

Tracking Daylily Bloom

By Scott Keller

I set about this summer tracking bloom progress in my garden. To do so, I physically counted open blooms every day to arrive at a total count. Crazy right? I did this in part because I thought it would make an interesting chart (... me being a statistician in a prior life) but also because I wanted to learn more about the bloom cycle. Specifically, when does it start, when does it peak, and the duration. Below is the actual chart of blooms open each day during a 7 week period in 2018.

I sell from my garden and I like to plan in advance when my garden will be open and for how many days/weekends. As the graphic shows, the 'earlies' peaked the last part of June. Each year this always makes me panic and think I'm on the downside of bloom. When in fact, a higher high is coming as the 'mids' kick in a week later.

A secondary benefit (that I didn't expect) was that by physically looking at every bloom (counting) every day, I found myself as a hybridizer identifying ideas for daylily crosses that I would have missed if I wasn't forced to consider every bloom, every day. Characteristics such as substance, branching, bud count, all came into sharper focus, making culling decisions after the season also easier.

Lastly, tracking bloom gave me a better appreciation for the value of having 'lates' in my garden. Varieties such as, 'Stranger in Strange Land', 'Strawberry Romance', 'Cradle of Bethlehem', 'Late To The Party', 'Northwind Dancer' and 'Orange Clown' all contributed significantly to the length of garden bloom, which pushed into early August. In the future I will recommend customers also consider purchasing later blooming varieties (as well as those seen during peak times) as an way to extend the length of color in their yards and landscapes.

