

# How exotic!

## Daylilies provide striking beauty in any garden

Although I am a promoter of the beauty and benefits that native plants and flowers bring to our gardens, I have to say that those gardens would be less beautiful if they did not also include the flowers that have come to be called 'exotics.' The Bridge of Flowers is one place you can see natives and exotics blooming in harmony.

Daylilies first bloomed in Asia, where they were used medicinally. Four

hundred years ago they arrived in Europe and hybridizing began, and continues today. We are all familiar with the roadside daylily, *Hemerocallis fulva*, and many hybrids resemble them, except that the range of color has exploded. Daylilies have also been hybridized to change petal shape and arrangement in ways that make the flower much more complicated.

I have a number of daylilies in my garden, but the first one I bought — more than 30 years ago — came from Ollalie Daylily Farm in South Newfane, Vt. I had heard that the Farm had wonderful daylilies, but it was really hard to persuade the owner to actually sell them.

Christopher Darrow was the new, young farmer caring for, and presumably selling, daylilies that his grandfather, Dr. George Darrow, had hybridized in his retirement from the United States Department of Agriculture. The young farmer showed me around, and when I finally decided on a daylily to buy, he shook his head, "No, I can't let you have that one."

He repeated his sad "no" twice more, until I finally said, "OK, what can I buy?" His choice and my purchase was a lovely yellow daylily —



FOR THE RECORDER/PAT LEUCHTMAN  
The daylily has been hybridized into hundreds of colors and forms. Regency Fortune is shades of yellow with ruffled edges.

name lost, alas, except for the prefix Ollalie. Since then I have added any number of daylilies to my garden.

Ollalie Daylily Farm has grown, and now sells more than 2,500 daylily cultivars, including those that Darrow has hybridized, like the citrine hybrids that are 6 feet tall or more. If you visit the farm to choose your own from the field, you might also want to pick your own blueberries before you leave.



PAT LEUCHTMAN  
BETWEEN THE ROWS

His grandfather also kicked off the pick-your-own movement, and has the Darrow blueberry to prove it.

Brunnera, a woodland plant, originated in Europe and Asia, but it is a current favorite in American gardens. In 2012, Brunnera "Jack Frost" was named the perennial plant of the year. It grows to about 12 inches tall with a spread of about 2 feet. It is the lacy white pattern on the green foliage, resembling frost, that inspired the name. Brunnera is sturdy and hardy, happy in the shade garden where its handsome foliage attracts attention. In the spring, it blooms with clusters of small blue flowers that are reminiscent of forget-me-nots.

Hostas are another shade-loving plant that can be used as a featured plant, or as a ground cover. It originated in Asia and can be traced back 800 years, but it was not until the early 19th century that it came to Europe and attracted attention. Nowadays, it is hard to find any shade garden that does not include a hosta or two — unless the gardener has given up because the deer love it so much.

There are now hundreds of hosta species and thousands of cultivars. A browse through any hosta catalog will show hostas in a range of color,



FOR THE RECORDER/PAT LEUCHTMAN  
The Ghislaine de Feligonde rose was hybridized by British breeder David Austin. Pat Leuchtman had it growing in Heath, when she lived there, and the petite flowers were a delight.

from a brilliant yellow green to a blue green, and in multiple sizes, from plants with large leaves and a spread of more than 36 inches, to tiny miniature hostas, like Mouse Ears.

Hosta hybridizers always seem to be finding new looks for these plants. Wiggles and Squiggles is a new cultivar this year, with long slim foliage and wavy edges in a bright shade of yellow-green. It is only about 8 inches tall, with 18-inch scapes and purple flowers, but will make a clump that is 2 feet wide.

Those hosta lovers who have trouble with the depredations of deer might find an

answer in a collection of the miniatures. Some have foliage as small as 3 inches. Like their larger relatives, they come in bright yellow-green shades, like the Limey Lisa, and in blue-gray, like Judy Blue Eyes with its lavender flowers.

Needless to say, the rose is one of my favorite immigrants. Roses originated in China more than 5,000 years ago. When we lived in Beijing, I didn't understand the translation "monthly rose." It was not until later that I learned a better translation would be "ever-blooming rose." Indeed, it is the ever-blooming gene in this Chinese rose that has en-

abled a world of ever-blooming roses to be hybridized.

My new garden does not have room for dozens of roses, but I have discovered Knock Out roses and Kordees hybrids that will bloom throughout a long season and will be disease resistant.

The Bridge of Flowers has many roses that bloom from June into the fall. People ask me to choose the best season of bloom, but it is impossible to name — it depends on your favorite flowers.

A visit to the Bridge of Flowers in the heart of Shelburne Falls inspires many people — suggesting flowers they end up wanting to add to their own gardens. It is even possible to buy plants that

bloom on the Bridge of Flowers.

Once again, the Annual Bridge of Flowers plant sale will be held on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon across from the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center on Main Street in Shelburne Falls. Plants come from the Bridge of Flowers, and local gardeners, with annuals from LaSalles in Whately. It will be held rain or shine and you'd better get there early.

Pat Leuchtman had written and gardened since 1980. She lives in Greenfield. Readers can leave comments at her Web site: [www.commonweeder.com](http://www.commonweeder.com)



FOR THE RECORDER/PAT LEUCHTMAN  
Miniature hostas can be planted in the garden, singly in pots, or put together as a collection.

ATTENTION CONTRACTORS & HOMEOWNERS

**GELINAS**  
WASTE • RECYCLE • LANDSCAPE

Debris Dumpsters - Clean-Outs  
30, 15, 10 & 6 yard Roll-Off Dumpsters  
Roofing/Concrete/Brush Containers  
Call a Representative Today! (978) 544-6511  
or write us at [www.gelinascompany.com](http://www.gelinascompany.com)

For Mother's Day

**SPRING COLOR IN BLOOM!**

EVERGREENS  
FLOWERING TREES  
SHADE TREES  
SPRING FLOWERING SHRUBS  
SPECIMENS  
ARBORVITAE

Fragrant Viburnum  
Peony • Azalea • Lilacs  
Rhododendron

**SUMMER FAVORITES!**  
Knockout & Homerun  
Everblooming Roses  
Endless Summer Hydrangea

**BEAUTIFUL ORNAMENTAL TREES!**  
Dogwood • Plum • Crabapple • Cherry • Serviceberry  
Stewartia • Japanese Maples • AND MORE!

**Spring & Summer**