

# Hosta Happenings

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois Hosta Society

ISSUE 118

JULY 2021

## 2021 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- July 11, Hosta Garden Walk, Downers Grove
- July 15-17, 2021 AHS Virtual Convention, Kalamazoo, MI
- July 25, Hosta Garden Walk, Campton Hills
- Aug 13-15, NIHS Online Hosta Auction fundraiser
- Sept 12, Potluck & Annual Mtg, Campton Hills
- Oct 17, Fall Symposium, Cantigny Park
- Dec 2021, Holiday Party, TBD
- July 14-16, 2022 MRHS Convention, Hostas Chicago Style, hosted by NIHS, Lisle Postponed to 2022 Save the Date!

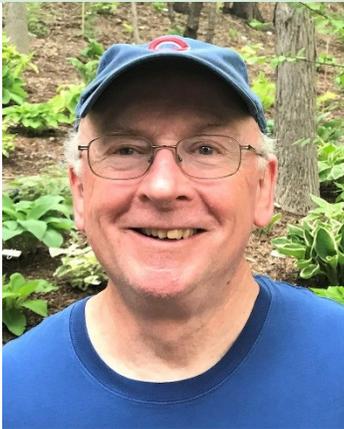
## President's Letter

Wow, what a year we have had so far in 2021. Nothing new with the weather, right? Just our typical Chicago/Northern Illinois weather. If you don't like the weather today, wait until tomorrow, it could be even worse....or not.

The NIHS Board has done another great job of putting together a menu of activities this year. Your Board really does put forth a tremendous effort to make these events available to you. Thank you to Mark Rekoske, Janet Simpson, Zoe Ingersoll, Judi Asselborn, Linda Lood, Stevie Meginness, Gary Blauser, and Ron Asselborn for all they do.

Garden walks have been a big hit this year as always. So far, we have been to Mark Rekoske's and Joe Jansen's gardens. Both gardens are incredibly beautiful yet very different from each other. Please read the articles following describing each walk. In place of our annual bus tour Mark setup a car caravan to Wisconsin. The four gardens were very different but each one was special and a joy to visit and walk through. The weather even cooperated as we only had to deal with some slight drizzle part of the day.

Check out the Calendar at a Glance on the first page to see all of the upcoming events scheduled for the



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**HOSTAS**

2022 MRHS Convention

CHICAGO STYLE

*Continued next page*

## President's Letter *continued*

remainder of 2021.

It is that time of year again to get back into the AHS National Display Garden at Cantigny Park. If you haven't seen it, you are missing out on an extraordinary garden. The dedicated group of NIHS member volunteers that maintain the garden have been working diligently to get the garden ready for visitors. Thank you to Barbara King and Diane Barrowman for leading this effort. Hope to see you out there this year.

As we have previously announced, NIHS had to postpone for a second time, the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Lisle. Please read Barbara King's article updating us on the 2022 MRHS convention.

Our incredibly successful Online Auction will once again be online in 2021. Mark Rekoske, Ron and Judi Asselborn and their team of volunteers did a magnificent job in setting up and executing last year's auction. Please read the article following detailing this year's auction. Please donate plants to this year's auction; do not delay in getting those plants potted up NOW.

I always ask people to visit our website as it has a great deal of pertinent information. Visit our Calendar Page to keep up to date on the NIHS upcoming events. The presentation is a typical full month calendar presentation that you can click on an event to see the details. Stevie Meginness has included instructions on this page on how to convert this to a list view for easier reading of the entire year's events.

Our Facebook page has become very popular. We have added another 200 participants since the May newsletter and total over 700 members. Since we only have approximately 200 memberships we are being noticed by people throughout the state, country and even the world. If you are on Facebook, take a look at our page. It is fun and an informative place to learn. Kudos to Stevie and Mark Meginness.

I would like to ask everyone to consider joining the NIHS Board. At this year's Annual Meeting we will

have two open positions to fill and two for re-election. One open position is for Director-at-Large replacing Janet Simpson. The other opening is the President's position replacing yours truly. Janet came on board four years ago and has led the effort in managing our Spring and Fall Symposiums. This includes securing a venue for our in-person events and locating interesting speakers to teach us about current garden topics. Janet, thank you for all of your efforts including volunteering at Cantigny and the annual auction. Your contributions to NIHS have not gone unnoticed. If you are interested in this position, please contact Tony Kwiatkowski, June Vandervest, Gary Blauser or myself. We also have a position that has been open for a year that really needs attention. The position is our Publicity Director. This position was previously held by Lynn Walsh. Lynn has prepared a package of materials to assist her replacement. If you have an interest in filling this opportunity please contact me directly at kraus6311@comcast.net. This position is filled by the board and does not require membership approval.

If you would like to be more involved with NIHS, we have other volunteer opportunities that might interest you. A good place to start is on our website. Under our "ABOUT US" tab click on Volunteers. We list a "few" possibilities for you to consider.

Looking for some great hostas this summer? Consider contacting one or more of our Member Vendors. Again go to our website, go to the ABOUT US tab and click on Member Vendors. There you will find our list of vendors with either a link to their website, Facebook Page or we show their phone number. Some are near enough to visit others sell online.

May your hostas be plentiful, lush and beautiful. Remember there is always room for another hosta.

Be Well and Be Safe. Hosta-la-Vista,

**Mike Kraus**

NORTHERN ILLINOIS HOSTA SOCIETY  
HOSTA HAPPENINGS

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**Hosta Garden Walk Sunday July 25**

**Rachel Neville's Unique Estate**

Visit from 2 to 5 pm on Sunday July 25.



