Northern Illinois Hosta Society

Hosta Happenings

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois Hosta Society

ISSUE III

MARCH 2020

2020 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- **March 29, Spring Potluck, at Cantigny Park, Wheaton**
- **May 3, Spring Symposium & Plant Pickup, Friendship Park, Des Plaines**
- **May 30-31, Hosta Leaf Display & hosta sales, Chicago Botanic Grdn**
- **June 7, Hosta Garden Walk #1, Geneva**
- **June 10-13 AHS Convention, Minneapolis, MN**
- **June 28, Hosta Garden Walk #2, West Chicago**
- ***July 16-18, MRHS Convention hosted by NIHS, Lisle***
- **July 25, Annual Bus Trip to Wis.**
- **Aug 9, Annual Hosta & Plant Auction, Community House, Hinsdale**
- **Sept TBD, Fall Potluck & Annual Meeting**
- **Dec TBD, Holiday Party Potluck**

President's Letter

ARE YOU READY!!! Are you counting down the days? Are you looking through all of the magazines popping up in your mailbox? Are you looking through all of the Facebook posts with everyone showing last year's pictures? Have you seen all of the Facebook posts from the online vendors dangling offers out there of hostas for sale? This hostaholic can't wait. I may need to go into rehab and the season hasn't even started yet.

Your NIHS Board has put together a full calendar of 2020 events for your enjoyment. Check out the Calendar at a Glance. The first event this year was the MRHS Winter Symposium in Milwaukee/Brookfield on February 1st. It was a great event, please see the article by June Vandervest for details. It was hosted by NIHS member Jack Barta and Glenn Herold.

On March 29th Stevie and Mark Meginness are hosting our Spring Potluck in the Medill Room at Cantigny Park. This is a great time to reconnect with your hosta friends and talk about your plans for the upcoming growing season.

Next is our Spring Symposium and Sponsor Plant pickup on May 3rd at Friendship Park in Des Plaines. See Janet Simpson's article following.

This year's Hosta Leaf Display and

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President's Letter continued

Plant Sale at the Chicago Botanic Garden is May 30th & 31st. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this very public event.

In addition to running the Chicago Botanic Garden Leaf Display Show, Nancy Huck is working hard at setting up our Garden Walks this year. Please see Nancy's preview of our summer Hosta Garden Walks.

The American Hosta Society Convention is June 10th – 13th in Minneapolis, MN this year. I understand the gardens are spectacular as they were in Green Bay last year. Worth a trip to the north country.

NIHS is hosting this year's Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Lisle on July 16th – 18th at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. We hosted this event in 2013 at the same location. Since this is a large undertaking we require a significant participation from the NIHS Family. I cannot impress upon you enough the importance for you to volunteer for any one of various 'jobs'. Our Convention's success is totally dependent upon our ability to provide helpful support staff. Please review Barbara King's article bringing everyone up to speed on where we are currently with our convention plans.

Mark Rekoske has been diligently seeking out gardens for our bus tour to Wisconsin on July 25th. Check out Mark's article detailing our fabulous trip this year and our plant buying opportunities. Get your reservations in early.

This year our Annual Auction fundraiser is again at the Community House in Hinsdale on Sunday August 9th. Mark Zilis has agreed to be our "auctioneer extraordinaire" again. This event is not to be missed. Plant donations from our members are an important part of our success. This is our only fundraiser for the year. Please come and bid early and often. Mark Z will provide background commentary about each of the hostas brought up for auction. It is both informative and FUN!

Each year we have 3 Potluck Dinners. As I mentioned earlier, Stevie and Mark Meginness are hosting the March Potluck. **I need volunteers** for the other two potlucks. In September we have our Annual Meeting and our Holiday Party is in December. If you can host one of these events or if you have questions, please contact me directly at kraus6311@comcast.net.

For those of you who have never visited our NIHS website http://www.northernillinoishostasociety.org/ you are really missing out. You can always access our Calendar of Events to see what is coming up. Most importantly is the RESOURCES Tab. It is full of information…Tabs for: Hosta of The Year, Community Garden Events, Taking Care of Your Garden, Educational Videos, Hosta Problems, & Hybridizing Information to name a few. Check it out!

If you see a Board Member tell them thank you for their work!! There is a list of our Officers and Directors at the end of this Newsletter.

Thank you for your support. Stay Warm and Stay Healthy!!! I hope to be out of my 3 Step Hosta Rehab by the time growing season is here.
Hosta-la-Vista.

Mike Kraus

H. 'Dancing Queen' - Hosta of the Year 2020

Spring Potluck Party - Friends, Food & Fun

Sunday March 29, 1:00pm @ Cantigny Park

EVERYONE IS INVITED to the first NIHS gathering of the year at Cantigny Park to enjoy the fellowship of old friends and meet some new gardening friends! Since our weather is changing to the Spring season, we will kick it off with a variety of soups. We will enhance our lunch with food brought in from our excellent NIHS cooks. Learn about body smart gardening and end with the fun of a Garden Swap. Everyone attending this event will need to sign up to bring a potluck dish: either an appetizer, salad, side dish, or dessert. Tableware and beverages will be provided. Stevie & Mark Meginness will email to the members **a sign -up survey sheet that is a fillable and click form. This is a very simple form where you just type in your answers, click on what you will bring and name of food item and then press "Send".** Or call her at (630) 363-7266 no later than **March 25** to let her know you will be coming and what dish you will bring.

Guest Speaker

We will also have a guest speaker from the DuPage Master Gardeners, Jan Hanson. Her talk will be on "Body Smart Gardening." I am sure we will learn some new tips to keep our bodies in shape as we begin our new gardening season.

