

the PETALOID

Patriot Daylily Society • C/O Partridge Hill Gardens 23 Partridge Hill Road Dudley, MA 01571-6201

www.patriotdaylilysociety.org

Let's Fling into Spring on Saturday, April 1 Join us for Curt Hanson's presentation and lecture

by Program Chair Bobbie Brooks



Curt Hanson's *H. 'Cognisant Dissonance' (l)* and *H. 'Waves Become Wings'(r)*.

Are you tired of winter? Ready for a little daylily excitement for the coming spring season? Want to get together for a great meeting with fellow daylily collectors? Want to learn what all the ruckus is about with the daylily craze? Indulge your impulse and come join Patriot Daylily Society for our "Fling into Spring" meeting Saturday, April 1.

We welcome our fellow New England Hemerocallis Club members (CDS, NEDS, Maine) and all fellow gardeners who are interested in learning what all the daylily-plant hype is about. We know we must be doing something right with over 10,000 daylily cultivars in circulation.

At the April meeting, hybridizer extraordinaire Curt Hanson will give a presentation and lecture on daylily hybrids and gardens.

Curt's Crintonic Gardens is located above the Chagrin River Valley in northeast Ohio.

Curt is dedicated to creating beautiful and distinctive daylilies rigorously selected for



Curt at work hybridizing at Crintonic Garden.

consistency and vigor under typical zone 5 garden conditions, without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

Curt has received the AHS Bertrand Farr Award as outstanding hybridizer; and the top daylily of the year, Stout Medal, for his cultivar, *H. 'Primal Scream'*. Who better to come and share his wealth of knowledge? His daylily hybridizing focuses on color, shapes and height, as well as maintaining good, hardy plant habits. Just wait until you see what new intros Curt has to offer for 2006.

Curt is a plantsman who also collects and hybridizes Rhododendrons, Magnolias, Hosta, Oaks, Epimediums and Asarum (gingers). He is an artist as well and his photography is breathtaking.

Don't miss this opportunity to see a wonderful presentation. There is no fee to join us.

Schedule of Events

12:00-12:30pm - Social time and refreshments

12:30pm -12:45pm - Business meeting

Door Prizes

Curt Hanson - "The Path 'To Hanson Hems"

Live auction of plants

Welcoming new members

Display tables, catalogs, seeds

PDS Library available

President's Message

from Ellen Laprise

An open invitation to join us for Patriot Daylily Society's special event.

PDS is excited to host Curt Hanson's presentation "The Path To Hanson Hems" where Curt will explain his gardening methods, present pictures of his exciting new introductions and perhaps show us a few pictures of his newest seedlings. His catalogs, with pictures of his 2006 intros, will be available at the meeting and several of Curt's cultivars will be auctioned. We extend an open invitation to all AHS members - and anyone interested in gardening - to join us for what we think will be a really exciting presentation.

PDS meets once a month at the Bedford Library. We've got a great schedule planned for this year including a plant sale May 21, plant trading begins during this meeting, more speakers and a planned tour of gardens this summer. We are working hard to create interesting programs that focus on daylilies as well as integrate other programs about general gardening practices. Our group is active and vital. We welcome you to join us.

What a wonderful meeting we had in March, building enthusiasm about gardening again as the weather warms. Patsy Cunningham provided us with a terrific show of PDS member's seedlings including George Doorakian, Bobbie Brooks, Mary Collier Fisher, Sandi Jacques and several of Patsy's own. We appreciate our webmaster Patsy's hard work.

Spring brings so much in the way of joy and promise but this year has certainly brought its share of sadness. The loss of our friend and fellow PDS member Marty Wray has been difficult to bear. Marty was truly a special person and she will be greatly missed by us all.

