

Hosta Happenings

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois Hosta Society

ISSUE 112

MAY 2020

2020 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- **June 7, Hosta Garden Walk #1, Geneva**
- **June 10-13 AHS Convention, Minneapolis, MN *Cancelled***
- **June 28, Hosta Garden Walk #2, West Chicago**
- **July 16-18, MRHS Convention hosted by NIHS, Lisle *Postponed to July 8-10, 2021***
- **July 12, Hosta Garden Walk #3, Crystal Lake**
- **July 25, Annual Bus Trip to Wis.**
- **Aug 9, Annual Hosta & Plant Auction, Community House, Hinsdale**
- **Sept TBD, Fall Potluck & Annual Meeting**
- **Oct 18, Fall Symposium, Cantigny Park, Wheaton**
- **Dec TBD, Holiday Party Potluck**



President's Letter

In the March newsletter I subtly expressed my angst about wanting to get in the garden. I believe it is great that we finally have this opportunity to get out of the house and into the garden and focus on our gardens/HOSTAS. The pips seem to be taking their time popping out of the ground this Spring. My yard looks like the hostas are practicing "social distancing". I tried to use that as an excuse to buy more hostas to fill in the gaps. Didn't work, Lenny saw right through it.

It seems like the weather is trying to warm up for us but never more than 2 days in a row. This past weekend was beautiful and now the forecast in a couple of days is for 29 degrees overnight. The closer we get to Memorial Day the closer we are to a time we can more safely put our new hostas in the ground. Hopefully you have already applied your first application of slug control. I remember Tom Micheletti advising us around this time to do just that. There are many products on the market from which to choose. For me, beer is not a likely choice. No self-respecting German would share his beer with a garden slug. As for my annual game with the deer...they have already christened my backyard salad bowl.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on our activities to date. We

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President's Letter continued

have had to cancel our Spring Potluck, the Spring Symposium and the Leaf Display and Plant sale at the Chicago Botanic Garden. As you will notice in the Calendar at a Glance, our next activity is the June 7th garden walk at Dennis & Jen Hood's home in Geneva, IL. If this were to change, we will update you with an email blast. Later in June we will have the opportunity to visit Lou & Nikki Horton's garden in West Chicago. Check out Nancy Huck's article on the details of our upcoming garden walks. We are currently working on setting another garden walk in early July.

Both the MRHS Convention that NIHS was to host this July and the AHS Convention in Minneapolis have been postponed. Make sure you read through Barbara King's article to get the details as we know them now. We are still planning to have our Bus Tour to Eastern Wisconsin on July 25th. Mark Rekoske's article will bring us up to date on that event.

As I mentioned in the March newsletter, I am looking for volunteers to host the September Annual Meeting and the December Holiday Party. If you can host one of these events or if you have questions, please contact me directly at kraus6311@comcast.net.

If you are on the web, please take some time to review our website. It is full of useful information. As I have mentioned before the RESOURCES Tab has an incredible amount of information including a schedule of Community Garden Events that may interest you. It is well worth your time. We also have a Facebook Page with 270 users of which 4 joined this week. Take a chance and take a look.

I want to thank you all for your support. Get your tools sanitized and sharpened and get out there to tend to your gardens. Be Safe and Be Well. I hope to see y'all at our upcoming events, conditions permitting.

Hosta-la-Vista

Mike Kraus

Be Safe in the Garden

By Mike Kraus

As we navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic the remainder of this year and try to conduct as many of our events as possible, it will be important for each of us to follow the current State of Illinois guidelines in place at the time of each event. As many of us are in the "most vulnerable" category, we must respect the health and well-being of our members.

As you are already aware, in the State of Illinois, we are required to wear masks and practice "social distancing" by maintaining a distance of 6 feet between us. We, as the Board of Directors, ask that everyone follow those guidelines as they stand at this moment in time. If things were to change in the State of Illinois, then we will adjust accordingly.

Prior to each event we will be checking with the host to see if there are any special considerations/rules that they would want us to follow. We will inform everyone of any additional rules or restrictions that need to be in place for that event. We ask that everyone respect social distancing as you walk the various gardens.

Typically, we have snacks and drinks at our garden walks. The Board has decided that there will be no snacks available at our garden walks as everything would have to be individually wrapped to ensure safety. We believe that bottled water will suffice at these events this year.

It is my sincere hope that things will continue to improve and we will once again be able to meet with each other safely and exchange thoughts about our gardens and talk about the new hostas we may have acquired. Please understand that it is our responsibility to ensure the health and safety of our members. Any decision we make will be based on that and we will not hesitate to postpone or cancel an event if it is deemed necessary for the safety of our members.

Thanks for your consideration in maintaining a safe environment at our events.

Preview our Hosta Garden Walks

By Nancy Huck

Bring Your Mask and Sanitizer



Dennis Hood pics

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 cull de sac).



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!



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.

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 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.