White Elephant Swap (participation is optional)

The tool and accessory swap is an NIHS tradition that is lots of fun when you get in the spirit. All you need to participate is a USED garden item you no longer want— DO NOT BUY something new! Here's how it works:

1. Bring a USED garden tool, accessory, yard ornament or any other garden-related item.
2. Wrap or package it in a way that disguises it or misleads observers as to what it is and bring it along.
3. At the swap, each contributor gets to make a choice from among all the treasures.
4. After everyone has opened a package, re-swaps may occur.
5. If you still don't like what you got, take it home, wrap it up and bring it back next year!

HOW TO GET THERE:

Cantigny Park is located at 1S151 Winfield Road, in Wheaton. At the entrance, just tell the gate keeper that you are attending an NIHS function in the **Medill Room of the Visitor's Center.**

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: **to 1S151 Winfield Rd, Wheaton -**

From the intersection of IL Rte. 38 (Roosevelt Road) and Winfield Road in Wheaton: turn south on Winfield Road to Cantigny Entrance, just 0.2 miles on the left.

HOSTA HAPPENINGS

2020 Special Events

Open House & Hosta Walk on June 12-13-14
Hosta Expert Bob Solberg on Sunday, July 12 *(reservations required)*
Artisan Market on Saturday, September 19th

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608-462-4662 www.uniquelyhostas.com

uniquelyhostas@yahoo.com

Insects, Diseases and IPM Oh My!!

Join Us at the Spring Symposium Sunday May 3, 1 pm

By Janet Simpson

Come join us for our Spring Symposium on Sunday May 3rd at 1:00 PM at the Friendship Park Conservatory in Des Plaines. Our guest speaker, Richard Hentschel, will help us take a closer look at all things lurking under our hosta leaves - challenges to our hard garden work. He will present a logical approach to detecting problems and taking care of our gardens using an IPM approach.

IPM, Integrated Pest Management, uses a combination of biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices and use of resistant varieties. It is an ecosystem-based approach focused on long term prevention of pests and their damage. Pesticides are used only as a last resort and are targeted to remove only the invading culprit. Pest control materials are used in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, beneficial & non-target organisms, and the environment. Great information if you are trying to do an organic garden!

Richard is an Extension Educator of Horticulture for the U of I Extension Office. He has worked as an educator for over 20 years educating the public on the timely topic of IPM. Richard received his Masters in Plant Pathology and Plant Physiology from the University of Illinois, Urbana.

Come join us for an informative afternoon on Gardening IPM!

Richard Hentschel

Sponsor Plant Pickup

Arrive early to pick up your pre ordered plants. If you are unable to attend the Spring Symposium please contact Mike Kraus to pick up your plants at his home in Crystal Lake. kraus6311@comcast.net or (815) 356-8569 .

Driving Directions:

Your destination is 395 West Algonquin Road in Des Plaines. Friendship Park Conservatory is located on the south side of Algonquin Road (Route 62), one-half mile east of the intersection with Elmhurst Road (Route 83).

Traveling westbound on the Northwest Tollway (I-90), exit at Elmhurst Road and go north 0.7 miles to Algonquin Road (Route 62), turn right, and proceed 0.5 miles to Friendship Park.

Traveling eastbound on the Northwest Tollway (I-90), exit at Arlington Heights Road and go north 0.4 miles to Algonquin Road (Route 62), turn right, and proceed 3 miles to Friendship Park. From Route 53, exit at Algonquin Road (Route 62) and proceed east 5.5 miles to Friendship Park.

Please see the following page for the NIHS Sponsor Plants that you can order for pickup on May 3 at the Spring Symposium. Also the Sponsor Plant Order Form is on page 7.

Introducing the 2020 NIHS Sponsor Plants

By Mike Kraus

The NIHS Sponsor Plant Program is designed for the benefit of our members. This year we have selected some high quality cultivars from two vendors, Bob Solberg and Jeff Miller. You will receive field grown divisions that are ready to be placed in your garden *after the threat of frost*. You will NOT need to grow them for months in containers.

This year's offerings are four outstanding cultivars that everyone should have in their collection. **Order Form is on the next page. Pickup plants at the Spring Symposium Sunday May 3. See previous article.**

H. 'Lemon Zinger' ($10) This is Bob Solberg's green margined sport of 'Dragon Tails'. Its wavy bright yellow leaves are outlined in dark green. It is a vigorous little mini, perfect in a pot. This cultivar was introduced in 2019 and is expected to grow to 7"H x 16"W.

H. 'Glad Rags' ($14.50) This is a beautiful wide margined variegated cultivar that was introduced in 2006. The leaves are semi-cupped and often crinkled with age, measuring 6"x4". A medium clump measuring approximately 16"H x 24"W with a vase like form. Glad Rags takes a good deal of sun. Depending on the amount of sun the wide leaf margins could be chartreuse to gold to ivory.

H. 'Pitch Black' ($9.50) This medium cultivar is a sport of 'Prince of Darkness'. It emerges bright green in the Spring and soon changes to a deep dark, almost black green. The leaves are shiny, cupped and puckered measuring 7"x7". Registered in 2010 the clump should measure at 16"H x 30"W.

H. 'Great White Whale' ($22) This is a very large wonderful 2018 sport of Humpback Whale. This makes a very large classic form mound of rounded leaves that sport a cream margin infused with just a little green. The margin is barely noticeable in the Spring, becoming more dramatic as the season progresses. Leaves will measure 12"x10" and the clump will measure about 28"H x 39"W.

Members only are eligible to order plants and there is a limit of **one plant per person** for each of the four cultivars. Any surplus plants may be offered at the meeting. We have ordered 25 of each cultivar and orders will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. *Pics from the Hosta Library*.

