

Ury Winniford

by Eloise Koonce

Winner of 1990 AHS Best Article About A Hybridizer

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From the Bertrand Farr Silver Medal, the Society's highest award given for hybridizing, to the Stout Silver Medal, the highest varietal award, Ury Winniford has won them all. He received the Stout Medal in 1980 for his *Hemerocallis* '**Bertie Ferris**', a persimmon orange miniature, while the Bertrand Farr Silver Medal was awarded to him in 1983.

Living and working in the Dallas area, Ury and his wife, Elna, have grown and hybridized daylilies for over thirty-five years. Elna specialized in the development of small flowers before ill health stopped her work. Her *H.* '**Pojo**' can be found listed in the winner's column of numerous flower shows, and many of her crosses still draw favorable comments and requests from visitors to Ury's garden today.

How did all this interest and industry in the "pollen patch" develop? Ury confesses that he had grown and hybridized Iris for years, but had become disenchanted with them because of their short bloom season. He was only familiar with the old "garden variety" daylily until during his rounds while at work for the Water Department, he spotted a pretty yellow daylily, *H.* '**Hyperion**', growing in a lady's yard. He was able to obtain a sample for his own garden.

But he didn't really start hybridizing in earnest until after a visit to the Hughes garden in Mansfield. Before then he had visited other gardens, done some hybridizing, and grown several varieties of daylilies, but without any particular goals in mind and without keeping records. He found the flower form that appealed to him among the miniatures in the garden of Lucille Williamson of Southeast Texas. So when he secured a seedling with some similar characteristics in the Hughes garden, he was on his way!

What are Ury's lifelong hybridizing goals? His most sought after characteristics are wide petals and round sepals. "I want them to roll back and hold water." He also wants the sepals to be rounded. "I won't keep pointed sepals."

In later years he added other hybridizing goals to his list. He wants the flowers to open early. "I want them to be looking at me when I come out to the garden in the morning." He has developed tetraploids that are early-openers as well as diploids.

Ruffles, "pie-crust" edges, high bud count, branching, heavy substance, and corduroying are all continuing goals and features of his daylilies. Neither size nor color is of particular consideration. He likes them all.

Currently his crosses are featuring distinct and contrasting eyes as well as his traditional rounded form and ruffles. His efforts have already met with recognition, because his *H.* '**Eloise Koonce**', a cream pink with strawberry eyezone and green throat, received a Junior Citation for 1989.

Still one of his favorite varieties is his *H.* '**Touched By Midas**', a 1980 introduction. This bright-gold self stands out across a garden.

Mr. Winniford makes a practice of naming many of his daylilies after local dub members. His *H.* **'Betty Acrey'** and *H.* **'Marietta Mosse'**, along with many others, will be lasting tributes to our members.

When asked about his tips for growing daylilies he answered, "First find out how the daylily grows in your own garden. Our conditions are not the same as they are in Florida or Michigan, so find out what they are for you first."

Another recommendation he had to share was to start with your hardest chore and work down to the easiest. He works in his garden almost every day of the year, even Winter. He prepares his beds in Winter for transplanting in the Spring. In this manner, the work is spread out and not bunched together during the growing season.

A master hybridizer, Ury Winniford continues to fulfill his stated purpose of "Seeing what I can give to the flower." He continues to be very excited and eager to develop more beautiful cultivars. He has given much, and continues to advance the beauty of the daylily for all of us. He unselfishly shares his talents and flowers with the visitors to his garden, his local dub and Region 6.