Lou Horton pics



Preview our Hosta Garden Walks

continued

Mike & Lenny Kraus' Garden Open 2 to 5 pm Sunday July 12

Lenny and I moved into our current home in 1994. It was new construction with no landscaping other than grass and a lot of trees, oaks, shag bark hickories and a lot of buckthorn and honeysuckle. Lenny crafted most of the landscaping initially. A few years after retiring I decided to get involved with hostas as Lenny had included some in our original landscaping. What started out as a simple way of sharing a common interest has turned into an addiction. You know you have a problem when you see a hosta you like and just have to have it then have to figure out where the heck you are going to plant it. Since 2010 we have added approximately 500 different cultivars.

Lenny prefers the smaller hostas. We have a large collection of mice spread throughout the property. I like the large and giant hostas. The last couple of years we



Pics by Mike Kraus - with daughter Courtney & granddaughter Isla.

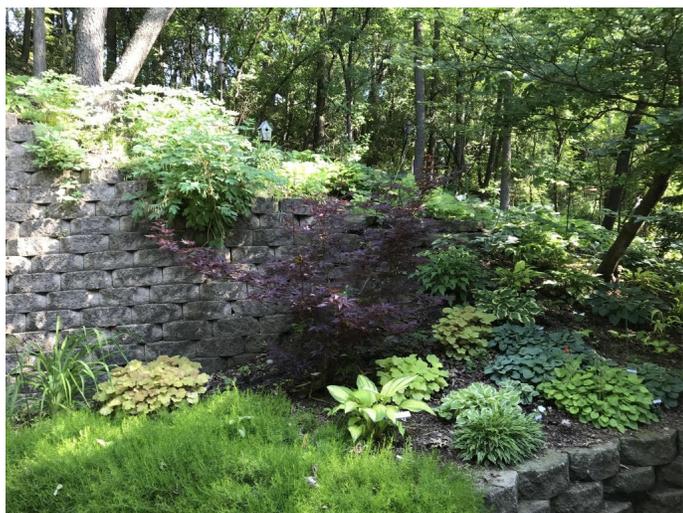
have begun to add a few complimentary plants like oakleaf hydrangeas, conifers and Japanese maples along with a dry creek down the east side of the property.

Our 1+ acre property is predominantly forested hills on the north and west side of the house. We have reclaimed some of the area by clearing buckthorn and honeysuckle trees. Our property is hilly and predominantly a collection of hostas. We have added steps to improve the walkability of our garden. One NIHS

friend, who shall go nameless, suggested I put in a zip line to make it easier to come back down after walking up the hill.

It is nice to just sit back on our deck, relax and look out over our collection of hostas. Then it turns into how can I add a few more.

Directions to 6311 Carrie Ct, Crystal Lake: From intersection of IL Rte 31 and IL Rte 14 (Northwest Highway) go East on IL Rte 14, at the first stoplight turn left (north) onto Sands Road. Continue on Sands Rd to Wyndwood Dr and turn right (east). Continue on Wyndwood until it curves to the left. Turn right onto Lindsay Ln and immediately turn left onto Carrie Ct. We are the 5th house on the left, a blue cedar 2 story house. You can drive up and turn around on the cul-de-sac to park in front of the house.



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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Fabulous Wisconsin 2020 Bus Tour - July 25

By Mark Rekoske

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 just \$10 per plant.

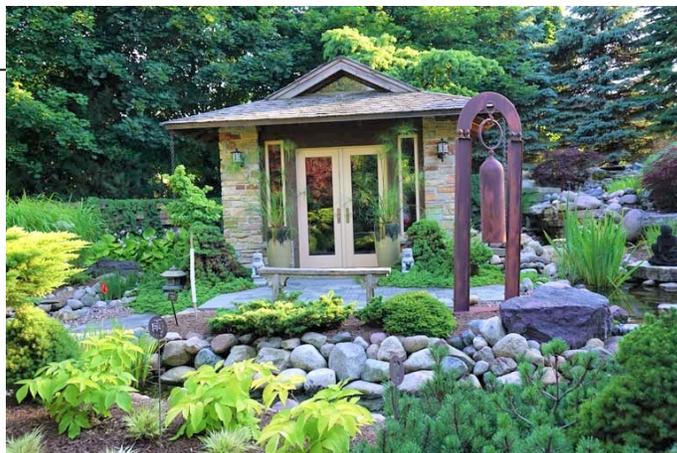
We will depart at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 25 from the conveniently located CDW Headquarters parking lot along the west side of the Tri-State Tollway just southwest of its interchange with Illinois Highway 22 (Half Day Road) in Lincolnshire. We will travel by motor coach. No lunch stop is planned 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.

Please know that if social distancing requirements or other concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic jeopardize our safety on the trip we will cancel the tour and issue full refunds. Please sign up before the due date



Christopher Farms Asian Water Garden

so we can gauge the level of interest in going forward. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Mark Rekoske at marekoske@gmail.com or call him at 224-622-1171. **See Order Form on page 9.**

Garden Descriptions

The Christopher Farm & 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/>

Continued next page

**Fabulous Wisconsin 2020 Bus
Tour - July 25 continued****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 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 x pseudosieboldianum '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