H. 'Lemon Zinger'

H. 'Glad Rags'

H. 'Pitch Black'

H. 'Great White Whale'

Sponsor Plant Order Form

Maximum order of 1 of each variety

Name:_____

Email Address:_____

Phone Number:_____

Lemon Zinger ($10) _____ Glad Rags ($14.50) ____ Pitch Black ($9.50) ____

Great White Whale ($22) ____ One of each plant ($56) _____

All orders must be accompanied by a check for the full amount made out to NIHS. If you wish confirmation that your order was received, either include your email address or a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Orders should be sent to Mike Kraus 6311 Carrie Ct., Crystal Lake, IL 60014. The order deadline is Friday April 24th.

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2020 CONVENTION Update!

You'll Want To Be There

By Barbara King

Only ***four months to go*** until July 16 and the MRHS Convention in Lisle! We hope that you as a member of NIHS will support this event. By registering for the convention you will be able to visit spectacular gardens on tour, attend the seminars, view the leaf show, buy hostas at the auction and from vendors, meet/make friends at the hospitality suite, and enjoy all the other components of this wonderful event. You will have a great time!

Marlene Rosenberg of Uniquely Hostas will be vending at the 2020 MRHS Convention beginning July16.

The NIHS Convention Planning Committee has been working for over a year to get everything in place. For a preview of what you are in for, go to http://www.midwesthostasociety.org and click on 2020 Convention Information. The Registration Form is there, too.

To make this event a success, ***we also need a lot of volunteers***. We thank those of you who have already told us you want to help, but we still need more of you. There are many opportunities to help out ***by doing what you enjoy at a time and place that are convenient for you.*** You can be in the hotel to assist at the concierge desk, registration booth, hospitality suite, leaf show or elsewhere. If you prefer to be outside, all nine of the tour garden hosts need people to help in their gardens before and during the tours.

No matter what you volunteer to do, it can be scheduled so you will still have time to participate in convention activities. Just let us know how you want to be involved. We are working on an online system to sign up, and we'll let you know when it's ready. In the meantime, contact Barbara King at 630-879-2263 or bhk430@att.net for more information or to sign up. MANY THANKS!

Pics by Ron Asselborn

Visit Cappy Johnston's gorgeous garden on the North Shore - one of our Convention's tremendous tour gardens.

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HELP WANTED IN CANTIGNY HOSTA GARDEN!

By Barbara King

NIHS is preparing for a new season of enhancing the Cantigny Park AHS National Hosta Display Garden. We want it to look its absolute best by the time of the Midwest Regional Convention to be hosted by NIHS July 16 – 18.

To do that, we need volunteers! We would love to have you join us. Our work days are on Tuesdays at 9:00 am for 2 or 3 hours, usually every other week. Busy times are in the spring, beginning in late April or early May when we clear out the winter's debris, add new plants, and spread mulch. For the rest of the growing season we maintain the garden, add plants as needed, then "put it to bed" in late fall.

Here's how the garden looked last year in mid-May with hostas emerging after spring cleanup:

Two volunteer options are available:

1. Special Events Volunteers - no training required, few benefits.
2. Regular Volunteers - training and background check required, several nice benefits. Regular Volunteers have opportunities to work in other places in the park as needed, which will allow you to gain experience, and meet many other volunteers. Cantigny gives special recognition to those who volunteer at least 50 hours per year, though most NIHS volunteers who work in the hosta garden accrue less than half that number.

The NIHS goal is to involve as many people as possible, even if it's only for 2 hours per workday, rather than to limit participation to a handful of volunteers, each of whom puts in lots of hours.

TO VOLUNTEER, PLEASE RESPOND TO Barbara King at bhk430@att.net and let her know which category you choose. If you want to be a **Regular Volunteer**, let her know on which of the following dates you want to take your one-hour training at the Cantigny Greenhouse:

- Thursday, Mar 26, 8:15 am
- Friday, April 24, 8:15 am
- Saturday , May 16, 1:00 pm

WHICH VOLUNTEER DO YOU WANT TO BE?

HOSTA HAPPENINGS

MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society represents Region 5 of the American Hosta Society that includes 9 states.

Membership in the society is $20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of the newsletter. Please mail a check made payable to MRHS to:

MRHS Membership
Kathy Rustad
4011 10th Avenue NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Along with Name, Address, Phone, and email (Most correspondence is by email). For questions email MRHS.hosta@gmail.com.

Please call for your appointment

Jack Barta | 262 375-0617 | 262 385-0180

W59 N910 Sheboygan Rd. Cedarburg, WI 53012

HOSTAS 2020 MRHS Convention CHICAGO STYLE

Coming July 16 - 18, 2020 in Lisle

Plan to attend and volunteer!

Click for Convention Info

http://www.midwesthostasociety.org/ChicagoStyle2020.shtml

The american HOSTA SOCIETY

www.americanhostasociety.org

Members receive three issues per year of The Hosta Journal, which includes color photos of hostas, reports on the national convention, scientific info concerning current research pertaining to hostas and advertisements of interest to hosta families.

Dues for one year are $30 for an individual and $34 for a family.

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Fabulous Wisconsin 2020 Bus Tour - July 25

By Mark Rekoske

Plan now to spend the day with fellow hosta enthusiasts touring three fabulous gardens in eastern Wisconsin on Saturday, July 25. One of the gardens is rarely open to the public. It is sited on 500 acres of Lake Michigan frontage and includes a garden with hundreds of varieties of hostas. Our second garden stop was perhaps the best hosta tour garden of the 2019 American Hosta Society Convention in 2019. Our final stop will be at a hosta nursery with a huge display garden showing off mature specimens of the hostas they sell at very modest prices.

