

# Hybridizing With the Great-Grands

By Peggy Cathey

Photos by Peggy, Dan and Kathy Cathey

While on their way to visit their grandparents in Magnolia, TX, three of our great-grandchildren stopped by for a visit in May. This would be our first time to meet six-week-old Dustyn. I told their Mom that we wanted to teach the two oldest how to hybridize daylilies, like we had taught her when she was growing up. They got so excited. Cambri, 7, and Emmitt, 6, were anxious to learn how to “make their own flowers.” Dan and I never miss a chance to teach young children how to hybridize daylilies.

It wasn't long after they arrived that they were ready to get out to the garden. Dan, also known as Gramps, took Cambri, and I had Emmitt. We went to the garden and told them to pick out two daylilies they really liked. Cambri picked the beautiful, big red *H. 'Persian Ruby'* (Trimmer, 1998) blooming along the driveway and chose it as her favorite. She also picked *H. 'Dallas Blushing Debutante'* (Nichols-H, 2010), which was blooming nearby. After Gramps checked to be sure they were both tetraploids, he showed her how to take the stamen from one flower and find the pistil of the other to dab the pollen on. Cambri decided she wanted to have '*Persian Ruby*' as her pod parent with '*Dallas Blushing Debutante*' as the pollen parent. She then decided she wanted

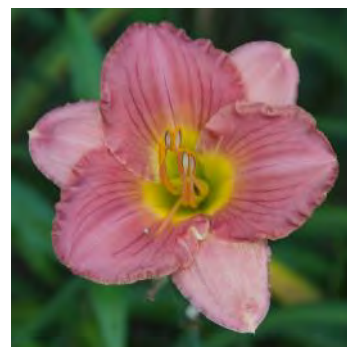
to use the same two plants to go the other way, with '*Dallas Blushing Debutante*' as the “Momma” and '*Persian Ruby*' as the “Daddy.”

Emmitt was off to find his favorites, with me trying to keep up behind him. He went straight for the bright orange double *H. 'Guadalajara'* (Carpenter-J, 2003). I showed him how to pull off a stamen, and he carried it over to the pistil of another orange, *H. 'Wildfire Tango'* (Kirchhoff-D, 1992), both tetraploids. He also liked *H. 'Screen Pattern'* (Stamile, 2005), which he crossed with *H. 'How Are Ya'* (Shooter, 2001).

I didn't want baby Dustyn to miss out, so I crossed two of my favorites, *H. 'Twisted Whiskers'* (Joiner-



*H. 'Persian Ruby'*



*H. 'Dallas Blushing Debutante'*



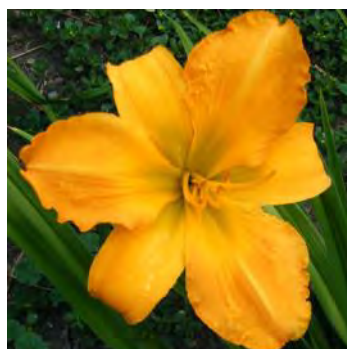
Cambri with  
*'Persian Ruby'*



Emmitt with  
*'Screen Pattern'*



*H. 'Guadalajara'*



*H. 'Wildfire Tango'*



*H. 'Screen Pattern'*



*H. 'How Are Ya'*



R, 2014) with *H. 'Queen of Green'* (Trimmer, 2014). I had told the children that when their flowers bloomed, we would register one for each of them, and they could name them. Our granddaughter said the two talked about “making their own flowers” all the way to Magnolia!

All four of their first experiences in hybridizing resulted in seed pods! I (Nanny) sent text photos to their Mom (Lori) to keep them updated on how they were doing. They get so excited to see the



Cambri's **'Persian Ruby'** seed pod starting to form



Here is Emmitt's seed pod forming on **'Screen Pattern'**



Cambri's **'Dallas Blushing Debutante'** seed pod is growing



Emmitt's **'Wildfire Tango'** is getting big



First seeds harvested

progress. First, with the tiny seed pods starting, then the harvested seeds.

We put the seeds in cold storage for a month; then Dan planted them in 4-inch pots since Mom wasn't able to bring the kiddos back at that time. It was only a few days before we saw the first sign of a sprout. After just 10 days, their babies had grown to 4 inches. When I sent photos of the little plants for them to see, Cambri said, “They are so cute!”



On the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, they were able to come for a visit so they could “pot on” their babies. We showed them how to fill the pots with potting soil,



Cambri filling the 4" pot with potting soil



Emmitt carefully separates the seedling from it's pod-mates



Carefully trimming the long roots so they will fit in the pot



Using a dibbler to make a hole for the plant



separate the pot of daylily seedlings into individual plants and trim the roots of each plant if needed, so they would fit into a new pot, make a hole for the baby plant, and hold it by the leaves instead of the



Firming the soil around the little plant



Filling out a plant marker for each pot



Learning a new skill



Baby daylily potted and tagged



Soaking the pots in seaweed water, watching to make sure none of them turn over



Proud of a job well done

stem (crown) so that the stem wouldn't get crushed. Once they firmed the soil around the plants and each marked with a plant tag (which they filled out themselves), they put them in a tub of water to soak. Cambri wanted to know why we were putting them into dirty water, so we explained that we always use a little seaweed extract in the water of newly transplanted seedlings to help reduce transplant shock and to help the plants develop a stronger root system. We were so proud of how well they took to potting up their little baby daylilies. We only gave them a little instruction on how to do it, and they were off and running.



Dan and I will take care of the seedlings throughout the winter and hope Cambri and Emmitt will be back in the spring to plant them in the garden. So far, their little babies are looking great. It will be fun to see what kind of flowers these two young hybridizers have created. But most of all, we hope it will give them an appreciation of all plants and flowers and make them want to learn more and become gardeners themselves. We gifted each of them a youth membership in the American Daylily Society, so maybe that will be a help in spurring their interest. I can remember when I was growing up, learning about all kinds of flowers from my Grandmother. She could make anything grow. As I got older, life got in the way, and gardening was pushed aside. But, after our boys were grown, all those memories of gardening with my Grandmother came back, and I wanted to return to the garden. Then—we discovered DAYLILIES, and the rest is history!

If you have children, grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren, I encourage you to get them into the garden during the daylily bloom season and teach them how to "make their own flowers." Who knows, you could be inspiring a future Stout Silver Medal winner!