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



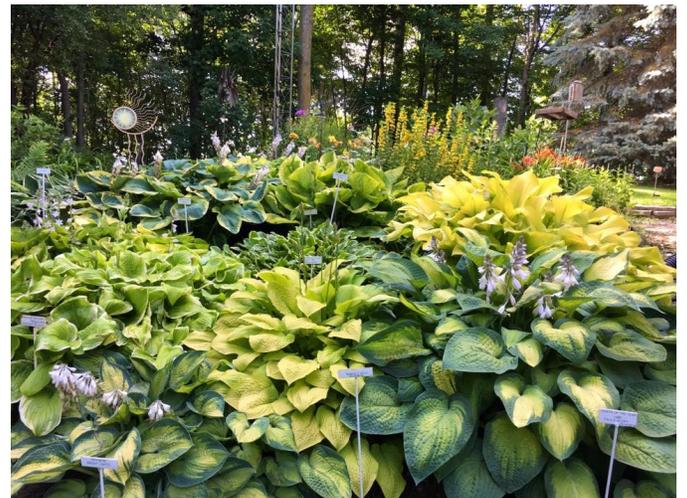
Gorgeous hostas in the Temmer garden.

of this backyard.

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.

Pondside Gardens display area.





Eastern Wisconsin Bus Tour July 25 Order Form

Please 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.

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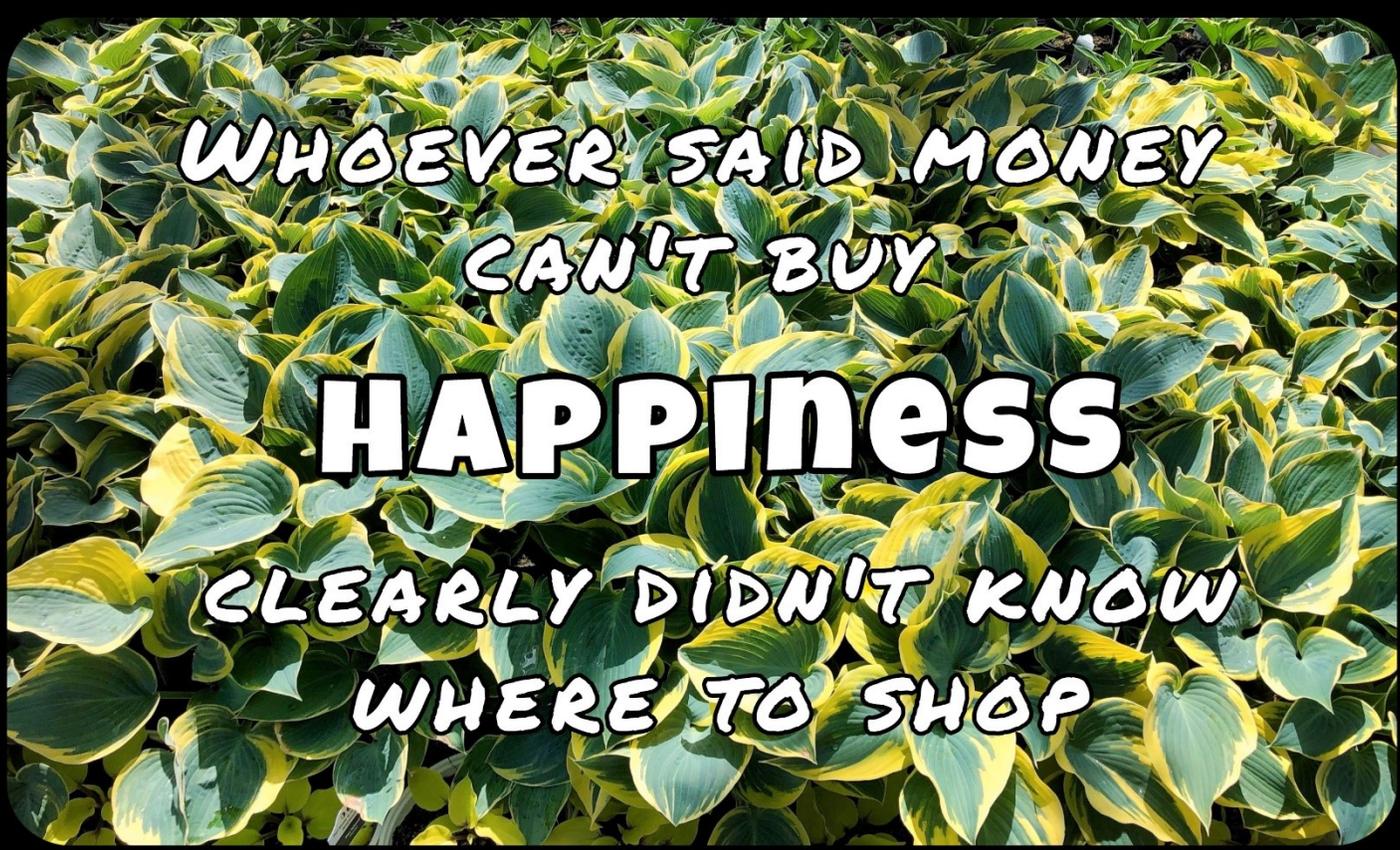
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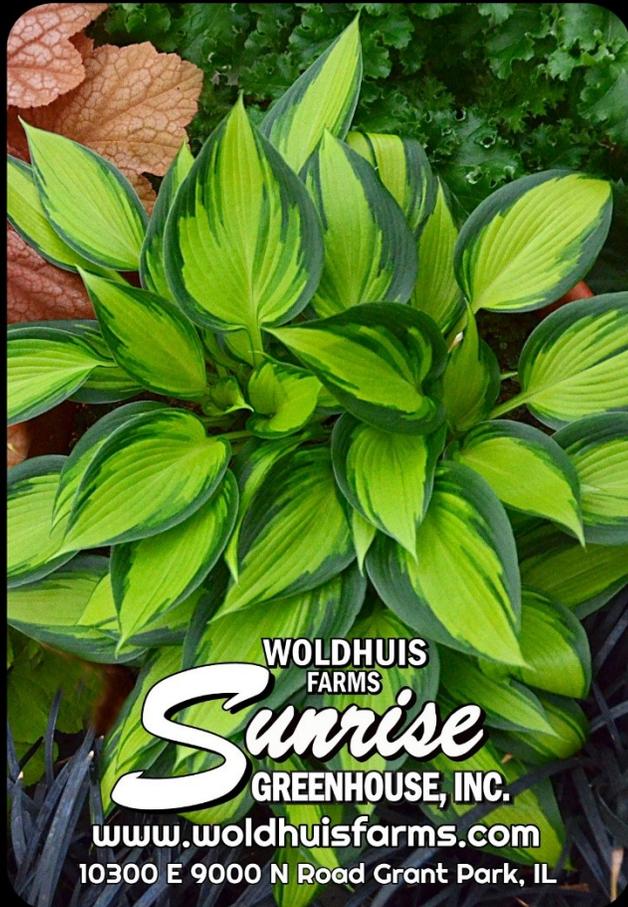