We will depart at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 25 from the conveniently located CDW Headquarters parking lot along the west side of the Tri-State Tollway just southwest of its interchange with Illinois Highway 22 (Half Day Road) in Lincolnshire. We will travel by motor coach. No lunch stop is planned so bring your own lunch (no alcohol please) to eat on the bus. NIHS will provide limited on-board refreshments as well. We will go regardless of the weather so bring rain gear if the weather looks unfavorable.

We are limited to 52 participants so please sign up early to ensure a place on the bus.

Please arrive at the parking lot by 6:45 a.m. as the bus will leave promptly at 7:00.

COST: $42 for NIHS members and members' spouses. $50 for guests (includes a one-year NIHS membership). The cost will increase to $50 for late entries received after May 31. **See Order Form on page 15.**

QUESTIONS: Email Mark Rekoske at marekoske@gmail.com or call him at 224-622-1171.

Christopher Farms Asian Water Garden

Garden Descriptions

The Christopher Farm and Gardens - Sheboygan WI

Jay Christopher, a Chicago businessman, has worked for years to develop his 500 acre farm with one mile of Lake Michigan shoreline and 60 acres of gardens into a horticultural showplace. Through his interest in horticulture and education he has developed gardens to inspire and enlighten guests while providing a space for enjoyment, understanding and conservation of Wisconsin plants, trees and animals. Among its many specialty gardens is Jayrassic Park, formerly known as the Hosta Haven. Jayrassic Park includes a number of sculptures overlooking over 400 hosta cultivars in a garden that includes over 3,000 hosta plants. We could probably spend the entire day at Christopher Farm, but beyond the hosta garden we will sample a few of the other gardens, viewing three koi ponds, waterfalls, examples of kinetic sculptures, a conservatory, an Asian water garden and a collection of conifers. Our visit will be about 1.5 hours and include walking among the gardens on mostly paved paths over even terrain. For more information about this garden follow this link: http://www.christopherfarmandgardens.org/

Audrey and Jim Temmer - Appleton WI

A beautiful border of hosta 'Curly Fries' that edges a planting bed to the left of the driveway on this quiet cul-de-sac provides a hint of the hosta garden that awaits

Continued next page

Fabulous Wisconsin 2020 Bus Tour - July 25 continued

in the back yard. Audrey reported that she began collecting hostas for her home on Legend Lake in about 2000. That house was on a very shaded lot and she found that the hostas grew well. Within a few years she had many more hostas and began hosting garden walks. She loved sharing her garden with others so when planning to sell that house Audrey began splitting and moving pieces of her hostas to her Appleton home. Currently, about 1,200 hostas are perfectly placed in borders and planting beds surrounding the house and along the gentle slope to the creek at the rear of the yard. The backyard is layered with mature trees, understory trees and shrubs along with garden art and companion plants. Annuals, hydrangeas, clematis, roses and lilies provide some color, but the star attractions are the perfectly grown hostas. Most of the hostas are large and mature specimens. Audrey also enjoys small and miniature hostas and you will see fine specimens of these as well. Hybridizing is also one of Audrey's pastimes and you may find seedlings of streaked hostas throughout the garden and near the shed. Not to be missed is a terrific Acer 'North Wind', one of the Iseli Nursery's Jack Frost collection of ornamental maples that survived -30 degree temperatures in 2018's polar vortex. A broad shaded deck at the rear of the house allows guests to take in the full measure of this backyard.

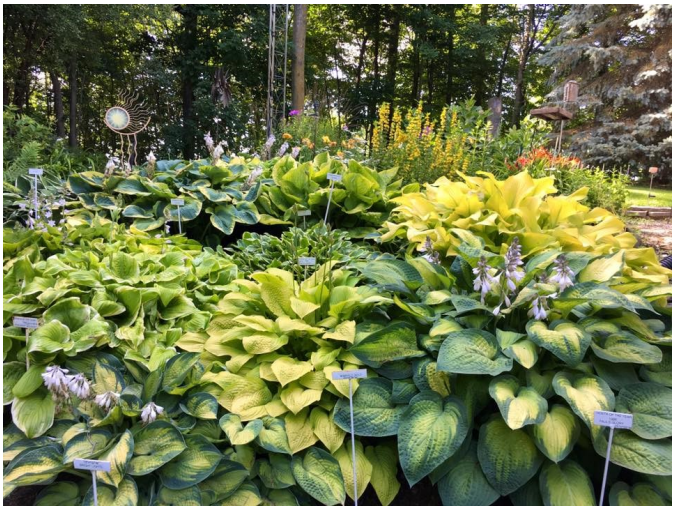
See the next page for your Eastern Wisconsin Bus Tour Order Form.

Off the back deck in the Temmer garden.

Pondside Gardens - Kiel WI

In the rolling, wooded countryside outside of Kiel Wisconsin Dennis and Diane Lenz maintain a display garden with thousands of mature hostas that they have collected and grown for many years. Stroll the paths through the gardens and make your wish list of hostas you did not know you needed before your visit. The Lenzes offer hundreds of varieties of hostas for sale at very reasonable prices in their adjacent retail garden center. Both newer cultivars and classic hostas will be available for purchase. The owners eschew the internet and do not sell by mail order. They prefer the person to person contact of direct selling. Pondside Gardens does have a presence on Facebook, however. You can preview the beautiful gardens on Facebook: www.facebook.com/PondsideGardensHostas/. The Facebook page even includes a video tour of the display garden. Pondside Gardens **does not accept credit cards**, but cash and checks are welcome. A price list is not available, but most hostas are offered at just $10 each.

Pondside Gardens display area.



