

by Steve McConnell
ABINGTON SUBURBAN WRITER

Tucked away off a dirt road in Newton Township is a place where a cornucopia of daylilies sway gently in the summer breeze.

The perennial thrives at the Endless Mountains Daylily Farm, creating a fantastic visual feast, a multitude of colorful hues, from the 55 varieties available.

"People think of them as the average tiger lilies around the roads," said Sharon Burke, who along with her husband Kevin raises and sells the farm's specialty.

Daylilies open for sunlight and wither at sunset but regenerate often with new stems. Sharon described the daylily as the "perfect perennial."

"Each bloom ... lasts one day, but they appear that they are constantly blooming," she said. "Some last many weeks (and) ... some last only a week or two."

Comprised from the genus *Hemerocallis*, a Greek work signifying "day" and "beautiful," the daylily flourishes through June until frost with peak blooms arriving about this time of year.

Each root decides its own fate, when to grow and bloom: a variable timetable depending on the particularly daylily. Blooms – when the petals fan outward – may last three weeks or up to 10.

After bloom, the root will hold for sea-

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—Sharon Burke



PHOTO STEVE MCCONNELL

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sons to come.

It is also adaptable to climate and seasonal flux.

"Any new varieties we look at, we want to how it grows," she added, noting that their stock, in particular, is acclimated to this region.

The Burkes acquired their daylilies from a retired gardener near Philadelphia who also specialized in the daylily trade and even cross-pollinated a few colorful marvels, including what was named the "JJ" – a maroon, gold-throated flower with the gold hue extending to petal's edge.

It's one of Sharon's favorites.

She also counts "Point of View," "Strutters Ball," "Chicago Sunrise" and "Spiderman" as personal and customer favorites.

She decided three years ago to get into the business as a way to make use of the couple's 25-acre farm.

"This was my husband's idea. We were looking for something we could do with our land," she said. "The first daylily farm

I contacted ... They were selling their farm and moving to Guatemala."

So they put on their gardening gloves and uprooted innumerable varieties, hauling them to the farm.

"They've multiplied very quickly," she said. "We started with about 7,000 daylilies, but it's probably about 12,000 ... at this point."

"And this time of year, people want to come out and see the plants."

She sells the bare root with prices starting at about \$4.

She is now accepting orders via the Internet or directly from the farm for shipments that will go out in the fall.

"It's ready to plant, and we give them planting instructions," she noted. "We'll dig them out."

Contact the Burkes at Endless Mountains Daylily Farm at 586-4387 or e-mail them at: info@endlessmountains-daylilyfarm.com. The Web site is: www.endlessmountainsdaylilyfarm.com.

See more pictures on page 3.