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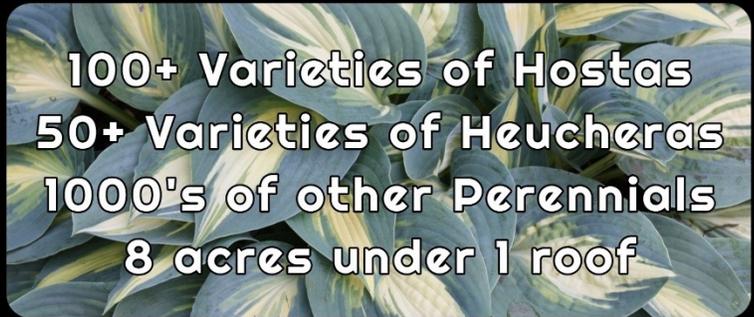
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Cantigny Park Hosta Garden - Still Waiting!

By Barbara King

NIHS volunteers at the Cantigny hosta garden may be wondering if we will ever be able to work in the garden this year. The coronavirus has kept the park closed up to now. Craig Kruckenberg, Cantigny's Horticulture Design Manager who supervises our work in the garden, says we will be able to get in eventually but no one knows exactly when. Cantigny is following the directives from the State and Craig expects the Park will be opened in stages when safe to do so. The Cantigny Golf Course opened May 1. When the State gives parks the OK, the grounds will open first, while buildings such as the Visitors Center and the museums will come later.

Volunteer training requirements are not resolved. We have suggested that since all our volunteers are experienced and have taken the training class several times, perhaps the training requirement could be waived for 2020. Keep in mind that in 2018 we couldn't work in the garden until the end of July because of the construction in the area, and we whipped it into shape rather quickly. We should be able to do it again this year.

If you still wish to volunteer at Cantigny this year your help would still be welcome. Just contact Barbara King at bhk430@att.net or 630-643-2263 for information.

The 2020 AHS
Convention in
Minneapolis **Post-**
poned to 2022

The 2021 AHS
Convention will be
in Kalamazoo, MI





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

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www.americanhostasociety.org

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MRHS Convention Moved To 2021

By Barbara King



You should have received word by now that the 2020 Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention sponsored and planned by NIHS has been rescheduled for **July 8 – 10, 2021**.

NIHS convention committee members, working with the MRHS board, made the decision in late March. The determining factor was that even if restrictions instituted because of the virus are lifted by mid-July this year, we anticipated that many potential attendees would not yet feel comfortable attending an event with a large num-



ber of people in close contact with one another. A convention, while enjoyable, is not an essential activity. Poor attendance would pose significant financial risk for both NIHS and MRHS. Planners expect more favorable conditions next year. All fees and deposits paid by those who had planned to attend this year's event have been returned.

We have been fortunate to be able to retain the Double-Tree by Hilton in Lisle, IL for July 8 – 10, 2021 for the same cost. The hosts of all the residential gardens scheduled for this year's convention garden tour have confirmed they will be with us in 2021. There will also be a fine array of vendors including most of those who

planned to vend this year. We lost only one of this year's speakers, who has a conflict with next year's date. And we are so grateful that most of the NIHS members who volunteered to help this year have indicated they can do so next year. Thus the 2021 convention will be much the same as what we originally planned for this year.

If you are a member of the American Hosta Society, you will also have received notice of the cancellation of its 2020 AHS convention in Minneapolis in June. AHS President Andy Marlow's email notification went out on April 29 to all AHS members.

No one is happy about the events that necessitated these actions, but we are confident that we did the right thing. Many thanks for your understanding and support. Hope to see you in Lisle in July 2021!





