. Containers and raised beds are wonderful for showing off single special specimens. Pots have to be large and should be filled with a soil high in organic matter such as compost. They will require careful watering and fertilization to bloom and stay lush. Pots on the deck or patio should be light weight or on wheels to allow switching as blooming fades.

It is safest to overwinter by removing from pots and planting in the garden; it is probably easiest as container plants will have to be divided annually anyway. If you have too many in pots, you can lay the pots on their side close together in a sheltered location where there will be a good snow cover and cover well with evergreen boughs.

For planting in the garden, daylilies do well in any garden soil, preferably with a pH of 5.5 to 7. They do not like wet feet, but should have a moisture retentive soil. Their fleshy roots will hold the plant over a dry spell, but will need watering for good bud set and bloom.

Put plants where they get as much direct sun as possible, although some of the darker shades benefit from a little shade in the hottest part of the day to prevent colour fading. If you have full shade - plant Hosta.

I recommend that you plant your daylily in a soil of only moderate fertility - a shovelful of compost or other humus well worked into the planting hole will do. Too much nitrogen will make wonderful clumps of grassy foliage for you. In the spring you can sprinkle a little 5-10-10 around to encourage bloom formation.

To plant, loosen and amend the soil to about 18", make a hole a foot deep, then make a little mound in the centre and spread the fleshy roots over it. Never plant the crown of a daylily more than 2" below the soil or it may not bloom. Backfill a bit, water, fill in some more, water. A little transplant fertilizer added to the water won't hurt. Make sure the soil is well packed around the roots. Keep it well watered until the new growth starts and the plant is established.

The last thing to remember when planting your daylily is label it. I have yet to find a perfect labelling system. Plastic breaks with the weight of the snow in the winter. Names tend to disappear from wood. I thought the aluminum and copper labels were wonderful until I saw a crow fly off with one. They love bright objects. That is why you see many daylilies which appear at the plant sale as named variety, cultivar unknown.

Daylilies can stay in place for years, so leave at least 24" of space between them or you will be dividing more often than you may care to. Don't get upset if your daylily is not the exact shade you expected the first year. It usually doesn't show its true colours until it is happily into its second year.

So you want to divide your daylily. If you are like me and don't much like work, your daylily clumps may have reached a foot or more at the base. Forget about those books that say "place two forks back to back" or such nonsense. You would have to Be Paul Bunyan with Babe the Blue Ox to get that clump out.

If you just want to share a piece with a friend, slice down the side of the clump with a spade, making sure that you are well into the root system. Wash the division down with a jet of water, and then clean up any broken or chopped roots. Inspect the clump and find what looks like a natural division between fans. Ease the resulting clump apart with your fingers into smaller clumps of three or four fans. If your fingers won't work, insert a screwdriver or knife and give it a twist until you hear a crack. Grab the roots near the crown and wiggle it apart. Trim the foliage back to about 4". You may also trim back the roots.

If you want to dig up and divide the whole big clump, feel free to cut the clump into pie shaped wedges with a sharp spade, and then ease the wedges from the outside edge and continue with the method just described. Don't look horrified - daylilies are tough. After such brutal surgery it may be best to allow the wound to heal overnight before replanting.

This has been an awful lot of words about such a low maintenance plant. Suffice to say that daylilies will provide you with many years of pleasure for little effort. For those of you with the collector's gene in your blood you will probably be hooked for a lifetime. Many such infected individuals have made extensive use of the internet to pass on their knowledge. Just type "daylilies" in your search engine and you are good for a week at least.

