



— Mike Huben photos

'Toy Trumpets' at Daylily World wins coveted **President's Cup**

By Mike Huben
International

It began as a joke. In 2010, when David Kirchhoff and Mort Morss had just moved from Florida to Kentucky, I knew that some of his southern tetraploids wouldn't be as happy there. So I sent him a CARE package of northern diploids bred by myself and my mentor, Bob Sobek, not just to twit David (which is great fun), but also to show him some different northern breeding goals. 'Toy Trumpets' (Sobek, 1984) was one of them. The clump in David and Mort's luscious garden won the President's Cup Award at the AHS National Convention this year, an award for the most outstanding of all clumps observed by conventioners in all of the Tour Gardens.

'Toy Trumpets' already had a distinguished history at the New England Daylily Society when I joined many years ago. Bob Sobek bred it from a cross of 'Corky' (Fischer-H.A., 1959) × 'Purity' (Traub, 1949). He selected the smallest-flowered seedling, which happened to

also have incredible branching and bud count. Every other year, it seemed, somebody would enter 'Toy Trumpets' in our flower show and walk away with Best In Show because of the amazing multiflora scapes.

However, 'Toy Trumpets' has several other characteristics that are well worth noting, and it suggests breeding goals worth pursuing. The clump has great foliage with closely packed fans that do not allow weeds to grow through. The flowers close tightly, so that no grooming is necessary. The backs of the sepals have conspicuous red stripes which adds a nice pattern to the trumpet form. The scapes are erect: they do not lean towards the light. But the flowers DO point towards the light, so you can place the plants where all the flowers will point to the path the viewers stand on. Imagine if modern, large-flowered daylilies also had more of these characteristics.

As a garden judge, I'm really pleased that the AHS National Convention goers recognized



the virtues of this very old-fashioned plant. After about 40 years of daylily hybridizing, this is Bob Sobek's first award; I don't think he has ever even put one of his plants on a ballot. I had the great pleasure of telling him that he won, something that he never expected.

Thanks, David, for making it possible for my mentor to win a top award. I'll have to tease you more often.

Editor's note: Bob Sobek's hybridizing was featured in The Daylily Journal Vol. 68 No. 1, Spring 2013, pp. 14-17.