Eastern Wisconsin Bus Tour July 25 Order Form

Pease print this page and mail it with your check. Due date is 05/31/20

QUESTIONS: Email marekoske@gmail.com or call 224-622-1171

Make checks payable to: Northern Illinois Hosta Society

Send to: Mark Rekoske, 10902 Hickory Nut Way, Richmond, IL 60071

Member Name_____ **Members $42 X**_____**= $**_____

Guest Name_____ **Guests $50 X**_____**= $**_____

Telephone _____ **Late Entries $50 X**_____**= $**_____

Email (Required)_____ **Total $**_____

Please provide your email address above. Confirmation of your reservation, directions to the parking lot and the tour schedule will be sent to you via email. Registration fees are non-refundable. However, I will make a waiting list to facilitate private transfers. No guarantees - but sometimes replacements can be arranged.

Join the Northern Illinois Hosta Society

Join the NIHS by contacting Stevie Meginness, Membership Secretary, 84 Dunham Place, St. Charles, IL 60174 with your check for $20. Please include your name(s), address, phone #, and current email address.

Family membership dues of $20 for 2 years include email versions of 5 newsletters.

Email us at NI.hosta@gmail.com. Call Stevie at 630-377-9306. Visit our website @ www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org and visit us on Facebook.

New Member Welcome!!

A special welcome to our newest hostaphiles!

- **Terry & Mary Klein, Geneva**
- **Nancy Murphy, Lombard**
- **Jim Blanford, Aurora**
- **Janet A. Radke, Burr Ridge**

Preview our Hosta Garden Walks

By Nancy Huck

Dennis Hood's Garden Open 2 to 5 pm Sunday June 7

We have lived in Geneva for about a decade. With help from my parents, we put in our first 100 hostas in an area I refer to as "the grove" and around the east side pines.

Over the last 5 years or so, we have integrated about 500 more plants into our small back yard, and have encroached a little into the wooded area that separates us from the Union Pacific Railroad. I began to create growing "themes" in different areas of the yard about 3 years ago, creating a sun garden on the west side, a mini garden behind the house, and a shade walk along the east side.

The introduction of lawn gnomes began, much to my wife's chagrin, in an attempt to add extra color and dimension to the otherwise green and yellow world that most hostas create. Over the last couple of years I have concentrated on finding vintage gnomes and under-appreciated yard art that help create scenes in different areas of the yard. Since most of the plants and statuary are in the back yard, most people don't know that any of this exists.

Welcome to our garden!

Directions: *to **700 Brigham Ct., Geneva***

From IL Rt. 38 and IL 31 in Geneva

*Drive south on Rt 31 one mile and turn right on Fargo Blvd, continue west 0.7 miles on Fargo to Brigham Way and turn right on Brigham Way, continue north on Brigham Way 0.4 miles to the end to **700 Brigham Ct. Geneva** (Dark green house on the left of the cul de sac).*

Preview our Hosta Garden Walks

continued

Lou & Nickie Horton's Garden Open 2 to 5 pm Sunday June 28

Lou's plan for a shade garden began over 25 years ago. Lou surveyed his grove of 100 year old oaks with the high shade canopy and realized that large areas of their one-acre parcel were perfectly suited to shade gardening - and hostas.

Brush Buckeye that dominates an area in front of the house.

When a severe storm claimed several of the big oaks six years ago, Lou began adding a collection of state-of-the-art daylilies in newly-sunny areas. Come for a visit - you will be enchanted!

Directions: *to* ***1N735 Ingalton West Chicago, IL***

From the intersection of IL Rte. 64 and IL Rte. 59 head south on IL Rte. 59 for 1.4 miles to Hawthorne Ln,

Turn sharp right onto Hawthorne Ln and travel 0.4 miles to Ingalton Ave. Turn left on Ingalton for 400 feet to 1N735 Ingalton on your left.

Over the last quarter of a century Lou created a stunning display garden featuring approximately 300 gorgeous large hostas along with several collections of ornamental shrubs. The shrubs provide accent to the hostas - including hydrangeas, magnolias and viburnums. In addition there are some established ornamentals such as a 25-foot tall Tricolor Beech tree and a mature Bottle

GARDENING with Hostas

By Diana Stoll

Although hostas are the star players in my shade gardens, without the companion plants they would lack pizzazz. Hellebores offer flowers before hostas have emerged in spring and evergreen foliage after hostas have surrendered to winter. The purple foliage of coral bells provide dramatic color contrast with hosta leaves of green, gold and blue. Striking textural contrast is afforded by ferns of all sorts.

And astilbes, oh the astilbes. They not only contribute fine-textured, fern-like foliage, their summer-blooming flowers are the proverbial icing on the cake.

Much of the shade in my landscape is provided by silver maples with ravenous roots that selfishly drink up most of the water Mother Nature provides, leaving little for other plants. Some astilbes require consistently moist soil and are difficult to grow in these conditions. These thirsty prima donnas don't have much of a chance in my gardens. Even when I tried giving them supplemental water, their foliage displayed their displeasure with their brown, crinkled foliage.

But *Astilbe chinensis* (commonly called Chinese astilbe and false spirea) puts up with drier soil and grows beautifully for me. They may look delicate but are tough as nails.

Astilbe chinesis 'Pumila' was the first cultivar I planted many years ago and the one that got me hooked on Chinese astilbes. It is among the smallest members of the family. The sweet, fern-like foliage of this little cutie spread quickly under a crabapple, tickling the toes of neighboring hostas and boasting lilac-pink spikes of flowers in summer.

Astilbe chinensis *Pic by Diana Stoll*

And the rest, as they say, is history. I have added several cultivars of Chinese astilbes to my gardens and love them all.

The varieties in the Visions series grow 18 to 24 inches tall and almost as wide. 'Visions' features violet-red plumes, 'Visions in Red' sports dark purple-red blooms, and 'Visions in White' has, you guessed it, creamy white spikes of flowers.