GARDENING with Hostas

By Diana Stoll

I have been singing the praises of *Aralia* 'Sun King' for several years and was not the least bit surprised when the Perennial Plant Association named it their Perennial Plant of the Year for 2020.

Native to Japan, it is the offspring of *Aralia cordata* – commonly called Japanese spikenard and mountain asparagus. This large-leaved perennial grows quickly from three to six feet tall and wide depending on its growing conditions.

I appreciated the coarse texture and dark green color *Aralia cordata* lent my garden as it served as a backdrop for golden or variegated hostas and finer-foliaged perennials like ferns and astilbe. But then I found *Aralia* 'Sun King' at a garden center, showing off its leaves the color of sunshine, and I was smitten.

Planted in a shady spot in my garden, it thrived but barely grew more than three feet tall and wide. Without any chance of direct sunlight, its leaves turned chartreuse but still added a pop of color.



Easy to care for does not begin to describe it. Because it was planted in a spot where the soil rarely dried out, I never needed to give it supplemental water, leaving spring clean-up to remove the previous year's stems as its only maintenance.

Pic by Diana Stoll

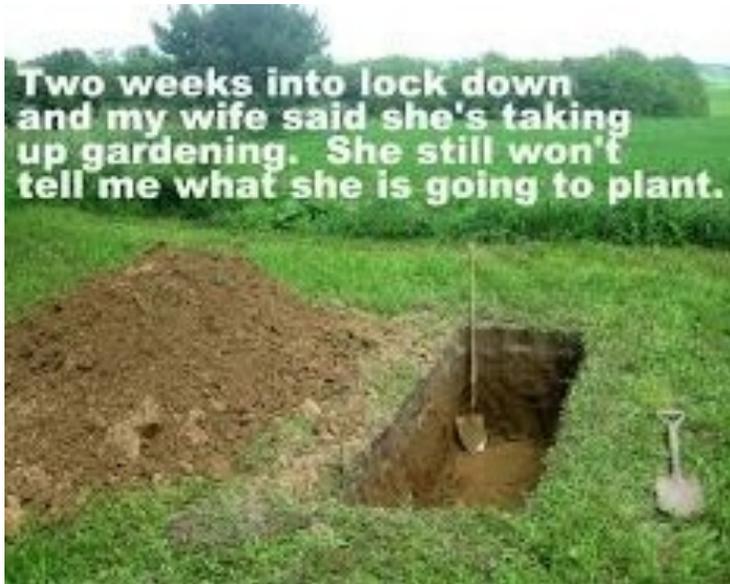
I purchased another and planted it where it received direct sunlight all morning. Wow! It grew like gangbusters reached every bit of six feet tall and more than four feet wide. Its large compound leaves glowed bright golden yellow.

Spikes of white flowers began blooming late in summer, followed by reddish-purple berries in fall. Pollinators loved the flowers; birds devoured the berries. (*Note: the berries are toxic to humans.*)

Since then, I have added at least one more plant to my landscape every year. It has become a staple, mingling with my hostas and other shade-loving perennials. I have even used one as a container specimen on a sunny deck. With daily watering, it handled full sun like a champ.

If I have yet to persuade you to add *Aralia* 'Sun King' to your landscape and deer frequently visit your garden, plant it because deer don't find it delicious. And because it is hardy to Zone 3, even our coldest winters can't hurt it. And it stays where it is planted because it doesn't spread by seed or suckering.

Now that you are convinced to plant *Aralia* 'Sun King', I hope you all leave at least one more for me.



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 hostaphile!

◆ Nancy Mountain, Roselle



I LOVE THOSE MINIS!

by Joe Haber

Gardening on a small piece of property with a steep hillside in my backyard, I must confess that mini and small hostas have become my favorites. Obviously, I'm not alone since the American Hosta Society decided to conduct a separate popularity poll for minis in addition to their poll of the most popular standard varieties. Also, I have noticed that articles on this subject and photos are appearing in *The Hosta Journal* more frequently in recent editions.

These little guys look great in containers and my favorite containers are troughs. Troughs can be filled with many different plants including dwarf conifers, small succulents and of course, mini hostas.

Making hypertufa troughs is not difficult and can be a good winter pastime as you wait for your hostas to start emerging in the spring. There are several recipes for hypertufa mixtures. The main ingredients are portland cement, peat moss and perlite – all readily

available in local home improvement centers. They can be made using molds that are rectangular, round, etc., or even free shaped. Whatever shape you choose, the final product can really dress up a patio.

I grow mini and small hostas in a variety of containers and even have 'Lemon Lime' growing in a tree stump. It has been there for eight years. In most of my containers I mix hostas with companions like Ajuga



Hostas 'Pandora's Box' (top) and 'Mighty Mouse'.

'Metallica Crispa', Tatting Fern (*Athyrium Frizellae*), and even small annuals. Some mini hosta favorites that I grow in our rock garden are; 'Pandora's Box', 'Surprised By Joy', 'Medusa', 'Teeny-weeny Bikini', 'Blue Mouse Ears', 'Green Eyes', 'Crepe Soul', 'Chickadee', 'Kinboten', and 'Thumbnail', to name a few. Like peanuts, you can't have just one.

