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What a difference a daylily makes!

Especially if you're Ross Hawthorne.

The well-known local horticulturist has a new variety of daylily named after him and he couldn't be happier.

Henry Lorrain, who operates the popular 'We're in the Hayfield Now' Daylily Gardens in Orono near Lindsay, introduced the Ross Hawthorne Daylily in his year 2000 order catalogue. A photograph and description of the plant bearing his name are included in the daylily catalogue for thousands of gardeners to see, order and, eventually, plant.

The Ross Hawthorne Daylily is one of about 5,000 varieties available in the new catalogue.

Hawthorne said he "feels great" about the honour bestowed on him by Lorrain.

"It's like you've left your mark in this business," said Hawthorne, who's been gardening for 70 years and for many years, writing about it, including every Saturday in The Intelligencer.

The 77-year-old Hawthorne is especially proud of his name being attached to a daylily.

"They're one of my favourites," he said.

"They're disease and insect free and they faithfully come back year after year."

Daylilies have roots and reproduce by root division; regular lilies have bulbs. Both are perennials and bloom every year.

Hawthorne's namesake plant was five years in the making.

New varieties of daylilies are produced by cross-pollination and only one in 100 is successful, he said. And it takes about five years from the time of development of a new variety at the Orono operation until there is enough available to put it up for sale in the catalogue.

The new catalogue states the Ross Hawthorne Daylily is a cross between the Edessa and the Edna Mabel Jean. It will grow up to 30 inches tall and bloom in June or July.

Lorrain writes: "This perfect, round, ruffled, melon five-inch flower has lighter midribs, a small gold edge on the ruffling and a strong green throat. A sibling to Mary Ethel Lycett, this exciting, fragrant flower has 16 buds on three-way branching. Named for a garden journalist, living in Brighton who wrote about us."

For his part, Hawthorne said he couldn't have picked a better daylily to be associated with.

"What I like about it is the round shape, which is unusual for a daylily, and the ruffled edge. Also the fact that they have so many buds which results in prolific flowering. I'm quite happy with the variety named after me."

The whole Hawthorne Daylily deal grew after he wrote a feature on the Orono operation about eight years ago for the Good Times magazine for seniors and The Intelligencer.

Henry Lorrain and the late Douglas Lycett (a partner at the time) liked his article and decided to name a variety of daylily after him.

"They told me about five years ago that a variety would be ready by the year 2000 and here it is in this year's catalogue," he said.

The Ross Hawthorne plant will be in limited supply later this spring and the root will sell for \$50 each.

Hawthorne said he plans on buying one for each of his daughters and some for himself to plant and eventually reproduce at his Brighton on the Bay garden.

"I have at least 30 varieties and 100 daylily plants in bloom all summer in our front yard," Hawthorne said. "Our house is on the horticultural tour in Brighton."

Hawthorne said the Orono operation is also a must to see every summer.

"Henry Lorrain hybridizes daylilies at his farm every day and at the peak of season in July, there will be 20,000 daylilies in bloom. He has open houses in July and busloads of people, even from the United States, arrive to walk through the daylily fields and then buy the plants."

Hawthorne's wife, Erla, is justifiably proud of the plant bearing his name.

"Ross has helped so many people solve their garden problems over the years and he's now getting deserved recognition for it."

The Daylily catalogue is available by calling 1-905-983-5097 or toll free at 1-888-818-7234.