

Hosta Happenings

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois Hosta Society

ISSUE 107

MAY 2019

2019 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- **May 19, Spring Symposium & Plant Pickup, Friendship Park, Des Plaines**
- **June 1 & 2, Hosta Leaf Display & Plant Sale, Chicago Bot. Garden**
- **June 9, Hosta Garden Walk #1, Gurnee**
- **June 12 - 15, AHS & MRHS Convention, Green Bay, WI**
- **June 23, Hosta Garden Walk #2, St. Charles**
- **July 7, Hosta Garden Walk #3, Downers Grove**
- **July 12, Cantigny Hosta Garden Dedication, Cantigny**
- **July 14, Hosta Garden Walk #4, Lombard**
- **July 20, Annual Bus Trip, Rockford, Cherry Valley & Dubuque, IA,**
- **Aug 11, Hosta & Plant Auction, Community House, Hinsdale**
- **Sept, Fall Potluck & Annual Mtg**
- **Oct, Fall Symposium , TBD**
- **Dec, Holiday Party, TBD**

President's Letter

So it's May and everyone's hostas are up and thriving right, right? Seems like we are a couple weeks behind what we used to consider normal. I know this winter was brutal with the "polar vortex". The snow 2 weeks ago and 20 degree temps have hit many of my hostas with a freeze burn on a number of leaves. But, this will pass and everything will be back to "normal" in June.

With our annual Leaf Display and Plant Sale, NIHS programs get into full swing starting June 1st and 2nd at Chicago Botanic Garden. If you have never volunteered to work at this event or never attended, you are missing out. We expect to have a hundred plus donated hosta leaves on display, presentations on Saturday and Sunday at 1:00 and 3 member vendors selling plants. Check out the article later in this newsletter for details.

Nancy Huck has put together 4 great garden walks this summer that you do not want to miss. Mark Rekoske once again has set up our bus tour on July 20th. I understand space is still available. See the details below.

This year's American Hosta Society's annual convention is June 12 – 15 close by in Green Bay, WI. I am looking forward to this convention as I have never attended an AHS convention. I understand the gardens in

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President's Letter *continued*

Green Bay are spectacular. However, I plan on leaving my Chicago Bear's gear at home.

The NIHS website is a tremendous resource worth your attention. I cannot say enough about the breadth of information available and the links to other informative websites. You can find our website at www.northernillinoishostasociety.org. There is a tab for our Calendar of Events and a Picture Gallery showing pictures from past events. More importantly is the Resources Tab. Stevie Meginness has done a great job identifying Community Events throughout our area, a tab for Gardening Tips of the Season and a tab for Hosta Problems just to name a few. I strongly suggest you check it out.

If you have any questions about NIHS programs or you have suggestions, contact me or a board member. What are we doing right or what could we be doing to better meet your needs? Our contact information is listed later in the newsletter. Also, if you do have suggestions for improving NIHS, please consider volunteering and helping us out.

May your hostas be full and your gardens colorful.

Hosta-la-Vista, *Mikø Kraus*

Seats Are Available!



**Bus tour to Rockford Area and Galena
July 20**

Contact Mark Rekoske ASAP to reserve your seat! 224- 622-1171 or marekoske@gmail.com

See the Mar 2019 newsletter page 7 for all details.



Garden Center – Arboretum – Botanical Gardens



Open House and Hosta Walk
June 7-8-9

Artisan Market—September 7

Nursery Open: April 10 – October 10
Princeton, Illinois (815) 659-3282

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**Rich's Foxwillow
Pines Nursery, Inc.**

After 31 years in business, 2019 will be the final year!

All 1 gallon hostas \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

Specimen conifers, beeches, ginkgos, and Japanese maples
40% off container trees & shrubs
30% off in-ground and b&b stock

Unusual conifers and deciduous trees abound at Rich's Foxwillow Pines Nursery, like weeping pines and spruces, angular ginkgos, majestic dawn redwoods, soft-neededled firs, columnar beeches, graceful hemlocks, and wispy false cypresses. Myriad sizes, shapes, textures, and colors add interest to any garden space.

Natural companions in shady gardens, hemlocks with their soft, feathery foliage contrast nicely with hostas. Hemlock cultivars come in weeping, mounding, irregular, or upright forms. Each tree is unique and has character, some looking like angels or shaggy dogs, others resembling abstract sculptures.