Slugs are a bigger problem for small hostas than large ones. My way of combating the "damn slug" is by spreading a topping that forms a barrier. My formula for this very successful topping is a mixture of ground egg shells, ground sea shells, and chicken grit. An occasional sprinkling of Sluggo also helps.

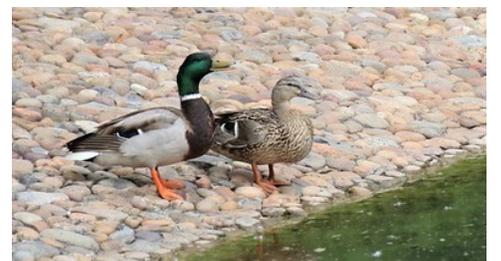
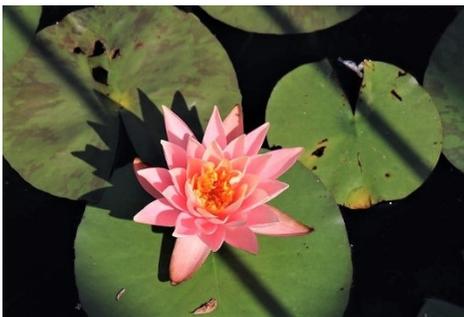
In closing I will quote Bob Solberg: "Miniature hostas are cute, little babies that will grow in a thimble. They often run in herds through rock gardens, around ponds, or along the edge of a path. Minis are especially happy in containers, strawberry pots, troughs, or even whiskey barrels. Hundreds can live comfortably along a driveway. Just give them water." *From the Mississippi Valley Hosta Society newsletter, April 2020.*

DAVE'S VIEW

- Garden Beauties- By Dave Trollope



"I took these pics all during 2018 and 2019 at home and visiting Cantigny, the Chicago Botanic Garden and on the various NIHS related bus tour and garden tours."
Dave

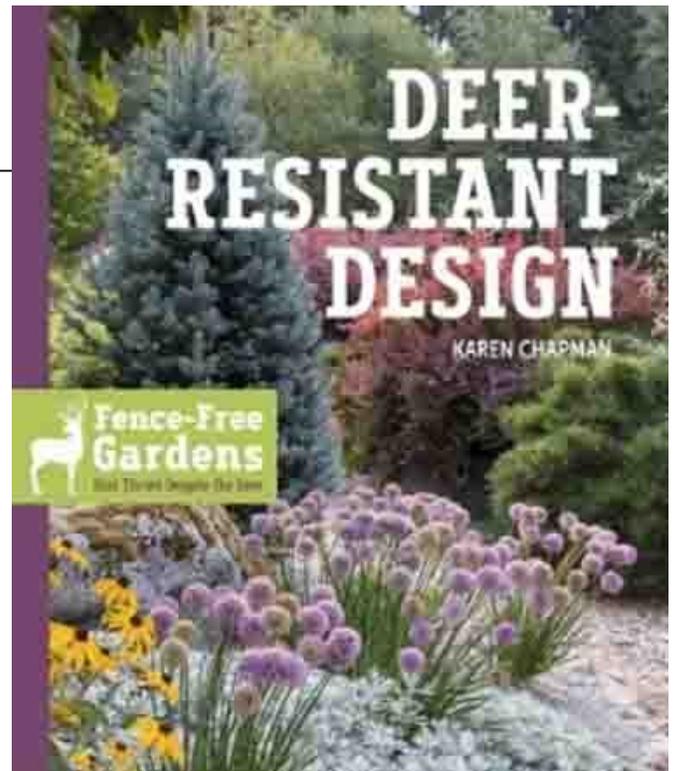


How to Ban Bambi!

by George Graine

"Dealing with these garden marauders requires a varied strategy and vigilance." Carole Ottensen

Just the title of this new book should excite anyone with a garden faced with the marauder of fauna - "*Deer-Resistant Design: Fence-Free Gardens that Thrive Despite the Deer*" by Karen Chapman (Timber Press, 2019). Bambi et al is not your friend in the garden! The author explains that her "book has been written to encourage and inspire homeowners just like you with stories and photographs of mature landscapes that have withstood the test of time and the taste testing of deer." The point of the 13 gardens included in this book is that working with a restricted assortment of plants does not mean one has to compromise on beauty or vision. If you are deer-challenged, then this book is for you. Although you can find many lists of deer-resistant plants in books and state extension web sites, the question remains - Now what? A list is still a list and it does not have color photos or any explanations. This is only a starting point. The trick is to know what to do, that is, how to create a deer-resistant garden design that you can install or have installed. Another way of looking at the problem is to



develop not only a strategy but a reality about how to avoid a deer problem in the first place.

The subtitle of the book emphasizes having a fence-free garden. For example, crisscrossing fishing line over a pond tends to keep out large birds such as herons that would make you scream if they caught one of your prized koi fish. For a landscape, a similar technique can be tried on your property by tying multiple strands of fishing line in parallel lines to trees or poles. This is a very humane way to exclude deer from your property and it is practically invisible. Hopefully, after this minimal effort and expense, you will have protected any plants that need to be protected. Of course, you can employ other ingenious methods of deer-proofing, but you need to keep in mind county and city fence ordinances and even home owner association regulations regarding fence height and materials. But...the book under discussion is all about fence-free gardens, so fencing is not a problem that should be considered.