- Ellen

President: Ellen Laprise, gentian1@charter.net • **Vice President:** Martha Pike, mapike@adelphia.net

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Coconuts for your daylilies *by Patsy Cunningham*

Like most gardeners, I enjoy looking around nursery centers to see what new gardening tools and products are available. While wandering around Worm's Way, a hydroponics store near Worcester, I ran into a number of planting mediums I had never seen. One was a hard, dry little brick called coir. The packaging described coir as "expanding coconut fiber medium". It was midwinter when it can be hard to find good seed starting mixes at most nurseries, so on the recommendation of the staff I gave coir a try.

I started with a small brick, added the recommended amount of water and after soaking was pleasantly surprised with the soft fluffy medium produced. I used it to start some rose seeds. The first difference I noticed was how easy it was to water. There was no crusting at the surface and even if it was left to almost completely dry, it was easily re-wetted with no surface pooling or runoff. When it was time to start my daylily seeds that winter, I went back and bought a big block of coir. The large block produces 2.5 cubic feet of medium, almost equivalent to a full bale of Pro-Mix. I figured on mixing up about half the block at a time, but couldn't cut the block. A fellow rosarian also bought the large block and was only able to cut it in half with a chain saw. I mixed the coir with water in an inexpensive covered plastic clothes storage tub (you need at least the 18 gallon size for this). This gave me plenty of seed starting medium and potting "soil" for the entire winter.

After the seedlings were up and growing, I found coir had other advantages. For the first time, I had no fungus gnats buzzing around the seedlings and eating the seedling roots. There was no damping off at all, nor was there any fungus or algae growth on the soil surfaces. I was sold on using coir for seed starting and have used it since. Coir is also almost completely dry, fully compressed, and "sterile". It's stored indoors on nice clean shelves versus being outside in wet, dirty nursery yards where bagged mediums can

become infested with insects or pathogens. Because coir is dry, won't freeze into an unusable soil popsicle when you need it mid-winter – even if stored in an outside shed. Until it's reconstituted, it's easy to transport and store because of its small size and light weight.

Coir is often compared to peat moss. Both are considered to be a renewable resource. Sphagnum peat is deposited over hundreds and of years in bogs. It accumulates only about 2mm per year in the bog and could become depleted with poor management. Coconut coir is produced from the pith of coconut shells and is renewable. In India and Sri Lanka alone, 10 billion coconuts are harvested yearly. Coir is used for stuffing mattresses, auto seats, ropes, for erosion prevention and more. The shells are shredded, sorted, then aged and rinsed by rainfall for a season in large concrete yards.

There are differences between the two mediums. Peat has an acid pH, about 3.5-4.5, while coir is 5.7-6.7, closer to the needs of daylilies and roses. Peat may contain weed seeds and pathogens while coir is produced "above ground" and has no opportunity to acquire soil contaminants. Peat decomposes rapidly, with its particles becoming smaller and more closely packed over time which reduces the pore sizes in the soil and air circulation. It also contains more tiny particles than coir, which can cause waterlogging. Coir on the other hand has more than 45% woody lignin in its composition. This greatly increases the time it takes to break down, so soil structure stays open and stable and allows air to penetrate longer. This feature is particularly useful for growing roses in containers. The high lignin content also encourages the growth of soil microorganisms around the roots. Coir easily rewets, even without a surfactant added. We all know how impossible it is to wet dry peat moss. As an aside, make sure that you soak and "fluff" your blocks of coir well in advance of use. If it is not completely rehydrated before being filled into pots, expansion of

will make it too dense. When starting seeds, coir deters fungus gnats by keeping the top surface of the containers dry. Gnats are attracted to a moist soil surface and peat based products are known to attract these pests. In this way, coir acts like a soil surface mulch while distributing moisture evenly by its natural wicking action.

Studies have found that the percentage of seed germination is increased and occurred more quickly in coir. It was particularly helpful germinating difficult seeds of woody plants. Other studies have found that soil-less mixes with coir as an additive, produce plants with heavier stem and root growth. It is thought that coir has antifungal properties that prevents pythium from causing damping off and significant amounts of phosphorus and potassium.

