



*Above, a daylily display from Mary and Eddie Gage's (now closed) Spring Creek Daylily Farm in Spring. Mary recalls, "Those cut out places enable old folks like me, who cannot crawl around on their knees anymore, to sit on a low stool and reach plants in a raised bed for weeding and such."*

## Daylily Culture in Texas

*(Don't Be Misled by  
Advice for Other Regions!)*  
by MARY GAGE

- Best location for growing daylilies: a well-drained, neutral-to-slightly acid soil in full sun or at least 6 hours per day. Daylilies do not do well under oaks. Their shade is too solid and roots too shallow. Daylilies will grow under pine trees (dappled shade and deep root system).
- "Good drainage" bears repeating. Daylilies need plenty of water but can tolerate being too dry better than too wet. More die from overwatering than underwatering.
- Best time to plant in this area: October — early enough for a good root system to develop before freezing weather. Spring planting should wait until danger of freezing is

past. If you must plant in June, July, August or September, best to pot and keep in a semi-shaded area until October.

- Loosen bed soil to 12+/- inches. Raised 6" above ground to insure good drainage. Add compost, peat moss, sand if needed to amend the soil. Inside planting hole, build a soil mound. Set crown (point where leaves join roots) atop mound. Spread roots around mound. Replace soil. When finished, crown should be no more than 1" below soil surface. Water in well but very little more, if any, for the first week until you see new growth.
- Best daylily mulch: Pine needles! They do not pack down and cover the plant deeper as a ground up mulch would, but stay light and airy, shading the ground from the sun in the summer time as well as holding in moisture. As they decay they keep the acidity in the soil.
- Divide daylilies every 3-5 years. If they get too root bound, the whole clump may die.
- A well balanced fertilizer with trace elements is best. Avoid fertilizers with a high middle number. Too much phosphorous ties up other elements daylilies need. Super Thrive, a plant vitamin, not a fertilizer, is an excellent product for daylilies and any other plants as well.
- If severe freezing is expected, cover plants, especially evergreens, with row cover fabric.
- If a large clump with full foliage freezes, trim foliage back before it dries and makes an airtight cover that prevents air circulation. When the weather heats up it will cook the daylily and cause rot. (I learned that from experience)
- Daylilies have three types of foliage habit.
  1. **Evergreen daylilies** keep green foliage the entire year unless there is severe freezing weather. Some evergreens are too tender to grow in the northern states.



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2. **Dormant daylilies** lose foliage completely even in our warmer winters. Some dormant daylilies will not grow here as they need cold and cannot take our hot summers.
3. **Semi-evergreen daylilies** lose some or most foliage in winter.