Named for the wife of Mayor Richard M. Daley, 'Maggie Daley' shows off gorgeous lilac-pink plumes on stems over two feet tall. The robust cherry red flower spikes of 'Mighty Red Quinn' reach an impressive four feet tall. Even taller, *Astilbe chinensis* var. *taquetti* 'Superba' grows up to five feet tall and flaunts purple-rose flowers.

The flowers of astilbes are lovely in bouquets. Cut stems when half of the flowers are open. They can also be dried. For best results, cut spikes when flowers have just opened, strip the leaves from each stem, and hang them upside down until they are dry.

When astilbes are finished flowering, flower spikes can be removed to improve the plant's appearance, but I think the dried flower stalks are attractive, and left unpruned they also provide winter interest.

From the time Chinese astilbes emerge in spring until their seed heads are cut back in late winter, they are as useful as they are beautiful in the shade garden.

DAVE'S VIEW

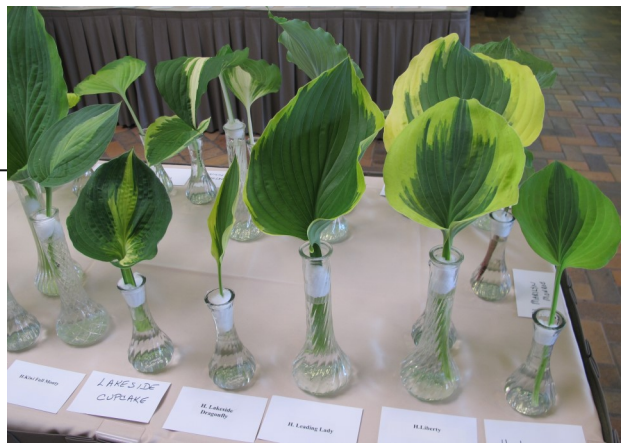
- Emerging Spring -

By Dave Trollope

Here is a collection of photos to remind us of the emerging spring which is nearly upon us (clockwise from top right). The stages of growth shown here, from the tips breaking through the soil to unfurling of a hosta (or neighboring fern), the wildlife that looks on (bird or racoon!) and the spring rain that beautifies our landscape.

Annual Leaf Display May 30 & 31 at Chicago Botanic Garden

By Mike Kraus



I know it seems to be a bit early to be talking about a late May event, but I am ready for the warmer weather and growing season. Our annual Leaf Display and Plant Sale at the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) in Glencoe is scheduled for May 30th & 31st this year. The NIHS mission is to share knowledge of hostas and to promote their use in the landscape. How better to do this than to display the most beautiful hosta leaves from our gardens. Hundreds of CBG visitors will walk through our display and enjoy our hosta experience. Some will even buy hostas from our member vendors. Attendees also have the opportunity to vote for their favorite hosta leaf. I have seen some vote more than once…. allegedly a Chicago tradition.

DONATE LEAVES: We need your donations of leaves from your best hostas. Here is what you need to do:

- Identify your best looking hostas in mid May.
- Select the best (most typical) leaf and cut it cleanly within 48 hours of the display. Be sure to leave the petiole long enough to put into a vase as shown in the photo.
- Write the name of the hosta on the petiole with a waterproof Sharpie Ultra Fine Point tip pen or securely label the leaf in some other way. All leaves must be identifiable and labeled.
- Thoroughly wash any dirt or debris from the leaf and put it in cool water to keep it fresh. Clean the hosta leaf with wet cotton balls.
- Repeat this process for as many hosta leaves as you wish to bring to the display.

NIHS members will be at CBG on Friday May 29th between 9:00 and noon and on Saturday morning, May 30th, from 8:30 to 10:00 to accept your leaves and help set them up for display.

GET YOUR LEAVES TO CBG: If you cannot get there during the above hours, you can drop off your leaves with one of the following members. Please contact them in advance for your leaf drop off.

Thursday Drop-off:

Andy & Faith Campbell, Elgin andycamp@flash.net	847-209-8455
Nancy Huck, Bensenville nancyh43356@att.net	630-595-4874
Linda Lood, Sleepy Hollow llood@sbcglobal.net	847-426-9021
Barbara King, Batavia Bhk430@att.net	630-643-2263
Mike Kraus, Crystal Lake Kraus6311@comcast.net	815-353-3415

Friday Drop-off:

June Vandervest, Downers Grove junevandervest@comcast.net	312-301-4727
Mark Rekoske, Richmond marekoske@gmail.com	224-622-1171

VOLUNTEER AT THE EXHIBIT: To sign-up for a morning or afternoon shift between 10:00 am and 4:30 pm Saturday and Sunday contact Nancy Huck at (630) 595-4874 or nancyh43356@att.net. As volunteers we have historically been granted "free parking" while we work at the exhibit. Before or after your shift you will be able to stroll through the gardens. We are currently in need of volunteers for morning and afternoon shifts.

VISIT DISPLAY AND BUY FROM VENDORS: Lou Horton presents a seminar Saturday at 1:00 pm with tips on growing hostas. Come to see the display and buy some great hostas from our Member Vendors, Jim Morrow and Jack Barta. *The display is a great way to identify those cultivars you just have to have in your garden.* **Jim and Jack will have some of the newest cultivars coming on the market that you will not find at a garden center. Come out and look at their hosta inventory and invest in a few. SEE YOU THERE!!**

Winter Symposium Highlights Held Feb 1 in Brookfield, WI

By June Vandervest

The attendees of this year's Winter Hosta Symposium were there to get an early fix on anything garden related and to shed the winter blues. The February 1st programs did not disappoint. Bob Solberg began with opening remarks stating that the knowledge in the room was awesome. He said how lucky we all are to be able to learn from those around us who freely give of the things that they have learned.

