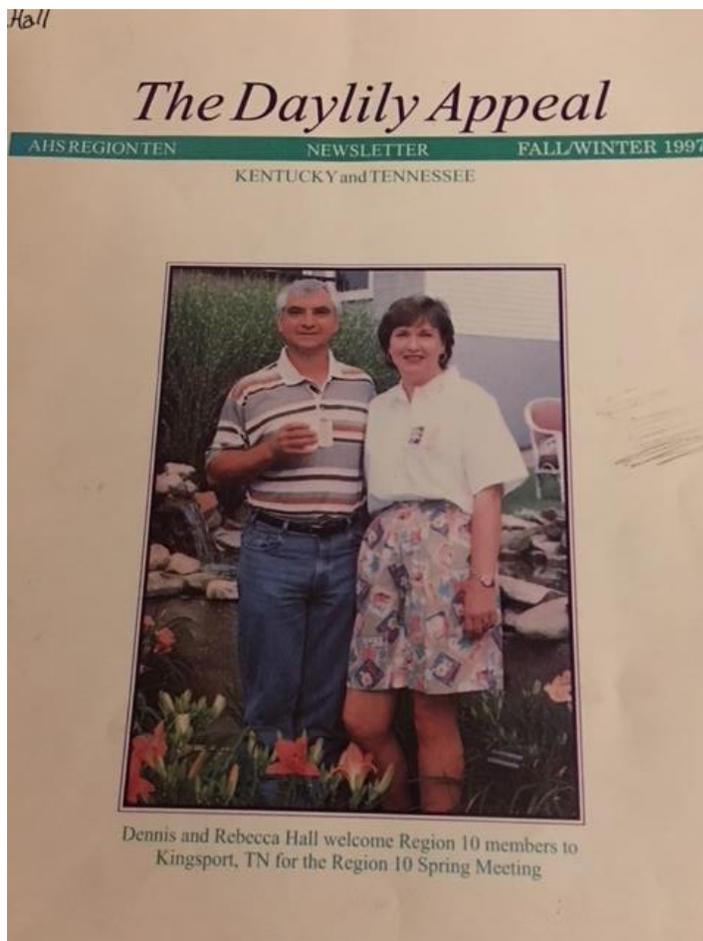


# HISTORY OF TRI-CITIES DAYLILY SOCIETY

By Rebecca Hall

## ORIGINATION

The Tri-Cities Daylily Society (TCDS) had its start in the spring of 1991. This venture had been a desire of Bob Hale and Dennis Hall since 1989. Both Bob and Dennis were already members of the American Hemerocallis Society (AHS) and had a great interest in growing daylilies. Folks travelled to Bob's Skyland Garden in Kingsport, Tennessee, to purchase daylilies. Dennis was a charter member of the Mid-Carolina Daylily Society in Columbia, South Carolina, where he lived for 7 years in the 1980's. Through searching the AHS membership list and contacting acquaintances with a daylily interest, the initial, organizing meeting was held in the home of Bob and Martha Hale with 9 people in attendance. Most of the charter members were men. The first order of business was to decide on a name. Those in attendance were not all from Kingsport, but also surrounding areas. The name "Tri-Cities" was chosen to represent Kingsport, Johnson City, Bristol, and other local communities. Several of our early attendees also came from Southwest Virginia. Bob Hale was chosen president and Dennis Hall treasurer. They both served in these positions for many years, sometimes alternating. Dennis was also the chairman of the 1997 and 2013 conventions later hosted by TCDS.



Dennis & Rebecca Hall, 1997



Bob & Martha Hale



Early Members – Bill & Mildred Pate

The by-laws of the Mid-Carolina Daylily Society were used as a guide to charter our club. Dennis had served as treasurer of that club and worked closely with Jim and Peggy Jeffcoat. The Jeffcoat's were great supporters of our club in its early years. Tri-Cities Daylily Society was registered with the AHS in 1991.

TCDS met in the homes of the Hale's and the Hall's for the first few years. As membership grew, meeting locations transitioned to local restaurants. We also met a few times in the Chamber of Commerce center in downtown Kingsport as a club member worked for the chamber. Then we discovered that the Kingsport Public Library allowed non-profit organizations to meet in its auditorium if available. This became to this date our meeting place for inside meetings. It is the perfect location with

no windows (good for PowerPoint presentations), a pull-down screen, tables and chairs, and food is allowed.

## **PROGRAMS**

TCDS meets 8 or 9 times each year. Our members are eager to increase gardening knowledge while we gather and eat together. After seeking input from members, usually at the December meeting, the officers meet in January to plan and schedule activities for the year. TCDS has established a tradition of recurring meetings. Local garden tours, usually the end of June, are scheduled to not compete with the regional or national conventions. Members are encouraged to attend these AHS events when possible as this is where you meet interesting people and see things you don't grow or can't afford. It is a great place to pick up ideas for your own garden. On a couple occasions, the club rented a van for members to attend together.

On the first Saturday in July, members carpool and participate in Club Day at Blue Ridge Daylilies the beautiful garden of Bob Selman and Eric Simpson in nearby Asheville, NC. In late summer, August or September, it is time for one of our most fun, annual traditions - the auction and picnic at Bays Mountain Eastman Recreation area where we reserve a large shelter.



### **Annual Picnic & Auction**

Around 2012, the club voted to have a Christmas party/meeting in December. This event usually begins with a short seasonal presentation followed by a wild, fun gift exchange known as "Dirty Santa." Beginning in 2016, this event is held at the Food City Crown Center where members enjoy a catered, delicious buffet lunch. Surprisingly, this has turned out to be our highest-attended meeting. Club officers are usually elected at this meeting.