### **CANADIAN GARDENING 150 YEARS AGO - DID YOU KNOW?**

One of the finest surviving examples of Victorian Gardens in North America, the Halifax Public Gardens began on Common land by the Nova Scotia Horticultural Society which had been formed in 1836 under the advocacy of Joseph Howe, a politician and journalist. The NSHS's aim was to advance the art of horticulture and the science of botany through the cultivation of new varieties of plants and cultural

practices. Mr. Howe sought to have a garden for the society supported by public donations, and grants from legislature. Through his efforts a 5.5 acre piece of the Halifax Commons was provided to the society free of rent in 1841. In 1847, Horticultural Hall was erected in the Gardens and served as the meeting room for members of the Society. To help fund its operation the Society sold memberships for the public to visit the gardens once a week. They also sold nursery stock and charged for entrance to band concerts

Twenty-five years later (1866) another politician, John MacCulloch, created the first city-owned public garden on a 2-acre piece of waste land adjacent to an artificial pond and the NSHS garden. While on a trip to Paris, Mr. MacCulloch fell in love with a public square, which he used as the basis for the design of the Public Garden, which was officially opened in 1867 by Chief Justice Sir William Young.

Mr. McCulloch's successor William Barron, also successfully set his sights on having the city purchase the People's Garden owned by the deeply indebted NSHS. He combined it with the adjoining Public Garden.

### CLUB NOTES

- Just a reminder that our July and August club meetings will be held at the Irving Centre at Acadia. Meetings will now be held in the downstairs classroom; we will not be in the auditorium as in the past. To get to the classroom from the lobby take the stairs or elevator to the lower level; the classroom is on the right. It will be marked. Much cosier as it is tables and chairs rather than the tiered seats with the speaker at a podium.
- Robin Whidden, Program Chair, is in the process of moving the September Corn Boil to The Wolfville Farmers Market. That will allow us to eat and have our speaker and business meeting all in one place without coping with weather conditions. If you are able to help Robin with the Corn Boil, please speak to her.
- Philip Longmire and Julie Benson were our delegates at the NSAGC Convention in Baddeck. Too bad more from our club were not able to attend. It is a great time with wonderful speakers and a chance to mix and mingle with members from all over the province. You should start thinking about attending the 2018 Convention, which will be held the first weekend in June in Bridgewater with the theme "Springing to Life". Make a little note to self on your next year's calendar.
- Our club is still looking for a Vice President. Being Vice is an easy job and will give you a couple of years to learn the ropes before jumping in the deep end. If you are interested at all in seeing the club survive, more of you have to take on the volunteer mantle and inject some life into things. The Club should be a fun thing where we all work together for a love of community and gardens.

● The Executive has decided to do away with the Refreshment Committee. It is very difficult to provide refreshments at Kingstec without a kitchen, and since we are supposed to vacate the room by 9pm there is not a lot of time. The conversational end of the meeting can still take place but you will have to provide your own beverage if you so desire. No one was willing to take on the refreshments, so it is presumed to not be of importance. The decision can always be changed in the future if desired.

## MENTORS

The following is a list of members who have volunteered to mentor new (or old) gardeners:

**Barry Yoell** 902-542-9240 [b.e.yoell@xcountry.tv](mailto:b.e.yoell@xcountry.tv) Interests: most stuff.

**Shirley Marston** 902-542-9323 [shirlmarston@hotmail.com](mailto:shirlmarston@hotmail.com) Interests: Perennials, roses, shrubs.

**Rosaleen McDonald** 902-542-2474 [rosacork@eastlink.ca](mailto:rosacork@eastlink.ca) Interests: Seeding, alpines, herbs, perennials.

**Ericka Crowell** [secrowl@eastlink.ca](mailto:secrowl@eastlink.ca) Interests: Woodland gardens, water gardening, shrubs and perennials.

**Alison Scott Butler** 902-670-8612 [ascottbutler@gmail.com](mailto:ascottbutler@gmail.com) Interests: Vegetables, herbs, small plants, local.

**Larry Marsters** 902-681-5129 Interests: Any.

**Donna Crawford** 902-365-2168 [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto:sparrowsong@eastlink.ca) Interests: Club activities (program, Show, Plant Sale, etc), perennials, herbs, vegetables.