Spring hours starting March 11th: Monday-Saturday, 8am-4:30pm.

11618 McConnell Rd. Woodstock IL 60098
815-338-7442

coniflora@richsfoxwillowpines.com
www.richsfoxwillowpines.com





PARTICIPATE in NIHS LEAF DISPLAY JUNE 1 & 2 at CBG

It's time for our annual Leaf Display at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe. The NIHS mission/purpose is to share knowledge of hostas and to promote the use of hostas in the landscape. How better to do this than to display the most stunning hosta leaves from our gardens. Hundreds of visitors will enjoy this hosta experience. Some buy hostas and ferns from our vendors. Attendees also have the opportunity to vote on their favorite hosta leaf.

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

- * Identify your best looking hostas.
- * 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 felt 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 hosta leaves 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 31st between 9:00 and noon and on Saturday morning, June 1st, 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 those hours, you can drop off your leaves at one of the following members. Please contact them in advance for your leaf drop off.

Thursday Drop-off:

- Andy & Faith Campbell, Elgin 847-209-8455
andycamp@flash.net
- Nancy Huck, Bensenville 630-595-4874
nancyh43356@att.net
- Linda Lood, Sleepy Hollow 847-426-9021
llood@sbcglobal.net
- Barbara King, Batavia 630- 643-2263
bhk430@att.net
- Mike Kraus, Crystal Lake 815- 356-8569
kraus6311@comcast.net

Friday Drop-off:

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

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

VISIT DISPLAY AND BUY FROM VENDORS: Whether or not you donate leaves or volunteer, come to see the display and buy some great plants from our vendors. The display is also a great way to identify those cultivars you just have to have in your garden. **NIHS members Jim Morrow and Jack Barta will sell hostas, and Jean and Scott Lundberg will sell ferns during display hours. Lou Horton will also present a seminar Saturday at 1:00 pm with tips on growing hostas. Scott Lundberg will make a presentation Sunday at 1:00 pm on Fern Culture for Midwest Gardens. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!**

Hosta Garden Walk #1 Preview Sunday June 9 in Gurnee

Joe & Monica Jansen's Garden Open 2 to 5 pm

I've always enjoyed gardening (an awesome stress reliever) and even started my own landscaping business during college. Monica and I were very happy when we were able to create our own garden here. When we first moved in 18 years ago we had only one tree that I was able to touch the top of. Now, we enjoy the shade provided by many mature trees which allows for the protection of my hostas. One of the best parts of our hosta collecting journey has been meeting other hostaphiles, learning from them and getting to actually see and sometimes purchase hostas you've only heard about. Lastly, I always enjoy having other garden enthusiasts visit our garden and talk shop.

My garden in general:

The three main staples of my garden are 500+ varieties of hostas, 45 cultivars of Japanese maples and many unusual conifers. I enjoy using these plants & trees to paint my garden with color. My style is definitely a controlled wild look. My goal is to always make something look like it's been there for many years. I'm always moving things around, putting in more paths, adding more seating areas, deciding what my next yard project will be and



definitely removing grass in order to add more hostas and trees. I already know what my spring project is going to be...you'll have to come and see.

Directions to 640 Yorktown Lane, Gurnee:

The two main roads that we are near are Route 120 (Belvidere Rd.) & Interstate 94. If you are on Interstate 94, take the Route 120 East ramp. Take 120 East to O'Plaine Road (Left/North). Take O'Plaine Road to Country Trails Road (Right). Take Country Trails Road (it's a curvy road) all the way to Yorktown Lane (Right). The house will be the second to last house on the right side (640 Yorktown Lane).



Hosta Garden Walk #2 Preview

Sunday June 23 in St. Charles

Stevie & Mark Meginness - The Garden of Earthly Delights Open 2 to 5 pm

The Meginness garden has evolved over 40 years from sun loving plants to shade and woodland plants. Mark and Stevie have added a diversity of oaks, & ornamental trees plus a stunning variety of flowering shrubs, hostas and perennials that provide color & blooms throughout the season.

As you enter the garden through the front walk, you will find meandering paths leading to many different garden rooms. Along the pathways, you'll encounter beautifully planted beds filled with colorful annuals, a variety of perennials & a wealth of **gorgeous hostas**. Planters brim with various annuals, herbs, and perennials. Many ornamental garden elements come into view as you tour the garden paths - benches, a vintage gate, trellises and small sculptures.