A successful spring event that began in 2017 is participation in the Garden Fair at Exchange Place Living History Farm in Kingsport. The only fee is 10% of income from our sales. This has proven to be the club's best fund raiser. Hopefully, this opportunity will continue in the future.



Kingsport Garden Fair

Another fun meeting idea which began in 2018 is the “Dirty Daylily Exchange.” This program, suggested by member Jo Durham, was well attended and enjoyed by everyone. Each participant went home with a new daylily for their garden. This program will continue to be on our schedule.

One or two programs each year are presented by local gardening experts such as a Master Gardener or someone in our club. Members have presented programs including such topics as container gardening, bonsai, nature in the garden, travels to exotic gardens, personal hybridizing programs, raised-bed gardening, photography presentations, and garden panel discussions. Wildflower walks and photography presentations by Bob Hale or Fred Martin, both very talented photographers, were popular spring programs for many years. Unfortunately, the wildflower walks were eventually discontinued due to unpredictable weather conditions affecting the wildflower bloom



Club Activity – Wildflower Walk

TCDS typically schedules one outside speaker per year. Throughout the history of our club, we have been privileged to host the following well-known hybridizers as speakers: Jim and Peggy Jeffcoat, Dr. Bob Carr, Van Sellers, David Kirchhoff, Mort Morss, John Rice, Michael Miller, Scott Elliott, Eric Simpson, Bill Waldrop, and Bob Faulkner. Our regional meeting speakers have included Pat and Grace Stamile,

Jeff and Elizabeth Salter, and Mike and Sandy Holmes who each named a daylily in honor of our area - 'King's Port' (Holmes-M., 2012) and 'Bays Mountain Sunshine' (Holmes-S., 2012).



TCDS spring meeting at Kingsport Public Library in 2017

### **MEMBERSHIP**

As in all organizations, membership and attendance has fluctuated. Club meeting notices and information is currently e-mailed to approximately 60 individuals with the average meeting attendance being around 25. TCDS has lost 20 members, or possibly more, due to passing over the years. Other members come and go, and some drop out after attending a few years never to be heard from again. TCDS has been able to partnership with members of two other organizations – Master Gardeners and Southern Appalachian Plant Society (SAPS). Recruited members from these groups help keep our club vibrant and active.

In looking at the past, membership included some very interesting and avid collectors who are no longer with us. Late charter member Bill Pate of Nolichucky Daylily Garden in Jonesborough stands out. His garden was on TCDS first regional tour in 1997. Visitors were delighted with his bunny rabbits as well as the 1,500 daylilies and seedlings. Hybridizing was a hobby for Bill, and he sold out of his garden but did not advertise or register plants.

Two other former regional tour garden owners with magnificent daylily gardens are also now deceased. Buck Worley of Kingsport, who passed in 2017, grew daylilies to perfection. Pearlina Malone of Afton, who passed in November 2013, was thrilled to be a garden host of the 2013 regional. Pearlina was an avid flower and nature enthusiast and also a talented artist who created beautiful daylily paintings. TCDS will always remember these who worked tirelessly for the club and opened their gardens for so many to enjoy.

Everyone's garden is an expression of their likes in daylilies. This statement is apparent in other members' gardens on regional tours: Bob Hale's Skyland Garden, 1997 in Kingsport and 2004 in Jonesborough; garden of Dennis & Rebecca Hall, Kingsport, in 1997 (also scheduled for 2019); Amy & Jack Boyles garden, Kingsport, in 1997; Spike & Donna Good's Garden, Bluff City, in 2004; Anna's Greenhouse and Gardens, Jonesborough, in 2013; Banner's Daylily Farm, Jonesborough, in 2013; and garden of Dennis Marshall, Kingsport, in 2013.

TCDS is proud to have three talented hybridizers. Bob Hale registered 16 daylilies between 1989-2003. Two of his, 'Martha Hale' 1993, and 'Skyland Jewel' 1999, have won the Region 10 Best Clump Award. Chris Massengill has registered 8 between 2011-2018. His 'Porterhouse' 2014 is gaining recognition throughout the region. Chris is serving as TCDS president for the second year and has presented

programs at various daylily functions throughout the region. John Wagner registered 2 daylilies in 2017. John is also the talented webmaster for TCDS.

Another talented member TCDS is proud to claim is Susan Okrasinski. Susan, well-known throughout the region, is a very talented photographer presenting nature programs at various organizational events. At the Summer Region 10 meeting, Susan was announced the winner of the Mildred Schlumpf Landscape Photography Award. Her beautiful photos also appear in various daylily publications. Susan is handling the chairperson duties of the 2019 Regional Convention being hosted by TCDS.

Tri-Cities Daylily Society is approaching 28 years old and continues to be an active group in love with nature and socializing together. Though our membership is aging, we are excited to have three members in their thirties.



Buck Worley standing in his tour garden for Kingsport Regional Meeting, 2004

### **CONCLUSION**

Our meetings are always open to everyone, and our Facebook page has 89 public group members. We encourage members to join AHS and the club gives away a membership at most meetings. TCDS strives to follow the mission of AHS to “educate people about daylilies, promote the cultivation and enjoyment of daylilies, and foster the ongoing improvement of this perennial flower.”



Tri-Cities Daylily Club - 2018