The genus Hosta has given us a language of its own. It hosts a vocabulary which, although it sometimes falls into using initialism to refer to a meaning, is easily understood once you get the basics down. Some examples are: TC = tissue culture and OS = originator stock. So the question, "Why do TC's revert?", actually means "Why do plants that came from tissue culture revert back to the parent plant?" This type of "shorthand" came well before the "text speak" that so many people now utilize on their cell phones.

Bob talked more about the ways hosta plants can be increased through various types of propagation, by division, tissue culture, seedlings and sports from the wild. The excitement of hybridization by crossing a blue and a yellow plant that bloom at the same time to yield a totally new plant is part of the mystique that feeds the soul of the hybridizer, as well as the buyers at the end of the equation who are waiting for a brand new hosta to own.

Jeff Moore shared his easy techniques for starting hosta seed indoors. He shared his recipe for the kind of soil mix, the ounce size and the number of cups to use and how to make your little hosta nursery into its own temporary terrarium. Voilà! After 3 to 20 days, with a little luck, germination will occur. Jeff covered the care of new plants from fertilization to techniques for insect and disease prevention. When his talk was finished, we all were sure we could hurry home and be successful growing hostas from seed. Since hosta seed was also available at this symposium, many people were able to do just that.

Pic by Mike Kraus

Jeff Moore at the podium on how to start hosta seed.

Michael Hill brought us a whole new way to think about the lives of plants and how they interact together with his talk about mycorrhizae. Mycorrhizae within the roots of plants provide better absorption of nutrients and increase the intake of water. Disturbance of soils from common practices like removal of topsoil, tilling, erosion, compaction and invasion of weeds can rob gardens of these beneficial organisms. Michael explained how reapplication of mycorrhizae can benefit all types of plants from garden vegetables, flowering perennials like hostas, annuals, trees and shrubs. Find out how it works at www.mycorrhizae.com.

Continued next page

Winter Symposium Highlights

continued

Hosta 'First Blush' introduced by Bob Solberg

Glenn Herold shared how to get the most from utilizing the shady spaces in your garden. His handout covered understory trees and shrubs for the shade, as well as lots of perennial companion plants for hosta gardens. His lists include many native plants that are underused.

Michael Greanya spoke about Alpine plants. These are a whole classification of dwarf sized plants that thrive in gravel soils with low nutrients. They also have the capacity to withstand cold temperatures and high ultraviolet light. When they blossom there is a profusion of flowers with large sized blooms. The flowers attract pollinators and enable them to reproduce in a very short span of life. In our gardens we can create some of these same conditions by growing these plants in hyper-tufa, scree or well aeriated rock.

Mark Zilis took us for a visual walk through his and other growers' hosta introductions over the years. Mark explained how hostas came to be one of the most collected plants in gardens today. The desire has not been quenched as we impatiently wait to see what the next new shape or color will be.

The AHS Convention in Minneapolis , June 11 - 13

The Minnesota Hosta Society is delighted to be the host for the AHS 2020 convention. Our theme, Hosta Vision 2020, reflects not only the year, but also the ever expanding use of hosta in the garden. Hostas continue to be America's number one perennial due to their versatility in the landscape. Plus they thrive in Minnesota's Zone 4!

Convention Highlights

- June 11, 12 and 13th, 2020 formal convention dates:
- Seven Meals Include (Breakfast (F/Sat), Lunch (Th/Fr/Sat) & Dinner (Th/Sat)
- Six Educational speakers (Thursday and Saturday afternoons, 3 each day)
- Garden Tours (Fri & Sat morning) – Op-in to ride a bus or drive on your own
- Hosta Show - Open Show Thurs-Saturday
- Judges Clinics – Clinic 1: Wed. 1-5 pm, Clinic 2: Th. 9-11 am, Clinic 3: Fri. 7-8 pm
- Hospitality (Wed/Th/Fri/Sat) – evening start time varies, ends daily at 11pm
- AHS Auction (Friday) – 1:30 – 5:30 pm
- Vending (Th/Fr/Sat) – times vary

Go to the website for all the details https://hostavision2020.com/

Ask the Expert…

Collecting & Drying Hosta Seed

By Don Rawson

Pic by Michael Greanya

Q: Can I grow hostas from seed?

A: Yes, you can! Growing hostas from seed is fun and easy. Most hostas produce plenty of good seed and growing seedlings during the long winter months is a lot of fun. While there are a few guidelines, basically it's just a matter of planting the seed, watching it germinate, providing enough light, and watering occasionally. Not much different than growing green beans, sweet corn, or flowers.

Another reason growing hostas from seed is so much fun is because you can develop your own new hybrid, since hostas don't come true from seed. That means that every seed will produce a new and distinct variety. It's very rewarding to create a brand new hosta which has no one has ever seen or grown before!

Q: From which hostas should I collect the seed?

A: First off, if you want to collect hosta seed from your garden, don't cut the scapes off when they're done blooming! Secondly, when it's time to walk around and collect the seed, there's one thing to keep in mind: generally, only a streaked pod parent (the mom) can pass along variegation, so if you want variegated seedlings, you should collect seed from streaked hostas such as 'Galaxy', 'Ice Age Trail, and 'Sea Prize'.

Hosta 'Paul's Glory'

Pic by Perennial Resource

In addition, hostas with speckled leaf centers such as 'Allegan Fog' and 'Revolution' will often pass on the speckled coloration to their seedlings.

Other hostas which have a "stable" variegated leaf pattern, such as 'Great Expectations', Patriot', and **'Paul's Glory'**, will not usually produce any variegated seedlings- they will all be solid colored (blue, green, or gold). There's nothing wrong with that, but many gardeners prefer variegated hostas over those which aren't.