On the eastern edge explore stone retaining walls filled with trees and shrubs which have been enriched with additional plantings of dogwoods, hellebores, ferns, more hostas, spring-flowering

bulbs and woodland flowers.

From the pergola you can

enjoy soft music inviting you to relax and reflect, while observing finches hovering at their thistle feeding sacks or watch hummingbirds gracing the air space, sipping nectar from daylilies, tiger lilies & coneflowers. You will also see butterflies flitting throughout the garden.

On the patio find a pond that holds fourteen goldfish picked out by each of their grandchildren. The patio pond and other water features in the garden induce a visual and auditory feeling of tranquility.

A small hosta and woodland shade garden is tucked between the exposed ledges of the cottage garden - guarded by boxwoods and perennials nestled under giant maple trees: Hellebores, brunnera, heuchera, hydrangeas, and a variety of hostas reside on Hosta Hill.

Whether you are two or eight-two, you are going to love the whimsy and the beauty created in this amazing garden space.

Directions to 84 Dunham Pl, St. Charles:

The nearest major intersection is IL Route 64/ North Avenue and Kirk Road. From this intersection proceed West on IL Rte. 64 0.5 Miles, right on Dunham Rd (stoplight), north on Dunham Rd 0.5 miles & turn Left on Dunham Place. Look for the gardens on the corner on your left - 84 Dunham Place.



Hosta Garden Walk #3 Preview Sunday July 7 in Downers Grove

Wayne & Bill Reid Garden Open 2 to 5 pm

As you enter through the garden gate, a huge naturalized pond and garden greet you. The pond is surrounded by a wide variety of trees, shrubs, hostas, perennials and some annuals that provide season-long color.



flourishing in many areas through-out the mostly shady yard. The Morton Arboretum has been an inspiration for many years and a source for some of the plants through their plant sales. Please come and enjoy our garden and pond!

Directions to 121 Fourth St, Downers Grove:

From the intersection of 55th and Fairview Ave., go North on Fairview to Fourth St. (just North of the church) ; turn right (east) two blocks on Fourth St. to Connor Rd. Jog 200 ft. north on Connor Rd. Then turn right (east) on Fourth St. to 121 Fourth St., Downers Grove which is the second house on the right.



The oriental themed garden had its beginnings in 1972 when we first moved into the house. As you walk along the pond you cross over an arched bridge and follow a flagstone path to the rest of the yard. Stepping stones across the lawn lead you to a wood chip path which follows along the back of the pond to a deck overlooking the pond with large colorful koi .

Another wood chip path at the back of the yard circles through a sunny perennial garden. Hostas are



Hosta Garden Walk #4 Preview

Sunday July 14 in Lombard

Cher & Mark Herlache' Garden Open 2 to 5 pm

When we purchased our 1920's house in June of 1987, I was not a gardener. I thought the giant thistle plants were interesting until a horrified passerby told me what they were. The yard was overgrown with privet and honeysuckle hedges & dead rose canes but the house spoke to us, and we were much younger.

The front walk was bordered on both sides by pretty, lance-like leaved green plants, which were lush and carefree. The pond had the same plant along the edges, and I was impressed they all came back every year and I liked the stalks with pretty purple flowers.



Flash forward to 1993: we had tamed the yard somewhat, and I joined our local garden club. One member gave me a tour of her garden and a small clump of my favorite plant, but lo and behold, it had some white edges on the leaves! I was told my two plants were...hostas. I was so excited to have "both varieties"!



Later the hosta bug bit me and it bit hard when someone told me there were over 700 different hostas, (remember, I was learning). Soon I was searching far and wide for food-named or people-named hostas. By doing that, I thought I could control myself, ha ha! I carefully labeled each plant after planning the perfect site for it's mature height and width. The next few seasons our precious pup, Kona, brought me about 50 plant ID markers pulled up from their important locations, and I could not remember which hosta was which. So many of my originals are "unnamed".

I have expanded my gardening obsession and the gardens, much to the chagrin of my husband who liked the grass, to include companion plants and natives. I continue to be a fool for flowers, succulents and hostas! I enjoy the riots of color and textures I can change up annually.

Please come and enjoy the gardens and our koi pond. If Curly, the fish, made it through the winter, he'll be 26 this year and perhaps he'll show you his trick.

