

2025 Electronic Media Award

Ray Houston



For the first time, the American Hemerocallis Society's Electronic Media Award has recognized a regional website, underscoring the vital role that regional websites play in promoting the daylily, supporting membership, and attracting newcomers. Ray Houston, Region 6 Webmaster for nearly a quarter-century and Regional Historian since 2003, has set an exemplary standard through his development and stewardship of the website serving Region 6 (Texas and New Mexico) (<http://www.ahsregion6.com/>).

Award criteria address worthiness in six categories:



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Potential Effect on Membership: One primary objective of the website is to facilitate connection of visitors to local daylily clubs. A prominently featured welcoming message and clear contact information for all affiliated clubs, including meeting times and locations, make it simple for newcomers to find daylily communities near them. Social media links further broaden the site's reach, enabling visitors to connect with daylily resources and news in real time.

Educational Merit: Ray's commitment to preserving the historical and educational legacy of Region 6 is unparalleled. In 2006, he became the first within AHS to undertake the digitization of his region's newsletters, dating to 1961. Many issues required complete retyping—a labor-intensive task that now serves as an invaluable resource for researchers and enthusiasts alike. Some educational offerings of the website include:

- **Regional Newsletters**, the largest collection among regional websites.
- **People Tributes**, biographical sketches of over 150 Region 6 individuals, describing their hybridizing and/or personal daylily accomplishments – most accompanied by photographs.
- **Daylily Names Associated with Region 6 People**, about 260 cultivar names including detailed descriptions and links to the AHS Online Database.
- **Region 6 Popularity Poll**, winners dating back to 1961, with linked images where available.

Aesthetic Appeal: A consistent, table-driven design, with a uniform background color, promotes visual clarity and enhances readability. Hyperlinks provide seamless access to internal and external resources. The site includes numerous high-quality images of regionally hybridized daylilies, plus arrangements that have achieved Tricolor Award recognition.

Ease of Use and Navigation: Navigation is intuitive due to a well-organized top menu bar consisting of eight major categories: Welcome, Activities, Awards, Communications, History, Organization, Popularity Polls, and Youth. These expand into approximately 100 drop-down sub-menus, encompassing a breadth of topics including club websites, histories, and contacts; regional business; newsletters; social media; officer and liaison contacts, past and present; people tributes; hybridizers; Bylaws and Policy & Procedures; Popularity Poll results; and youth award-winners.

Innovative Use of Technology & Technical Difficulty: Ray has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to keeping the site current. Every page includes a timestamp indicating the most recent update. A recurring column in the regional newsletter alerts members to newly added content. The site architecture allows for sophisticated hierarchies of linked content—for instance, users can view award results for specific flower shows by year and club, often linking to winning cultivar photographs in the AHS Online Database.

The organizational complexity of the site is significant. Many topics are deliberately cross-listed to allow users multiple pathways to access key information, improving usability while increasing the technical demands on the webmaster.

Effect on Furthering and Promoting the AHS Mission: Although Region 6-specific, the website serves as a gateway to the broader AHS, linking to national resources, such as the Membership Portal, Online Database, Policy and Procedures Manual, and social media platforms. It exemplifies how a regional presence can contribute meaningfully to the national missions. Now bearing the 2025 AHS Electronic Media Award logo, the Region 6 website stands as a distinguished model of digital excellence. Ray Houston's meticulous and visionary work continues to benefit not only his region but the AHS as a whole.