If you're planting a large area, coir may prove expensive, based upon the products I've seen. Coir may be purchased in bulk quantities that reconstitute to 10 cubic feet which provides a price closer to its peat counterpart.

All in all, coconut coir is great for seed starting and container growing. It is also a useful moisture retainer when placed in the planting holes of all sorts of perennials and keeps the air pores of the soil open for better root growth.

Region 4 auction is a fundraising success

Melody Campbell, Region 4 RPD thanks all our Region 4 members who have made this fundraising effort successful including Bobbie Brooks and Ellen Laprise. The region 4 auctions are currently running under username AHSRegion4 on Mike Longo's www.daylily.com site so there is still time to place your last minute bids. The auctions will continue to run through April 2nd.

Here are some of the exciting daylilies that have been or will be posted in the auction: H. 'Treasure The Past', 'Cannonball Express', 'Christine Dixon', 'Spacecoast Sweet Eye', 'King's Mistress', 'Kiva Dancer', 'How Beautiful Heaven Must Be', 'Elsie Spaulding Memorial', 'Bradley Bernard', 'April Fools', 'Bombay Silk', 'Circular Thinking', 'Dan Mahoney', 'Mrs. London's Apricot Tart', 'Saint Fiacre', 'Startle', 'Pinhill Claret Symphony', 'Minted Halo', 'Seneca Spirit' and 'Early And Often'. We also have several just for the Canadian bidder - H. 'Dragon Flight', 'Greywoods Nautical Nellie', 'Medicine Feather' and 'Notify Ground Crew'.

There's always room to add another daylily to the garden. Don't miss an opportunity to win a great plant while supporting Region 4.

Thanks to our donors for their generosity

Our members have come through for us again. We asked for plants averaging \$10 that were good recommendations for new members (and old) to consider adding to their gardens. These plants will be offered as door prize plants throughout the year. Our thanks to all of you who contributed and we encourage our members to continue to donate plants for meeting door prizes. Keep in mind everyone who donates will be rewarded with PDS Payola bucks.

H. 'Dragon King' - donated by Mary Collier Fisher; 'Bela Lugosi', 'Sandra Elizabeth', 'Westward Wind' and notecard - donated by Ellen Laprise; 'Stella De Oro' clump - donated by Kate; 'Wisteria' - donated by Bobbie Brooks; 'Something Wonderful', 'David Kirchoff', 'Country Melody' and 'Elizabeth Salter' - donated by Sandi Jacques.

This month's 3 door prize winners may each choose a plant from the above list.

Pooling your resources, or how to grow daylilies in water.

by Tom Maddox

Raising daylilies in water is quite different and against all the rules of raising daylilies. I accidentally found out daylilies love sitting in water by mistake. About 8 years ago I sold my seedlings in gallon buckets at the local farmers market. After the sale, having a few left over, I put them in a kiddie swimming pool in the shade so they wouldn't dry out. Being in my late 60s, my memory is about a thing of the past. Anyway, by the time my wife reminded me that I had forgotten about the daylilies, they had been in the water at least a month. I replied, "Well, they have gone to the Great Daylily Bed in the Sky by now." All the books I had read made it very clear that daylilies will rot if their feet stay wet. When I finally checked they looked GREAT. Hello! What's going on here?

Next year I put 30 daylilies in a new pool in 1 inch of water and they bloomed before the ones in the ground. I pot my seedlings in commercial gallon buckets (3 quart pots) in roughly 80% pine bark and 20% sand. They will drain very fast in this mixture. I put 2 heaping tablespoons of slow release Nutri-cote, 13-13-13, 270 day. That is all the fertilizer they get until they bloom next summer. I found daylilies do best when you keep the water about an inch deep, but this is not critical. They can run out of water for a week or so without the buckets drying out.

To make a more advanced "kiddie pool" I took 4 landscaping timbers, tied them together with a metal strap to make a square 8 X 8, placed 6 MM black plastic over the square and put water in it with the hose. You might put felt down the first time so you don't punch a hole in the plastic liner. This size pool will hold 200 daylily buckets. The plants sit out in full sun. Next year I will clean out anything that could punch a hole in the plastic and put down a new liner over the old liner. I get my plastic from Lowes, 10 feet wide, 100 feet long, about \$30 a roll.