Directions to 123 S. Elizabeth St., Lombard

From the intersection of St. Charles Road and Main St., head west to Elizabeth St. There is a traffic light and a Walgreens at that corner. Go south on Elizabeth, over the tracks to the stop sign, which is Maple St. We are on the northeast corner of Elizabeth and Maple Streets. Parking is on the south side of Maple St., or on the west side of Elizabeth St, south of Maple. There is no parking in front of the house.

NIHS Seeks Hosta Lovers to Speak at Local Libraries

.Do you love hosta gardening and want to share your knowledge with others? NIHS is seeking members who want to spread the joy of hosta gardening. You can join our Speakers Bureau to deliver an already-prepared digital slide program to local library audiences. Many local libraries are eager to offer a hosta gardening program to their patrons.

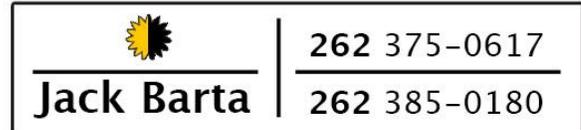


Typically these programs are an hour long, the speaker delivers the prepared digital slide program, and takes questions from the audience at the end. NIHS will solicit area libraries for their interest, and provide you with the request and contact information for your follow up. You need to be familiar with computer basics and have a friendly smile. Mike Kraus has developed the digital slide show and delivered the program this spring to enthusiastic responses. The program produced 7 new members.

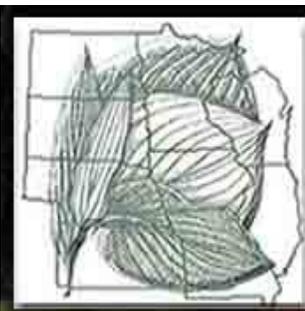
Please contact Ron Asselborn to answer questions and get you started at 630-587-1341 or rasselborn5@gmail.com.



Please call for your appointment



W59 N910 Sheboygan Rd. Cedarburg, WI 53012



The Midwest Regional Hosta Society

<http://www.midwesthostasociety.org/>

GARDENING with Hostas

By Diana Stoll



Division is Not Always a Math Problem

The main reasons gardeners divide their perennials are to keep aggressive plants in bounds, to rejuvenate aging perennials and to get more plants for free. All great reasons, right?

In early May, my shovel was thrust through roots of turtlehead, daisies and *Coreopsis* 'Zagreb' at the edges of their allotted spaces in the garden. The plants that had dared to cross their *lines in the sand* (or soil, that is) were lifted, divided into sections and replanted or given away.

An aster with a ring of new growth surrounding a dead center made a compelling case for dividing to revitalize. The entire clump was dug, and the outer ring divided into four sections. One section was replanted in the space occupied by the original plant and the rest were replanted in the garden or given away. A group of Siberian irises had refused to bloom last year, sulking in the shade of expanding tree limbs above. It was either prune the tree or



Diana prefers to let her hostas grow undivided.

move the irises. Maintaining the natural shape of the tree won over the position of the irises, so the irises were dug, divided and moved to a sunnier spot in the yard. The extras found their way to my sister's garden.

I divide perennials to keep garden bullies from taking advantage of more reserved neighbors. And I divide perennials to revitalize older plants. But I can't remember a time I divided a perennial just to get more plants for myself or to share with others. Could it be that I am selfish, free-spending or lazy?

Selfish? I don't think so. Eviction notices are often served to perennials that have fallen out of my favor to make room for new varieties. My sister's garden is planted almost entirely of my castaways. When my daughters moved to their own homes, I gladly dug up whole perennials for their new landscapes.

Free-spending? My husband would cast an affirmative vote and, if I am being honest, he isn't wrong. Instead of dividing and having more of the

same plant, I am always looking for an opportunity to try something new. And besides, I must do something with all those perennials that jump into my cart at the garden center!

Lazy? Not hardly. I may not have the energy I once had, but I am always busy in the garden – planting, weeding, deadheading and planning changes. I only divide when the plants force me to.

That is one more reason why I love hostas. They rarely *need* dividing. In fact, I think they are at their best when they are left to grow into their natural forms, whether it be a rounded mound like 'June' and 'Patriot', upright and vase-shaped like 'Sagae' and 'Krossa Regal' or ground covering like 'Lemon Lime' and 'Kabitan'.

The hosta may be called the friendship plant because it is easy to divide and share with others. Well, I think I am as friendly as the next gardener, but I don't want to divide my hostas. I don't want them to waste energy re-establishing after they have been uprooted and pulled into pieces.

