

History of the Garden State Daylily Growers

As Told by Mary Lovasz, former President

Betty Harwood was hybridizing daylilies at her Farmingdale home and invited several other local hybridizers and garden people to talk daylilies and share information. Word spread in the garden community. Informally, in 1992 the group called themselves the Central Jersey Daylily Growers and had four meetings a year and collected dues to cover expenses such as renting slides and videos from the AHS Library.

As word spread, Betty's family room became too small and we branched out to other members homes. Because most of us already belonged to the American Hemerocallis Society (AHS), Betty wrote to them for some guidance, new members and resources; and Tom Holman, the Region 3 Regional VP, wrote back to ask if we would consider starting a club in NJ. Our informal group of hybridizers, landscapers and gardeners took a vote and officially named the club "Garden State Daylily Growers" (GSDG) in 1998.

We elected Betty Harwood our first president, Dottie Kiel, VP and Marge Fournier, Secretary and Treasurer to keep dues and pay expenses. Betty had an open house and sale every summer and we gained new members and recognition as an active daylily group.

We started looking for a centralized place in Monmouth County to hold meetings. Because I knew the people at Deep Cut Gardens, I approached them and we were able to hold meetings there. To spread the word about our club, we went to fairs, local celebrations and Deep Cut's Open House. Later we added a picnic with a raffle and house tours.

Dottie Kiel of Freehold suggested a daylily show, but because we were a small group, we decided to have an exhibition which became Daylily Day at Deep Cut Gardens on the last Saturday of June. This exhibition continues today on the last Saturday of June. Cindy and Kevin Ruddy made wooden holders and a large display board. Mary Lovasz used her garden club expertise to arrange the tables and information posters and we launched Daylily Day with free give away plants from our gardens.

As Betty got older, she started downsizing her garden and eventually decided to sell her property and move to New York City to be closer to her other daughter. On a personal note, Betty's daughter had breast cancer and lost her battle with the disease. Betty named one of her favorite new cultivars LAURA HARWOOD in her honor.

What to do with all the daylilies? Betty contacted the president of the Battery Conservancy at Ellis Island and asked if she could plant a garden to honor her parents. They were delighted at the prospect. Betty chose cultivars and in May of 2006 a group of GSDG volunteers dug up, split, washed and labeled the 500 daylilies to travel to their new home across from the Wall of Honor.

Curt Hanson of Ohio named one of his special pink cultivars **Betty Harwood** after visiting her garden and giving our club a presentation.

Betty was a fascinating woman, gracious and generous and a wonderful photographer too. She hybridized for strong, floriferous daylilies and found a niche in hybridizing late bloomers because we were all sad when the daylily season stopped. We all felt special when she invited us to walk her

hybridizing bed with her. Betty died peacefully at home in 2011 and there is a bronze leaf on the tree in Deep Cut's foyer that reads "In Loving Memory of Betty Harwood Fondly, Her GSDG Friends"

Our club has evolved and each president has added new ideas and better perspectives. From Betty Harwood to Dottie Kiel, Mary Lovasz, Mike Oliver, Dick Dardas, Terry Oates, Lois-Ann Burek, Jane Guillard and presently, Susan Emhardt-Servidio.

We've had exceptional hybridizers come to speak to us, learned about hybridizing, taking photographs of daylilies, daylily culture such as fertilizer, water, and mulch and grooming, displaying daylilies and companion plants. There has been a wonderful camaraderie in our club and terrific people who have dedicated hours to make things happen and share their love of this unique, beautiful flower. It's been a lively adventure to know so many talented, generous, terrific and fascinating people.

While many have moved, retired from gardening or passed on to a better life; but it's been a privilege to know all the wonderful, dedicated enthusiasts who helped make up the Garden State Daylily Growers.

Garden State Daylily Growers Presidents and Years in Office

<u>President</u>	<u>Years in Office</u>
Betty Harwood	1992 – 1995
Dottie Kiel	1996 – 1998
Mary Lovasz	1999 – 2001
Mike Oliver	2002 – 2004
Dick Dardas	2005 – 2007
Terry Oates	2008 – 2009
Lois-Anne Burek	2010 – 2013
Jane Guillard	2014 – 2018
Susan Emhardt-Servidio	2018 to Present

Hybridizers, Nurseryman and Other Guest Speakers (1992 to Present)

Darrel Apps	John Kinnebrew
Dan Bachman	David Kirchhoff
Brian Bender	Steven Kristoph
Michael Bouman	Ludlow Lamberston
Bobbi Brooks	Melanie Mason
Mark Carpenter	Kim McCutcheon
Beth Creveling	Michael Miller
Mary Collier Fischer for Dr. Doorakian	Jim Murphy +
Jamie Gossard	Paul Owen
Curt Hansen +	George Rasmussen
Dan Hansen	Margo Reed
Betty Harwood	Tim Rice
Kirsten Hatfield	Ned Roberts
Rich Haynes	Pat Sayers
Don Herr +	Bob & Mimi Schwarz
Rich Howard	Megan & Ron Skinner
Mike Huben	Bill Smith
Stuart Kendig +	Patrick & Grace Stamile
Janice Kennedy for Pat Cochenour	Dan Trimmer

+ Speakers presented twice to the group