

# Orange Daylily (*Hemerocallis fulva*)

## DESCRIPTION:

Daylilies are a common ornamental plant. They have long, arching, grass-like leaves just over an inch wide and several feet long. Large, showy orange flowers rise above the foliage on thin stalks. Overall the plants can reach 2-4 feet in height.

This persistent member of the Lily family (Liliaceae) often remains on sites where it was planted decades ago. It can also spread by seeds and root fragments displaced by soil movement and flowing water. Daylilies are also aggressive spreaders that can form dense monocultures overwhelming adjacent vegetation when left unchecked. There are many varieties of daylily, however it appears that only the common orange-flowered variety is aggressive enough to be of concern to ecologists and home owners.

## CONTROL METHODS:

**Organic:** Digging up the site and removing all of the tuberous roots from the site is the most commonly used method of control. Roto-tillers and cultivators can be used in larger sites if care is taken to remove all root fragments from the area. You will need to continue to watch the area for plants that resprout from root fragments.

Smothering may also be an option. First the area needs to be mowed as near as possible to the ground, removing all the resulting plant debris. Then the area should be covered with a tarp, or durable landscaping fabric (perhaps multiple layers) as a weed barrier that the plants can't sprout through. The best times of year to apply this method are in early spring before the plants emerge above ground, or during or shortly after flowering as they will have the lowest energy reserves at these times. Then cover this fabric with about six inches of mulch, and leave it covered for an entire growing season. Remove the weed barrier before installing new plants in this area.

**Chemical:** A foliar application of glyphosate (Round-Up®, etc.) can be successful if the formulation has a high concentration of surfactant to help the herbicide stick to the leaves for better absorption. Also, use glyphosate at the highest rate recommended on the label for foliar application. This is best done in spring when the leaves are tender and young.

Another method is to cut each leaf stalk to the ground and rake away leafy debris. Then carefully apply glyphosate to the "stumps" of the daylilies, at the rate recommended on the label for woody stump treatment.

Always read herbicide labels carefully before use and always apply according to the instruction on the product label.

## NATIVE ALTERNATIVES:

Michigan or Turk's Cap Lily (*Lilium michiganense*) has beautiful orange nodding flowers and can be grown in sun to partially shady and in medium to moist sites. Be sure to find individuals of local genetic origin; stay away from horticultural varieties, and other "Turk's Cap" lilies such as *Lilium superbum* (which is native to the south and east). Wood Lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*) has a cheery upright orange flower and unique whorled leaves, surviving well in medium to dry soils and full sun to moderate shade. Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*) provides narrower, but similarly grass-like leaves with a pleasant pale-green color and vibrant purple flowers in late-May and June. Blue Flag Iris (*Iris virginica*) has wide, strap-like leaves similar to those of day lilies, and a lovely blue June-blooming flower, however, they require moist soils and plenty of sunlight. Overall we recommend a diverse planting of flowers and grasses to replace monocultures of daylily.

**-2**  
**Persistent**  
**Weed**



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