



Bill Wilk takes a break from attending to his beloved daylilies.

Daylily Garden Benefits from Bill Wilk's Volunteering

Rain or shine, heat or cold, volunteer Bill Wilk is in the Daylily Garden nearly every week, and sometimes more frequently. The retired chemistry professor travels from his home in Pacific Palisades to the Arboretum, even during the heat of summer, all for his love of daylilies, and perhaps to bask in our heat.

Since 2007, Bill has been active in acquiring daylilies, hybridizing them, plant-

ing, fertilizing, weeding, curating and maintaining a log of the cultivars held in the collection. He also files the renewal papers to the American Hemerocallis Society (AHS) to maintain the garden's display and historical status each year.

The Daylily Garden, containing both recent cultivar introductions and historical cultivars, was established in 2006 with support from the Southern California Hemerocallis and

Amaryllis Society (SCHAS). Frank Cusenya was the first SCHAS member to work mostly alone in the founding and early development of the Daylily Garden. Subsequently, Bobbie and Frank Hogancamp and Bill Wilk provided assistance. SCHAS members donated all of the plants used in the initial design of the garden. They have maintained and curated the garden with assistance from Arboretum staff.

When asked why he is so devoted to daylilies, Bill responded, "It's obvious! With 75,000 registered varieties (many look similar) and the fact that when breeding crosses are made, over 75% of the offspring bloom differently from the parents. This gives tremendous variety in color, shape, size and growth habit. After a cross, one gets a blooming plant in two years (as compared to 7 to 10 years for orchids). And in Southern California the main bloom period is May and June, but reblooms occur in summer and fall. Even though a single flower lasts only one day (hence daylily), each bloom stalk can have up to 25 or more buds. So a clump of 6 plants can possibly have 6 times 25 or 150 blooms and only a few open each day for over a month."

Beyond the beauty and plasticity of daylilies, Bill explained, "Daylilies are messy plants with dead leaves and flower scapes, and they require regular watering and fertilizer. With [our] scarce water resources, these may not be the ideal plant for Southern California. In fact Bill Maryott, a California hybridizer and grower, sells only 10% of his daylilies in California." Despite these constraining cultural requirements daylilies will continue to hold an important role in our landscape designs because of their beautiful flowers, resilience and durability.

The Daylily Display Garden is extremely fortunate to benefit from the continued expertise, love, enthusiasm, dedication, hard work and time of Bill. It would be far less without his invaluable contributions.

—James E. Henrich is curator of living collections at the Arboretum



Henrich, James E. 2014. "Daylily garden benefits from Bill Wilk's volunteering." *Exploring the arboretum : magazine for the members of the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden* 2014:winter/spring, 8.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/209471>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/215558>

Holding Institution

The Arboretum Library at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden

Sponsored by

Good Family Foundation

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Permission to digitize granted by rights holder

Rights Holder: The Arboretum Library at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Rights: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.