



Daylily Hybridizer Honoured with National Award

Taken from an article in the Bridgewater Bulletin:

By [STACEY COLWELL](#)

When all 2,000 of Don Longton's daylilies start to bloom next month, he'll see every colour combination imaginable.

Whites with gold edges, pinks, lavenders, oranges, reds and yellows to name just a few.

"Every flower will be different. There will be every colour and variety you could think of."

It wasn't always that way.

Despite being an avid gardener, he once thought all daylilies were orange, red or yellow.

"Then I went to a garden centre one time and saw one that was different. It had two colours and I thought that was really interesting. For whatever reason, it caught my eye, so I went home and typed 'daylilies' into Google on the internet and I got 254,000 pages of information. I started reading."

"I realized there were over 50,000 varieties. And read about Hybridizing. It fascinated me! Before long, I was hooked and began dabbing pollen."

"I'm creating brand-new ones that nobody's ever seen. I keep the exceptional ones to use for my own hybridizing and to register."

"I've almost gone into it full time," said Mr. Longton, who added other hybridizers and collectors have created a lucrative market for unique daylilies.

"There's an auction site dedicated for daylilies alone and it is huge. The highest I've seen go at auction this year was \$6,000. That was for a brand-new daylily that was unnamed so the buyer could name it after themselves," said Mr. Longton, who will be honoured with the Douglas Lycett Award for excellence in hybridizing at the Canadian Hemerocallis Society Convention on July 24 in Toronto.

"Talk about surprised when I read the e-mail saying I'd won it. I had to read it over and over and over. I thought it couldn't be true," laughed the 48 year old, whose award pales when compared to the joy he gets from his passion.



Don Longton was recently recognized by the Ontario Daylily Society for his excellence in daylily hybridizing. Stacey Colwell photo

"I've found something for the first time in my life that really talks to me. Like everybody, I've sort of scrambled through life trying to find something that I could feel deep down and this is it for me. I think I'll do this until I die. I've never been happier. ... I'm bringing beauty into the world. It's something brand-new."

Still, there is a competitive side of being a hybridizer.

"You're always trying to create the next best, awesome thing that nobody's ever seen," said Mr. Longton, who added anybody can be an amateur hybridizer.

"That's the easy part. You take the pollen from one, put it on the pistil of the other and wait for a pod to set."

Despite being the first Atlantic Canadian to win the Douglas Lycett Award, he's only been hybridizing three years.

"This is still new to me. It's only been three years and basically, it takes about three years to go from seeds to mature plants, so it's just budding for me."

Unlike Mr. Longton, most garden centres sell tissue-cultured daylilies. If you are not a collector of Daylilies, this may not concern you.

