

GARDEN

Some of the world's most beautiful day lilies grown in Kings Mountain

BY ANDIE L. BRYMER
Staff Writer

Think day lilies only come in orange and grow along the road? A walk around Iron Gate Gardens will get rid of that notion.

Owners Van M. Sellers and Vic Santa Lucia offer around 500 varieties in a rainbow of colors.

Located on County Line Road between Kings Mountain and Cherryville, Iron Gate ships to customers across the United States, Canada and Europe.

Many of the varieties were developed and hand pollinated by Sellers and Santa Lucia, a job they do many summer days from 7 to 9 a.m. Their favorites are Ballerina on Ice, a near-white with gold edges, and Claudine's Charm, a purple flower with large blue-white center.

"They're not something you're not going to find at Home Depot," Sellers said.

They look for unique visual effects, a high number of blooms per plant and good branching.

So far neither Sellers, Santa Lucia nor any other day lily hybridizer has managed to create a true blue flower. While lavender and grey blooms often pass for blue when planted among other colors, blue remains elusive. That doesn't mean growers aren't trying

though.

"It will happen someday. If you have two parents with some blue you try immediately to breed," Sellers said.

He already has a plan if Iron Gate produces the coveted color - a dash to the patent office. Collectors would pay large sums.

"You'd have to hock your car to get one," Sellers joked.

Iron Gate started as primarily an iris nursery with only 25 percent of its crop in day lilies. Then came the iris borer which wiped out much of those plants across the southern United States. Since then, Sellers and Santa Lucia have made day lilies the mainstay of their operation.

The day lilies grow for four or five years after the first bloom before being sold. Collectors often visit this part of the nursery and place the new varieties on a wish list.

Unlike some retail outlets, day lilies do not sit in pots at Iron Gate. Instead, the plants thrive in the garden until selected. Then the plant is dug up and bagged.

While Iron Gate does a thriving mail order business, seven or eighth years ago customers began driving from the Raleigh area. A few years later, Charlotte and Hickory gardeners discovered the nursery.

"They're becoming more popular. They give you a lot for your money.

You plant it and each year it becomes more glorious," Sellers said.

They describe day lilies as generally carefree and pest resistant. After three to five years, the plants are ready for root division and sharing.

The blooms peak in mid to late June though the nursery is open from May 15 to Aug. 1. Day lilies start at \$10.

While fall is the ideal time to plant, the flowers are generally not available because most nurseries, Iron Gate included, close for the season. Plants must be moved to another bed so the summer bed can be tilled. However, the hardy day lily can be transplanted during bloom.

Road scraping is credited with the spread of the orange flowers along roadways. It and one other varieties are tenacious enough to bloom from only a small piece of broken root.

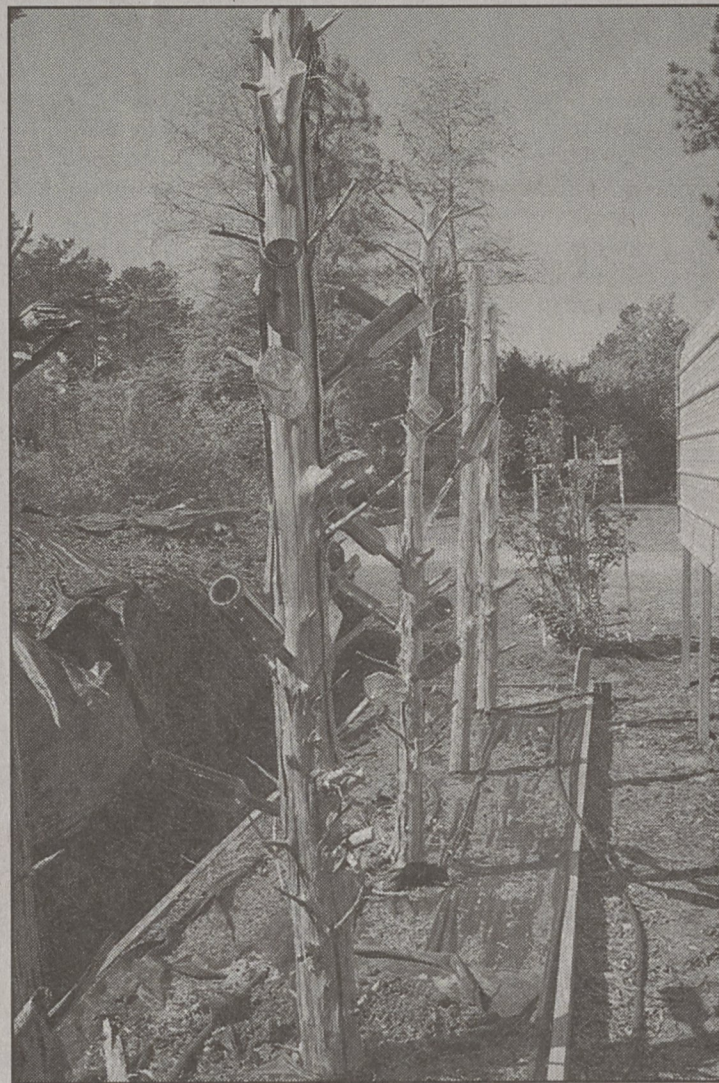
In Iron Gate's non-commercial garden, there are herbs, mums and other favorites, a gold fish pond and pest free roses.