Some plants are considered to be reliably deer resistant but you cannot always depend on this. The deer do not read plant tags! Even your favorite plant

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How to Ban Bambi!

continued

is likely to be “sampled” or, in worst case, entirely eaten. It happens! The fact remains that no plant is absolutely deer-proof. If a deer is hungry enough, especially when there is a limited supply of available food, then all bets are off. Typical plant lists that refer to deer resistant plants should not be read as deer proof. These lists often include plants with fuzzy foliage, spiky or sharp thorns and aromatic types. Also note that deer resistant plant lists are a general guideline of plants that are less tempted to be tampered with. Go to a list compiled by the University of Illinois Extension <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/perennials/specific.cfm?NodeID=3884>.

More extensively, Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/deer-resistant-plants/?search=&submit=Search> has an excellent list of deer resistant plants. Here you will find an interesting list of plants identified with four levels of deer-resistance. These are: • A-rarely damaged, • B-seldom severely damaged, • C-occasionally severely damaged and • D-frequently severely damaged. At the top right open space of the website type: “deer resistant plants”. An easy to read menu of information will be displayed. Scroll through the information that is relevant to your own landscape situation; however, as a caution, note that not all of this information is relevant to northern Illinois.

In order to determine which gardens in the book closely resemble your region, you also need to consider five “quick facts” that are noted for each garden. These include: location, soil type, property size, problem critters (aside from deer) and other variable challenges. This could include sun, shade, drought, plant disease and



Pic by Green Mountain Hosta Nursery

more. Each garden includes color photos and types of plants, also in color, with helpful plant descriptions as well as the A to D deer-resistant damage codes noted above. The book takes you through a smorgasbord of garden types from all over the country and at the end are many ideas for deer-resistant container gardens. Perhaps the best way to describe this information is to say it is like reading how to design a deer-resistant garden on steroids. You will need to interpret this information to fit your own landscape design. If you own property in addition to your main home, such as a lake-house, beach place, woodland retreat, etc., then you should be able to amalgamate several examples noted in the book.

As previously indicated, the garden examples cover a wide range of environmental conditions. Unlike pre-planned landscapes, often found in garden catalogs and on the internet, you can mix and match garden styles that not only fit climatic conditions but also your personality as well. Remember to consider outdoor family activities, pet considerations and anything else that is important that will make you happy and bring a well-done smile for having conquered how to ban Bambi.

Reprinted from SHADY BUSINESS Newsletter of The Potomac Hosta Club March 2020 with local adaptations by the Editor.



Hosta 'Guardian Angel'

A Shade Garden Combo for Hosta Lovers

by James A. Baggett

If your garden needs a boost, try the combo below: (picture)

It shows off hostas and other shade-loving companions beautifully. Add color to shade with foliage.

By summer, plant compositions in the shade garden often primarily consist of foliage.

Combine different shades of green - from bright chartreuse to dark burgundy - to create lively combinations that are both visually stimulating and eye-catching.

A) Hosta (Hosta 'Inniswood')

Type: Perennial; Blooms: Lavender flowers in summer above large, puckered, chartreuse to yellow leaves with a narrow deep green margin; Light: Part sun to full shade; Size: 2 to 3 ft. tall, 2 to 4 ft. wide.

B) Hosta (Hosta 'Guardian Angel')

Type: Perennial; Blooms: Purple flowers in summer above large ruffled blue-green leaves with a splash of ivory down the center;

Light: Part sun to full shade;

Size: 18 to 24 in. tall, 36 to 48 in. wide.

C) Coral bells (Heuchera 'Southern Comfort')

Type: Perennial;
Blooms: Creamy

dainty spikes of white flowers in summer above cinnamon-peach to burnished copper leaves;

Light: Full sun to part shade; Size: 12 to 18 in. tall, 18 to 24 in. wide.

D) Japanese painted fern (Athyrum 'Ghost')

Type: Perennial; Foliage: Silver-green fronds with deep purple midribs;

Light: Part to full shade; Size: 18 to 24 in. tall, 15 to 18 in. wide.

E) Coral bells (Heuchera 'Black Out')

Type: Perennial; Blooms: Ivory-white flowers in early summer above shiny charcoal-black green leaves; Light: Full sun to part shade; Size: 6 to 9 in. tall, 9 to 12 in. wide.



Reprinted from SHADY BUSINESS News-letter of The Potomac Hosta Club March 2020. Originally from garden-gatemagazine.com/newsletter, August 2019.)

Blue Hostas: Why are they blue? How to care for them

by Vladimir Mirka

Leaves of blue hostas are basically dark green. The blue color is visible due to a layer of wax on the leaves' surface. This phenomenon is unique in the plant world since hostas are shade tolerant, and most plants with a blue surface coating, as seen in many cacti, yuccas, agaves, etc., have it as protection against the sun. Most blue hostas are resistant to slugs and snails, because the wax is bitter and they do not like it. Some hosta cultivars have a thick wax layer; on other cultivars it is thinner. The thicker the wax layer, the more intense the blue color that the hosta develops. Also, the color is longer lasting. In direct sun-under the influence of heat, the wax layer degrades and gradually disappears. That is why most blue hostas are green-blue or just dark green from mid-summer until autumn. Try it yourself: Slightly wipe the wax layer from the leaf with your finger and the leaf will become green. It is that easy to remove.