Fertilizer never leaches out of the bed. You lose most of your nutrients when planting in the ground. The roots will hang out of the bottom of the buckets in the water. I leave about a one foot walkway down the middle to reach the ones out in the middle. Very little weeding and no watering except to run a little fresh water in with the hose.

I go to a lot of places showing a slide presentation on this method. I was in Houston, Texas a couple weeks ago doing a slide presentation, and an old gent ask me if I was the one with the daylilies in water. I said I was.

Celebrating the life of Marty Wray by Mary Collier Fisher

On February 21, Marty Wray, a dear friend and charter member of our club, passed away very unexpectedly. Although Marty came fairly recently to the love of daylilies, she embraced the flower and the people she met through daylilies with her own gracious blend of warmth and joy. She had made major changes in her gardens in recent years to extend it from one huge area filled with 'Europa' to a show-piece for many of the latest and the greatest daylilies, and then invited our club members to enjoy her hospitality for a garden visit to enjoy the ambience of the lovely home she designed overlooking a beautiful reservoir.



Marty Wray with her namesake daylily, H. 'Marty Wray', Doorakian (2004).

Marty also hosted, with her husband Bill, a most festive Christmas party for the club at their home as well. Bill and Marty have enjoyed visits to Mecca, attended AHS conventions and Region 4 annual regional meetings. Marty recently accepted the position of Treasurer for our club and was the first to volunteer advice and help when needed. She was a skilled Nurse Practitioner who kept an eye on all of us to make sure we were taking proper care of ourselves. I am so glad that Marty picked out a plant that she loved that has been named in her honor by the Doorakians. I can remember her excitement when she saw this flower blooming during a club visit there a few years ago and learned it would be named for her.

I am still in shock about losing Marty. We extend our deepest sympathy to Bill and their son, Andrew. Nine members of the club were able to attend the Memorial service for Marty at Christ Church in Harvard Square. We met Marty's family, many friends, co-workers and even her patients. The message repeated over and over was that Marty was a special person who exuded warmth, charm and humor.

Her many friends on the Tinker's Garden Site have written lovely tributes to Marty's memory and a copy was given to Bill at the Service. Bill has established a Marty Wray Memorial fund at the Patriot Daylily Society and donations have already been received in Marty's memory. If you would like to contribute, please send your donation to:

Mary Collier Fisher, 32 Mylod Street, Walpole, MA 02081 508-668-7399

We'll have to find a use for these donations that would have pleased Marty the most. It is unanimous. Marty, we will miss you very much.

He said you better watch them close, wet feet will surely rot a daylily. I said I will be on the next flight back to Mississippi since I have some that have been sitting in water over 2 years.

Daylilies need 10 things to look pretty – one is fertilizer the other 9 are water. Liquid fertilizer can be used as often as you like. Just before bloom season I will spray with liquid fertilizer a couple times a week. I like liquid fertilizer since it goes into the foliage on contact. If I see mosquito larvae a dash of dishwashing soap in the water will take care of them. I do not know how this will work in the North. I have asked a few to try it on a small basis and to let me know. It works great here in the South.

To contact Tom, email tommy@tomsdaylilies.com or to see Tom's photo tour and seedlings on his website visit www.tomsdaylilies.com.

PDS represented at the New England Flower Show during Home Gardeners Night

Paula and George Doorakian, Mary Collier Fisher, Linda Freda and Ellen Laprise represented Patriot Daylily Society at Home Gardener's Night at the New England Flower Show on March 14. During Home Gardener's Night experts from many disciplines were on-site en masse to aid home gardeners in all aspects of gardening. Roger Swain gave a talk on "Tips from the Victory Garden," WTTK radio host Paul Parent and a variety of experts all offered presentations and demonstrations.