## ON THE WEB

*Some of the most beautiful gardens in the province are those planted by nature along our highways and byways. Starting with coltsfoot to brighten our early spring, the lupins, Amelanchier and on to summer's black eyed susans, we whiz past these beauties in our rush to get from one place to another. The yellow, white and purple combinations in the late summer and fall are spectacular and ever changing over a long period. Few of us in our gardens are able to maintain such a spectacular combination to sustain constant colour. But what are these plants we drive past every day? It is an interesting study, especially since many of the plants are originally escapees from home gardens. Very few are native. One wonders what the plant life would look like if settlers hadn't brought slips of things from their home countries. It is an interesting study to took up what these roadside beauties are. Here are some sources:*

- <https://novascotia.ca/agri/documents/weed-identification-guide.pdf>

- <http://versicolor.ca/nativeplants/>

A little test for you:

- <https://winterwoman.net/2010/07/01/roadside-weeds/>

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **June 12, 2017 - Valley Gardeners meeting.** An educational tour of Jamie Ellison's garden at 10 Klondyke St. in Kentville. Jamie tells us how to start a rock garden. **Starts sharp at 6:30 pm. Note the change of time.** We will proceed to Kingstec at about 7:30 for our business meeting and to hear about this summer's events.  
To get to Jamie's : You can park on Justice Way and walk down old the rail trail at the end of it toward Miners Marsh (you will end up on Klondyke) OR park in the municipal parking lot and walk about 2 minutes on the Miners Marsh trail to where it comes out at Klondyke St. OR you can drive down Leverett Ave. from Main Street just past the Cornwallis Inn, where Linday's Funeral Home used to be. Jamie's is to the left on the first turn. You can park on the street or on Maple or Chestnut. Please do not park in front of Jamie's as you will block traffic and prevent us from seeing the garden, which butts right up to the street.  
Although the weather is saying "mostly cloudy" for the 12th, should it change and be a downpour, the visit to Jamie will be cancelled but the 7:30 meeting at Kingstec will still be on.
- **June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017** - Halifax Garden Festival taking place at Victoria Park in Halifax (across from the public gardens) from 9-5 pm. Free!
- **June 24, 2017** - Daylily Daze, 9:00 - 3:00 at the First Baptist Church Hall, 1839 Hammonds Plains Rd.
- **July 8, 2017** - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Under the banner "Walking in the Footsteps of the Past", this year's offering spans 3 days, starting with "Wine & Roses" in the Historic Gardens on Friday evening (5 p.m. to 7 p.m.), the House & Garden Tour on Saturday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), and a series of activities on Sunday.
- **July 15, 2017** - Valley Gardeners Members Garden Tour. We will be visiting gardens at Rena Nixon's and at Carol Goodwin's garden. Tea following will be on Alice Goodwin's lawn. Please bring some finger foods for the tea. More on times, directions, etc to follow.
- **July 15, 2017** - Champlain Garden Club Tea and Flower Show, Royal Canadian Legion, Annapolis Royal. 2-4 pm. \$5.00 entrance fee.
- **18 July 2017** - Wilmot Flower Show and Tea, Kingston Lions Hall, 2-4 pm, admission \$5.00.

- **August 12, 2017** - Valley Gardeners Flower and Vegetable Show celebrating Canada 150. Kingstec. Entries from 8 am to 10 am. Open to the public from 1-4 pm. Free will offering tea. Contact [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto:sparrowsong@eastlink.ca) for copy of the Show Schedule. Entries from the general public or members welcome. Committee needs volunteers...lots.
- **August 19, 2017** - Charing Cross Flower Show at the New Ross Fair Grounds.
- **August 19, 2017** - Valley Gardeners Summer Tour (replaces the bus tour) to the Tangled Gardens and Grand Pre Park Gardens. More on this later.