If you do not want to collect your own seed, you can purchase it on-line from several retail sources.

Q: How can I know when the seed is ripe?

A: The seed should be allowed to mature before harvesting. Six weeks after pollination is usually enough time for the seed to develop, but eight weeks is better. So, if you know when your hosta bloomed, you can determine when the seed will be ripe.

Seed pods will gradually turn yellow in the fall, which is a good sign they're ready to pick. Don't wait too long! Once the pods turn brown and start splitting open, your seed will fall out and be gone forever. In addition, plump juicy pods are a favorite snack for deer, mice, and chipmunks, so better to pick them as soon as they're ripe.

Seed on late blooming hostas may not be ripe even in late fall. In this case, the entire scape can be cut off, brought indoors, and placed in sugar water.

Continued next page

Ask the Expert…

Collecting and Drying Hosta Seed continued

Pic by Michael Greanya

Q: How do I dry the seed and clean it?

A: The pods can be picked and placed in paper lunch bags or envelopes. The parentage should be written on the envelope and stored in a cool, dry place.

Separating the seeds from the pods is quite easy once the seed has completely dried, which may take a few weeks. Many of the pods will split open on their own and the seed will drop right out.

Another method is to put the pods in a sieve. The pods are crushed enough to let the seeds fall out into a dish. Then the pods are discarded, leaving behind the clean seed.

Mature, viable seeds are dark brown or black and have a plump kernel at one end. On the other hand, white seeds and those which are light brown never fully matured and are no good. They won't germinate and should be separated from the good seed.

Q: How do I label the seed?

A: Write the pod parent (the mom) first. The pod parent is the plant from which you collected the seed. Then write the pollen parent (the dad). For example, 'Galaxy' X 'Big Daddy'.

If you did not do an intentional cross, then the seed was open pollinated (OP), which means the cross was made by the bees, wind, or by some other natural means. Growing open pollinated seed is just fine, but often it doesn't take long before such an enthusiast becomes interested in making his own crosses.

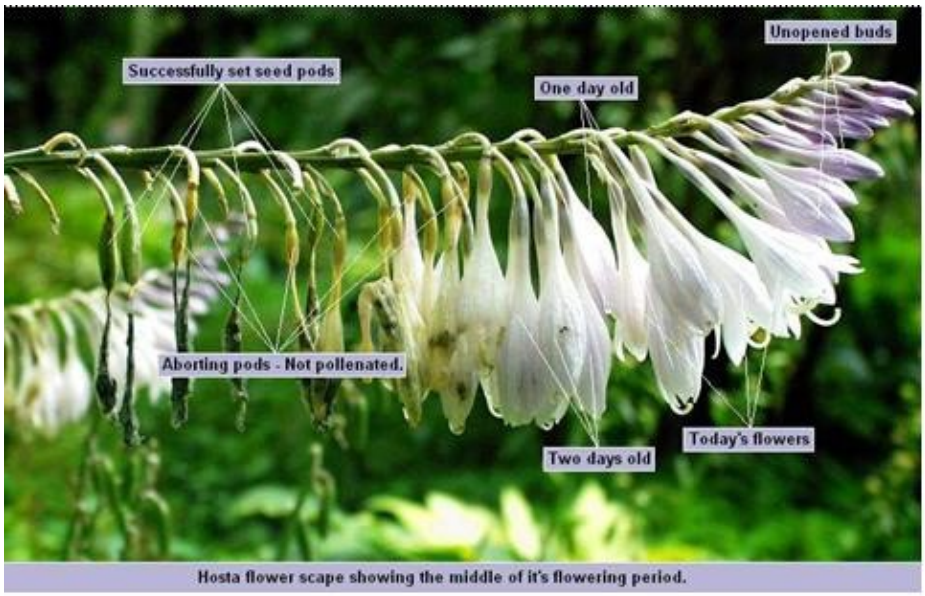
Q: How long can I store the seed and when can I plant it?

A: You can plant the hosta seed right away or store it to grow at a later date. You do not need to cold treat it or wait for a specific period of time. Just keep it in a cool, dry place.

If you plan to wait for three months or longer before planting the seed, it can be placed in an airtight container (such as a glass jar) and placed in the freezer. Hosta seed stored in the freezer should have the parentage and year written on each packet. The seed, if dried and stored properly, should last for years. Then when you're ready, you can remove it from the freezer, plant it, and have fun watching it grow to become beautiful new varieties you will surely enjoy!

From Oct 2019 Newsletter of the Michigan Hosta Society

Pic by White Feather Hosta



Hosta flower scape showing the middle of it's flowering period.

HOSTA HAPPENINGS

Holiday Party Highlights Dec 2019

Our festive Holiday Party in Dec 2019 was hosted by Arlene & Bruce Solyom in Lombard (pic left). In addition to the wonderful food we enjoyed taking our Group Photo at the bottom of the page. Meeting and greeting old & new friends made the afternoon special - plus - No Snow!

Pics by Ron Asselborn

Holiday Party Highlights
Dec 2019 continued

Pics by

Ron Asselborn

NIHS Membership Secretary

84 Dunham Place

St. Charles, IL 60174

The Northern Illinois Hosta Society is dedicated to educating the public and promoting the use of hosta in the landscape. NIHS serves the people of Northern Illinois and surrounding areas.

See this vibrant Main Council Ring at Christopher Farms on the July 25 Bus Tour. Sign-up now so you can see all three of the fabulous gardens plus incredible hosta shopping.

We're on the Web ! www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org

Visit us on Facebook

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Visit Billie Childress' tour garden at the July 2020 MRHS Convention.