Spitz the cat helps keep down the varmint population.

"We highly recommend if you're a gardener have a cat," Sellers said.

A 15-acre forest surrounds the back of the gardens. Wild irises and a family of silver fox call the land home.

For more information, visit www.irongategarden.com or call 704-435-4367.



A folk art bottle tree, top, stands behind the nursery beds at Iron Gate Gardens. Day lilies which are ready for purchase are in these two beds pictured bottom right and left.

Tips on growing herbs and vegetables

By the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

Herbs
Herbs should be harvested when the oils responsible for flavor and aroma are at their peak. Proper timing depends on the plant part you are harvesting and the intend-

ed use. Herbs grown for their foliage should be harvested before they flower. While chives are quite attractive in bloom, flowering can cause the foliage to develop an off-flavor. Harvest herbs grown for seeds as the seed pods change in color from green to brown to gray but before they shatter (open).

Collect herb flowers, such as borage and chamomile, just before full flower. Harvest herb roots, such as bloodroot, chicory, ginseng, and goldenseal, in the fall after the foliage fades. Some general guidelines to use include:

*Begin harvesting the herb when the plant has enough foliage to

maintain growth. Up to 75% of the current season's growth can be harvested at one time.

*Harvest early in the morning, after the dew dries, but before the heat of the day.

*Harvest herbs before flowering, otherwise, leaf production declines.

*Herb flowers have their most intense oil concentration and flavor when harvested after flower buds appear but before they open.

*Herb flowers harvested to dry for craft purposes should be picked just before they are fully open.

See Tips, 3B

COLLEGE BUILDING SUPPLIES

All Storage Buildings In Stock 10% OFF! Come In Today!

WOODEN STORAGE BUILDINGS
PRICE INCLUDES DELIVERY AND SET UP ON YOUR LOT

8x8 \$799	8x10 \$899	8x12 \$999	10x12 \$1,149	10x16 \$1,249	12x16 \$1,595
--------------	---------------	---------------	------------------	------------------	------------------

Ask DON LYLES, DBS Doctor of Building Supplies

ARMSTRONG TILE	EXTERIOR SIDING	TREATED LUMBER
Laminate Flooring.....1.79 sq.ft.	4"x8" Lap Edge.....13.95	8'.....10'.....12'.....14'.....16'
No Wax.....4.49 sq.yd.	Ger Side.....6" 99/ft. - 8" 1.19ft.	2x4.....3.25.....4.47.....5.19.....6.05.....7.25
Metal Tile Strips.....\$.50/ft.	4"x8" Sq. Edge Sm.....10.95	2x6.....5.49.....6.80.....8.75.....11.30.....11.50
Tile Glue.....4.95 qt. 9.95 gal.	4x8 Smart Panel.....15.95	2x8.....7.35.....8.45.....10.65.....12.40.....14.95
Grass Carpet.....3.99 yd.	8"x16" Lap Side S.M.....2.99	2x10.....7.75.....10.06.....13.69.....18.45.....18.45
Laminate Glue.....7.25 bottle	8" Fine Siding.....49/ft.	2x12.....10.95.....12.99.....17.45.....19.45.....21.95
Laminate Padding.....4.95	11-11 5/8" OC.....24.95	1x4.....2.39.....2.89.....3.39
200 sq.ft. roll.....40.00/roll	11-11 3/8" OC.....16.75	1x6.....3.89.....4.79.....5.49
	8"x16" Lap W.G.....3.49	5/4x6.....3.89.....4.89.....5.55.....6.36.....7.20
	12"x16" Lap W.G.....6.95	2x2.....1.99.....2.39.....2.89.....3.39.....3.69
	Black Board.....4.95	4x4.....5.79.....9.39.....10.95.....12.37.....14.56
	8"x16" Color Lock.....3.99	6x6.....17.95.....20.46.....26.60.....30.95.....36.95
	9 1/2" x 16".....4.49	4x6.....9.50.....13.15.....15.95.....18.45.....21.25
		Lattice 4x8.....1/2".....10.95.....3/4".....12.95
		Treated Pickets.....2 1/2".....9.95.....2x2 Fence Section.....6.95
		Post/Fence.....3.50.....Mailbox Post.....7.00
		Landscape Timbers.....1.79.....6x6 LST.....12.59