So, my hostas grow without the risk of assault from a shovel. Selfish? I hope you don't think so. I will be happy to share if I ever remove an entire hosta from the garden. Free-spending? Absolutely. I am always ready to open my wallet for a new variety. Lazy? No time to answer. I must get back to work in the garden.

CANTIGNY GARDEN READY FOR THE SEASON, DEDICATION

By Barbara King

Dedicated NIHS volunteers have been working diligently in the AHS National Hosta Display Garden at Cantigny to get it ready for its first full growing season in the new layout created by the Project New Leaf renovation of the entire park.

Less-than-ideal conditions prevailed on the first workday of the year, May 7, when it was cold and damp. The main task was to clear out the dense scilla that nearly obscured the hostas and blooming companion plants. The photos on the following page show what they had to deal with. After 3 uncomfortable but productive hours, most of the scilla was gone. More volunteers finished that job on May 14, then planted a few hostas, spread all the mulch Cantigny had available, and....VOILA! You could see a hosta garden again!

Work will continue on May 21 to finish mulching the areas that could not be done earlier, and to plant a few more hostas. By mid-season, the garden should have 300 hosta varieties and 50 different companion plants. The volunteers will continue to maintain it throughout the summer and fall. These devoted, hardworking NIHS Cantigny volunteers deserve a pat on the back from all of us.

Another reason to make the garden look its best this year is the **dedication of the AHS Hosta Garden on Friday, July 12, at 1:00 pm. All NIHS members are invited.** Be sure to mark your calendar now. We hope you can be there for the ceremony and reception. Details to follow soon.

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!

- ◆ Howard & Holly Clark III, Geneva
- ◆ Dale Craig, Arlington Heights
- ◆ Kelly, Stan & Judy Fenton-Dostal, Woodgate
- ◆ Jeanne Fischbach, Woodstock
- ◆ Wally & Linda Groble, Bartlett
- ◆ Dennis & Jennifer Hood Jr., Geneva
- ◆ Melissa Jankovic, Aurora
- ◆ Kathleen, Eddy & Scott Leannis, Streamwood
- ◆ Pat & Frances McTee, New Lenox
- ◆ Bonnie, Rudolph & Mandy Osborne, McHenry
- ◆ Deborah Wilderman, Downers Grove



NORTHERN ILLINOIS HOSTA SOCIETY
HOSTA HAPPENINGS



Cantigny Work Days - the weather for our 2 Work Days in May ranged from cold to balmy. Our volunteers cleared the scilla, pulled the weeds and mulched the beds. The garden is a gem. Thanks to Barbara King and her crew of volunteers! *Pics by June Vandervest and Barbara King.*





Hostaffinity

noun | host·af·fin·i·ty | host-ə-'fi-nə-tē |

Welcome!

A feeling of kinship among people who share a love of hosta.

Attendees of the AHS national convention certainly have an affinity toward hosta, but they also have an affinity toward other hosta lovers! Maybe that's why it's called the "friendship plant" — it brings people together.

Join hundreds of other hosta enthusiasts from around the country and the world for the 51st annual convention held in Green Bay, Wisconsin June 12–15, 2019, hosted by the Green & Gold Hosta Society.

We welcome you to beautiful and picturesque Northeast Wisconsin where you'll tour iconic gardens, hear world-renowned speakers, shop a variety of vendors, participate in friendly competitions and a live auction, eat great food and, most importantly, enjoy the company of fellow gardeners and friends, both new and old.

Join us in Green Bay June 12 - 15! www.ahs2019event.org

Gardening - Why?

by Jason Kay

In these increasingly busy times, it's not always easy to find the time for gardening. Blogger Jason Kay tells us why getting his hands dirty remains high on his to-do list.

Returning from another work trip on late Friday afternoon, the first thing I did was inspect the garden. Then I spent a couple of hours staking, clipping, weeding and generally puttering around. At one point, I asked myself: 'why am I doing this after being absent from home all week?' More generally, why do I spend so much time, as well as physical and mental effort, on the garden?

I can think of a few reasons. There is a sense of contentment and tranquility that comes from observing either a single flower, or patchworks of colour and texture that seem just right. The same feeling comes from watching a bumblebee climb in and out of the tubular flowers of smooth penstemon, or a monarch butterfly nectaring on purple coneflowers, or goldfinches feeding on the ripe seeds of an anise hyssop.