Blue hostas perform best in temperate climates, with a wet and long spring and cooler summer. In very warm regions, in the south, where the year goes straight from



Hosta 'Blue Angel' pic by Ron Asselborn

mild winter to hot summer, the blue color lasts for just a short while. Blue hostas generally perform better in somewhat colder climates. In Central European conditions, blue hostas are brightest from the end of May until the middle of June. Then the blue color slowly disappears. Blue hosta cultivars are shade tolerant plants. The more sun they have, the sooner they lose their wax coating and keep their blue color for a shorter time. Extensive irrigation can increase the duration of their nice blue color. Be careful not to irrigate from above, as water can wash the wax layer down from the leaves. Apply water carefully close around the roots if you want to keep the wonderful bright blue color as long as possible. Older plants have a thicker wax coating, so that older well-rooted clumps are more intensely blue than young plants of the same cultivar.

This blue hosta (pic left) was exposed to full sun for a long time and the protective wax layer on the leaves was burned by the sun. The green parts of the leaves are wax free. Leaves that were in shade remained blue. It is not true that there are no beautiful blue cultivars among the older cultivars, or that all of the new blue cultivars are ideally blue. Between the older and new hosta cultivars there are plenty of truly beautiful blue types. I have divided blue hosta cultivars into three categories and listed some representative cultivars in each category. The division is

Continued next page



Blue Hostas: Why are they blue?**continued**

highly subjective. You may have different experiences in your garden.

Often under certain circumstances and under specific suitable light conditions, BLUE-GREEN HOSTAS will develop a wonderful blue color – the nicest in the garden! As a rule, these hostas will hold a beautiful blue color a bit shorter than those from the REALLY BLUE HOSTAS category.

REALLY BLUE HOSTAS These hosta cultivars keep a beautiful blue color from the beginning of spring. The intensity of the blue color culminates in the period from the end of May to the middle of June, after which the blue gradually weakens. In many cases, these cultivars are almost blue until the autumn. Many growers think H. 'Halcyon' is the bluest-leaved hosta. The huge, heavily corrugated leaves of H. 'Elegans' are a favorite among the blue giants. H. 'Skylight' probably has one of the most brilliant blue hues. No hosta garden can be complete without H. 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd'.

'Abiqua Drinking Gourd' 'Big Daddy' 'Blue Jay' 'Blue Vision' 'Camelot' 'Deep Blue Sea' 'Flemish Sky' 'Fragrant Blue' 'Hadspen Blue' 'Halcyon' 'Elegans' 'Love Pat' 'Prairie Sky' 'Skylight' 'Winfield Blue'.

GREEN-BLUE HOSTAS with a prevalence of blue Under



Hosta 'Halcyon'

suitable conditions, these cultivars are often very beautiful. Their color may last a little shorter than REALLY BLUE HOSTAS. After the culmination of the blue color intensity in June, the color of their leaves turns to a blue-green or greenish blue. Many of these hosta cultivars are real blue jewels and their beauty should not be underestimated. Included in this category would be most blue hosta cultivars. It's hard to find a favorite among them.

H. 'Krossa Regal' and 'Blue Angel' will not disappoint. The true-blue color of H. 'Lakeside Beach Bum' and 'Mystic Star' can be amazing at the end of May. Leaves of H. 'Salute' are upright and those of H. 'Neptune' are lanceolate wavy. The choice is yours.

'Beauty Little Blue' 'Big Mamma' 'Blue Angel' 'Blue Cadet' 'Blue Diamond' 'Blue Mouse Ears' 'Blue Umbrellas' 'Blueberry Muffin' 'High Tide' 'Krossa Regal' 'Lakeside Beach Bum' 'Lederhosen' 'Millennium' 'Mystic Star' 'Neptune' 'Queen of the Seas' 'Salute' 'Sapphire Pillows' 'Sky Dancer' 'Yankee Blue'

Why are my "blue" hostas not blue? Maybe because you grow them in too much sun. A bit of sunlight does not injure any blue cultivar (especially morning sun), but intense afternoon sun quickly melts the wax layer and blue hostas soon lose their color. You irrigate the plants too often over the foliage. Frequent irrigation from above can wash the wax layer from the leaves and this can make your blue hostas lose their color. It's very easy to damage this layer.

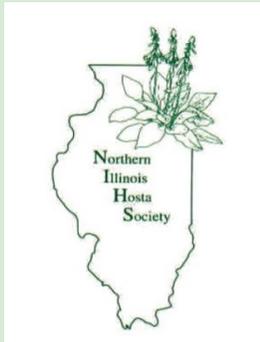
From SHADY BUSINESS Newsletter of The Potomac Hosta Club March 2020 abridged by the Editor. Mr. Mirka resides near Prague, in the Czech Republic.



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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.



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.



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See these hostas in the Temmer garden - Bus Trip July 25