METAL CARPORTS	PLYWOOD	REGULAR LUMBER
Prices Include Installation	7/16 OSB Hardboard.....15.95	Trusses can be ordered any size
12'x16'.....845.00	3/4" Plywood.....24.95	8'.....10'.....12'.....14'.....16'
12'x21'.....970.00	3/8" Sanded Plywood.....14.95	2x4.....1.89.....2.29.....2.59.....3.39.....3.95.....4.79.....5.75
18'x21'.....1095.00	5/8" Plywood.....21.95	2x5.....3.56.....4.29.....4.98.....5.59.....7.29
20'x21'.....1295.00	1/2" Plywood Clips......05	2x8.....4.69.....5.69.....7.69.....8.85.....9.55
22'x21'.....1495.00	1/4" Luan Plywood.....10.50	2x2.....1.69.....2.19.....2.69.....2.99.....3.39
24'x21'.....1695.00	1/2" Plywood.....17.95	1x2.....1.37.....1.64.....1.91.....2.07
24'x24'.....1995.00	Pegboard 4x8.....9.95	1x4.....2.19.....2.69.....3.19.....3.59
24'x26'.....2295.00		1x6.....3.79.....4.69.....5.39.....6.09
	MATERIALS FOR STORAGE BUILDINGS	1x8.....5.59.....6.99.....8.39.....9.29
	8x8.....805.73 10x12.....802.82	1x10.....7.92.....9.90.....11.88.....16.90.....19.20
	10x10.....752.91 12x16.....1077.09	1x12.....9.50.....12.00.....14.40.....14.40.....18.40
	Prices Do Not Include Tax	1x4 T&G.....7.92.....9.90.....11.88.....13.86.....15.84
	MATERIALS FOR TREATED DECK	1x6 T&G.....7.92.....9.90.....11.88.....13.86.....15.84
	8x8.....227.54 12x14.....435.50	
	10x10.....292.67 12x16.....536.16	COLORLOCK DOG HOUSES
	12x12.....375.26 16x16.....685.05	55.00, 65.00, 75.00, 105.00
	Prices Do Not Include Tax	5 V GROVE GAV. METAL
		8'.....6.59 14'.....11.95
		10'.....8.59 16'.....13.69
		12'.....10.79 10' RIDGE CAP.....8.95
		MATERIALS FOR GARAGE PACKAGE
		12x20.....968.62 24x30.....2669.44
		24x24.....2253.95 28x30.....3031.97
		Prices Do Not Include Tax

Between Dallas and Gastonia on Hwy. 321 704-922-8649
(Across from Gaston College) M-F 8-5:30; Sat. 8-1; Winter Fri. 8-5:00

4DBX3.
1 Carat t.w. bridal set
(2/5 carat center)
\$1,499

STORE HOURS
MONDAY 9:AM-5:30PM
TUESDAY 9:AM-5:30PM
WEDNESDAY 9:AM-5:30PM
THURSDAY 9:AM-5:30PM
FRIDAY 9:AM-6:00PM
AS ALWAYS.....SATURDAY 9:AM-5:30PM

ARNOLD'S Jewelry
MASTER JEWELER

226 South Washington Street, Shelby, NC
704-487-4521