Gardening is an assertion of influence on a small piece of the environment – that's influence, not control. A wise gardener seeks to channel the elements of the garden's environment – soil, plants, critters, weather – to produce a small community of beauty and abundance. Trying too hard to rigidly control the garden generally leads to results that are sterile – literally and figuratively – and dull.

Achieving the effect you want with the right mix of effort and letting things take their own course is tremendously satisfying. A wall covered with rich purple clematis, or a flower bed that gradually rises from sprawling blue geranium to towering yellow cup plants, makes me feel that the world can be handled to create beautiful results.

Personally, I like a style of gardening that maximizes the quantity and variety of creatures in the garden. This



Pic courtesy of Wayne and Bill Reid

world is full of malice, indifference, and selfishness, but a garden can be a small-scale exercise in altruism and benevolence that I find comforting. A healthy garden, of course, is full of carnage and predation mostly invisible to people, so you can easily overstate the benevolence aspect. But at least a garden can welcome many forms of life by providing easy access to those things which are necessary for survival.

The tactile quality of gardening is also very attractive. Like so many people, my work involves dealing with concepts, personalities, varying degrees of truthfulness, and, it must be said, a whole lot of bullshit. So, it is a relief to leave that world and literally get my hands in the soil. This may be one reason I prefer not to wear gloves when I garden, though Judy complains I make a mess of the bathroom sink. Of course, in addition to touching things that are real, the senses of sight and smell are also gratified.

Finally, gardening helps me be more connected to my human community. I've grown to know a number of neighbours (especially the dog walkers and those with small children) while gardening in the front yard. Without gardening, I'm sure that community connection would be greatly diminished. Some of the neighbors think my obsession is a little odd, but more often I hear expressions of admiration. At one point a neighbour waved at my front yard, bursting with the colors of mid-summer, and told me: "This is a joy!" Yes, that about sums it up.

Reprinted from April 2019 Illinois Prairie Society's 'Prairie Hosta Herald' newsletter

2020 MRHS Convention Update

By Barbara King

HOSTAS



CHICAGO STYLE

NIHS is moving forward with its plans for hosting the 2020 MRHS convention in Lisle, IL, July 16 – 18 next year. So far, the Convention Committee efforts have concentrated on the following components, with progress on all fronts:

- ◆ Venue – Doubletree by Hilton, Lisle (formerly named Lisle Hilton, site of the 2013 convention that NIHS hosted)
- ◆ Creation of logo and theme - see above.
- ◆ Selection of people to fill key positions
- ◆ Selection of gardens for the Friday and Saturday tours. We have five confirmed for the Saturday north and east tour, two for west and south on Saturday. We are still looking for outstanding gardens, especially for Friday—

suggestions from members are welcome.

- ◆ Identification of possible speakers for afternoon seminars and Saturday banquet
- ◆ Selection of vendors
- ◆ Development of registration form
- ◆ Recruitment of volunteers to work on all aspects named above

Convention co-chairs Mike Kraus (kraus6311@comcast.net) and Barbara King (bhk430@att.net) would welcome any suggestions, ideas comments or questions from members about the event. A more detailed report will be in the next newsletter.



The Spring Potluck was a funny & yummy party of old & new hosta friends. Letting go of the dreary winter and a positive vibe were real benefits for our gardeners' dispositions. After the delicious food buffet folks settled in for the spirited Garden Tool Swap. Psychic and tool treasures were had by all!

Pics by Mike Kraus & June Vandervest



GARDEN AESTHETICS

by Glen Williams

Sometime I would like to create a profile of a HOSTA COLLECTOR and the profile of an ordinary gardener who enjoys hostas and has perhaps 10 or 20 in his/her garden. The psychological divide between these two groups goes to the heart of good and evil in the 21st century. However, I will save that for another time. The branch of garden aesthetics I want to write about provides the same cannon fodder for a war that continues to be fought in every garden in this great country. If this were a special documentary by Ken Burns on "Gardens in America", you would now be listening to "America the Beautiful" as hummed by the Vienna Boys' Choir...with any accordion playing softly...

But not today.

What I am going to write about is another great divide. This divide is wonderfully illustrated in the world of hostas, but it exists with most all of the annuals and perennials with which we populate our gardens. The problem is a Puritan/Purist problem that has haunted us for 400 years. The Catholic Church has lectured at great length on the subject for eons. The French have strong feelings on the subject and the English are notoriously hypocritical about the topic as expressed in the Victorian Age. Early Americans dealt with it by using boards to divide the beds. Our Supreme Court has tried to deal with it by interpreting various parts of the constitution in the name of one side or the other in the great divide. Gardeners

Hostas touching.