## LEAVES

*I can relate to the following:*

*"It always amazes me how enthralled collectors get over primroses. I think these modest little flowers create as much excitement as orchids or rare stamps. I know myself that if I want a special one I want it very badly and write round to everyone who may have it. Then I pay a very high price, and ten to one it won't like me and disappears after a year or so." - Margery Fish, 1958. An All the Year Garden.*

## FROM THE GARDEN RECIPE BOX

*I know the first peas of the season are a delight on their own, especially straight from the pod while standing in the garden. But here are a couple of ways to dress things up for company or the family picnic.*

### **MINTED GREEN PEA SALAD**

1 ½ lbs. fresh shelled peas  
 3 tbsp. mayonnaise  
 1 tsp. lemon juice  
 ½ tsp. sugar  
 1 tsp. chopped fresh mint or to taste  
 1/8 tsp. salt  
 ½ c. chopped celery  
 Boston lettuce  
 Lemon slices & mint leaves to garnish  
 Cook peas until barely tender; drain. In large bowl, blend mayonnaise, lemon juice, sugar, mint, and salt. Stir in celery and peas. Line platter with lettuce leaves; spoon mixture on top and garnish with lemon and mint. Chill.

### **FRENCH PEAS (Serves 4)**

125g (4oz) butter  
 125ml (4fl oz) water  
 500g (1lb) fresh or thawed peas  
 1 small onion, finely chopped  
 ½ Iceberg lettuce, shredded  
 1 tsp sugar  
 salt, freshly ground black pepper  
 Melt butter in water in a large saucepan. Bring to boil. Add peas, onion, lettuce and sugar with a pinch of salt. Cover and cook over gentle heat for 10 minutes or until peas are tender. Remove lid and cook until all liquid has evaporated. Add plenty of black pepper. Serve hot.

**COLD MINTED GREEN PEA SOUP***4 tablespoons butter**4 green onions, chopped**1 pound frozen or fresh green peas**2 ½ cups vegetable broth or stock**3 Tbsp. chopped fresh mint leaves**2 ½ cups milk**salt and freshly ground black pepper  
to taste**1 pinch white sugar (optional)**½ cup light whipping cream**2 sprigs fresh mint leaves for garnish**Melt butter in a large saucepan or Dutch  
oven over low heat. Add the 4 chopped  
green onions, and cook until softened, but  
not brown.**Stir in the peas, vegetable stock, and 3 Tbsp  
chopped fresh mint. Increase heat to  
medium, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat  
back to low, cover, and let simmer for about  
30 min. If you are using frozen peas, 15  
minutes is enough.**Using a large slotted spoon, remove about 3  
tablespoons of the peas, and set aside for  
garnish. Pour the soup into a blender or food  
processor along with the milk, and puree until  
smooth. Season with salt and pepper to  
taste. Throw in a pinch of sugar if desired.  
Allow the soup to cool to room temperature,  
then refrigerate until chilled. Pour the soup  
into 4 serving bowls. Swirl 1 tablespoon of  
light cream into each one, then garnish with  
reserved peas and sprigs of mint.***KNOW YOUR CLUB EXECUTIVE AND CHAIRS**

*The following people work hard at keeping our club up and running. Feel free to express your opinions to any of them. Some, like the Show, Plant Sale and Communications Committee are looking for volunteers as well. There are only names, no contact info. Should you wish to contact one of the named people please drop me a line or call and I will provide the info.*

*Executive: President: Philip Longmire. Vice President: Vacant. Secretary: Cinda Kaulkman. Treasurer: Gerri Robertson. Program Chair: Robin Whidden.*

*Communications Chair: Donna Crawford.*

*Show Chair: Allison Magee.*

*Publicity: Lucie Giroux*

*Plant Sale: Larry Marsters*

*Membership: Elizabeth Yoell.*

**THIS SPACE IS PROVIDED FOR NOTES YOU MAY WISH TO MAKE ON IDEAS TO TAKE FORWARD TO THE NEXT MEETING.**