PDS volunteers handed out membership forms and spoke about the upcoming April 1 meeting with Curt Hanson. Ellen Laprise donated three fans of H. 'Malachite Prism' (Doorakian) for the evening's raffle.

Daylily Traders get ready - its time for April plant trading

April 1 meeting begins plant trading, so bring your list of plants you have to trade and what plants you might like to receive. Prepare a typewritten list of your cultivars, information included and we will display the lists. Patsy Cunningham has offered to compile trade lists on the PDS website. To make things easier for Patsy, send lists to her in the body of an e-mail or as an e-mail attachment at patham@cox.net. Time will be set aside at the meetings to make your trades. For those who want to make trades later in the season, you can post your trades on our public bulletin board, which can be navigated to from our website. Or you can post under our secure member section on the website (username and password available to members).

Contribute your time, suggestions, plants or books to benefit PDS

To raise funds to bring speakers to PDS and keep our club growing, please contribute daylilies, seeds, perennials, books, magazines, etc. for our auctions. We need ideas for speakers or presentations and your suggestions how to encourage other gardening groups to attend PDS. We also seek proofreaders for the newsletter. We encourage all our members to be involved. Send suggestions, comments or volunteer status to program chair Bobbie Brooks at lilylady@adelphia.net.

Our April meeting should have a larger than average attendance, so we encourage everyone to bring a dessert or snack to share - even wine! Please e-mail Mary Hubbel at chhubbell@yahoo.com or Joan Dahl at joan.dahl@comcast.net to sign up to bring refreshments.

Directions to Bedford Public Library and PDS meetings

PDS meetings are held at the Bedford Public Library, Mudge Way, Bedford, MA 01730-2193:

From Rt 95 (128) in Lexington, take Exit 31B (Rt 4-225 West) and travel 2.4 miles through Bedford Center and turn left onto Mudge Way. The Public Library is on the right. Go around to the back parking lot. Door is on the right.

Meetings start at noon so feel free to bring your lunch. Drinks are provided and members take turns bringing refreshments. For more information please contact president Ellen Laprise at gen-tian1@charter.net.

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A rite of spring - new gardening gloves *by Nina Lapierre*

Replacing worn out gardening gloves is a spring ritual for many and whether you are a professional or new to gardening, good gardening gloves do make a difference. When choosing your new gloves make sure they fit your hands perfectly and choose a material that is right for the task. Leather gloves afford the most protection from punctures but can make hands hot and sweaty. I keep a pair for pruning roses and thorny shrubs but find them awkward for planting seedlings or weeding. Canvas or cotton gloves, like leather, don't allow delicate work and easily become wet – and they stay wet. Gloves with a cotton lining and rubberized coating like Mud Gloves work beautifully for ponds and wet areas. One brand-name glove that looks interesting but I have not tried is the Bionic Glove boasting extra padding in the palm and form-fitting comfort. There are a lot of gloves available but only a few have passed my test. My favorite all-purpose gardening glove is the Foxglove. The fabric is a thin but tough combo of flexible nylon and spandex that fits snug to the hand. Tiny dots on the fabric enable you to pick up the tiniest seedling and although moisture can get through, they dry fast. I've had my pair now for 3 years and they're almost ready for replacement. Another glove I use is the Atlas Nitrile. The palm is tough, waterproof nitrile while the back is an elasticised breathable knit. It doesn't fit as snugly as the Foxglove but its waterproof qualities make it a winner for wet spring clean up.

We want your stories!

We know our members have great ideas so we are inviting you to submit an article, with pictures if you wish, for publication in our newsletter. Your story can be humorous, informative, objective, biased – as long as it pertains to gardening or daylilies and is not plagiarized. Please understand your story may be edited for content or to accommodate the space but we would love to give everyone the opportunity to tell their story.

Help us to create an informative daylily newsletter. Anyone have suggestions of what they would like to read in their newsletter? Submit your ideas, stories and pictures to: nina@nii.net.