Hostas with room to spread out in the Cantigny hosta garden. Pic by Barbara King

epitomize the problem. Always the voyeur, Darwin watched it take place inside one square yard on an English moor and took copious notes.

And now, (to the music of Strauss's "Thus Spoke Zarathustra") is the problem for hosta folk and all other gardeners for that matter:

"SHOULD ONE HOSTA BE ALLOWED TO HAVE ANOTHER HOSTA WITHIN TOUCHING DISTANCE?"

Should hostas exist in solitary glory, grown to perfection and clumphood, or should they be allowed to mingle, touch, and stroke the leaves of their fellow hosta companions? Can H. 'Big John' be allowed to approach H. 'Painted Lady'? If H. 'Ryan's Big One' is seen at the outskirts of H. 'Afternoon Delight' can cross-pollination be far behind? The list is endless and the names are provocative: H. 'Purple Passion', H. 'Lakeside Love Affaire', H. 'Venus', H. 'Paul's Glory', H. 'Aphrodite', H. 'Slick Willie' this is all clearly the stuff best delivered in plain brown wrappers.

I have seen several of you profess the idea that each of your hostas (plants) should have its own spot. That each plant is located with inviolate space around it, with its nametag undisguised by foliage. I'll bet you use those special expensive nametags that are engraved on ersatz wood grain tags too. I'll bet you plan and plant your hostas like an art museum director hangs a treasured show. No leaf on one will touch another, nor the shadow of any plant cast a pall on the beauty of the other plants. Each plant/

GARDEN AESTHETICS

by Glen Williams continued

painting is an island unto itself.

KNOW THIS. YOU ARE A FLAWED HUMAN BEING.

I am here to say NAY to your anally retentive approach. NAY to the control freak that you have become. NAY, to the aesthetic that turns a garden into a museum.

NAY!

My hostas deserve to be free to mingle, to cohabit, to come and go, to caress and touch, to create, to procreate, to grow and commune in a natural environment. Don't your hostas deserve the same? As a gardener how can you know the subtle pleasure and feel the tingle when seeing a heart-shaped gold leaf brush by and cross the path of a blue corrugated beauty? Would you pin that butterfly to a cork and put it on your shelf in a glass jar as a trophy of the hunt? The toads deserve a home. Crickets and other small creatures of the night (voles and moles) need cover for their work. A real home. Your garden should not be a golf course with a plant/hosta on each green and neatly manicured lawns between. Are YOU a specimen?

Or do you belong in the real world where you touch and are touched in return. Where life is conflict, battles and survival. Where on a good day you are part of a whole, which surpasses the order of any row. Eden was not about order, but a state of mind. Of course we know what happened there. Adam insisted on nametags and Eve was sure she had the perfect place for each plant

If you can resist this powerful aesthetic principal, which I have spelled out, I have a final set of killer questions for you.

1. How can one get 1,400 hostas into less than an acre and not have them touch?
2. How can you keep the weeds down if you allow all that space among your plants?
3. What fun is it if visitors to your garden can find the nametags?



The winner in most gardens - pack in the hostas!

Pic from Cantigny hosta garden.

4. If you can't misplace at least 20 hostas a year, what is life about?

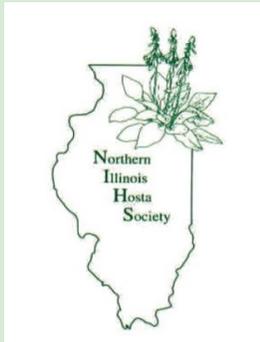
Life is a jungle out there. You might just as well give in to it. Let the beast in you out into your jungle. Let it prowl in the undergrowth and discover just how bloody in tooth and claw nature really is/was: even in Darwin's little patch of ground on the moor. DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU ARE IN CHARGE?

Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love! Sitting Bull

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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.



Join in the fun at our annual Hosta Leaf Display and Plant Sale event at the Chicago Botanic Garden on June 1 & 2. **Free parking** if you also **volunteer** - a savings of **\$25**.



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Four outstanding hosta gardens will be on Hosta Garden Walks this summer.

The Jansen garden in Gurnee (left) will be featured on Sunday June 9. Don't miss it!