Rachel Neville welcomes you to explore her 50+ acres among burr oak trees, shagbark hickory, the lawn and 2 acres of restored tall grass prairie on July 25. Meander along Stoney Creek that provides several enchanting waterfalls and a pond. Hostas accent the paths adjoining the creek. Wander several different gardens such as a native, butterfly, cutting, and vegetable garden and explore on the garden paths.

Visit her Buggy Barn Museum with a display of horse-drawn milk wagons and a large milk bottle collection from local dairies.

A golf cart will be available for those not able/wanting to walk the trails.

The star of the show will be the prairie. The picture shows the plants in bloom, but "you can only get the real feel for it by walking through it. I never understood what it was like for the pioneers to cross the prairie until I moved to Illinois in my 40's. It's breath taking and intimidating all at the same time" wrote Aubrey Neville in 2019. Aubrey, Rachel's husband, passed away in May 2021.

**This fabulous estate is at 39W714 McDonald Rd, Campton Hills, IL 60124.**

**Visit from 2 to 5 pm on Sunday July 25.**



*Directions: From the intersection of McDonald Rd & Randall Rd, head west on McDonald Rd 2.5 miles & turn right at the Flag/ Red Mailbox to Neville Lane.*



## 2nd Annual Online Auction We need your Help!



The Auction Team is hard at work preparing for our Online Auction from **Aug 13 to 15**. We need **your** contributions of **hostas** and **companion plants** to help us achieve our fundraising goal to finance our NIHS activities including Hosta Garden Walks, Symposia & our AHS Display Garden at Cantigny.

NOW is the time to dig up those hostas and companion plants that you want to donate. We want to offer a wide variety of healthy good-looking plants at the sale – unusual and more common, hostas and companion plants. Get them potted **now** so they can acclimate themselves in their pots and look their best by auction time. NIHS really appreciates your participation and donations for this auction, as this is our only fundraiser.

We ask that you select and drop off your donations at one of the five NIHS members' homes which will serve as our Distribution Centers. Choose the distribution center most convenient to your home. Drop off dates begin Wednesday, **August 4 through Tuesday, August 10**. You will need to contact the distribution manager to arrange a specific drop-off date & time. Please cleanup your plants and pots to look good prior to delivery.

After the auction closes, the distribution centers will also serve as pickup points for winning bidders.

This event has always been light-hearted and fun. **YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT!** This auction event is open to the public, so **please invite a friend or two to participate in this auction**. In the past, members, guests and the public have been able to obtain some great plants for their gardens. A wide variety of new and classic hostas and companion plants will be available. Most plants will be auctioned, but many will be available for sale separately.

**These are the five NIHS Drop Off Centers with our Receiving Plant Manager's contact information.**

### Geneva – Kathy Fox, 737 Anderson Blvd

Monday through Saturday delivery drop off times are from 10 am - 6 pm

Please call or text Kathy at **630-341-7508** to schedule an appointment for a drop off time

Email [fox2sew@gmail.com](mailto:fox2sew@gmail.com)

### Gurnee – Joe Jansen, 640 Yorktown Ln

Monday through Saturday delivery drop off times are between 10 am – 6 pm

Please call or text Joe at 847-477-7998 to schedule an appointment for a drop off time

Email [joseph.w.jansen@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.w.jansen@gmail.com)

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## 2nd Annual Online Auction continued

### Rolling Meadows – Becky Booth, 3143 California Ct.

Monday through Saturday delivery drop off times are between 10 am – 6 pm

Please call or text Becky at 847-303-1188 to schedule an appointment for a drop off time

### Sleepy Hollow – Linda Lood, 223 Hilltop Lane

Monday through Saturday delivery drop off times are between 1-6 pm

Please email Linda at [llood@sbcglobal.net](mailto:llood@sbcglobal.net) or text her at 847-508-2506 to let her know when you are coming.

### Woodridge – Janet Simpson, 4 Roberts Court

Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday- **afternoon delivery drop off times are** between 1-7 pm Wednesday and Friday, **delivery drop off times are** between 9 am-6 pm, Saturday- **delivery drop off times are** between 11:00 am until 4 p.m. Please contact Janet to schedule a drop off time with a phone call **630-881-9012** or email [janetsimpson@comcast.net](mailto:janetsimpson@comcast.net)

# 2021 Special Events

Open House & Hosta Walk on June 11-12-13

Hosta Expert Bob Solberg on Sunday, July 18 (*reservations required*)



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# HOSTA HAPPENINGS



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## AHS Online AUCTION—New

By Tammy Tomtschik Borden



More details about the AHS online hosta auction... Because you want to know.

An online AHS auction will serve as the kickoff event for the American Hosta Society convention starting on **Wed., July 14 at 6PM and running through noon on the 17th (CT).**

You do NOT need to register for the convention or be an AHS member to participate in the auction! U.S. participants only. Your generous proceeds will benefit the American Hosta Society.

There are fewer items than would be at an in-person event, but you won't believe some of the hostas that are up for bid from some very generous donors. Plus, two opportunities to bid on your pick of one hybridizer's garden!

Bidding is easy and only requires that you create an easy-to-set-up account on our secure, mobile-friendly auction site. A shipping charge will be added to each item and it will be sent to the winning bidder by the end of the season in plenty of time for planting this fall.

Get a preview here and start planning your bidding strategy now: <https://www.32auctions.com/ahs2021>

Thank you to our donors!

- Bob Solberg — Green Hill Hostas
- Josh Spece — In The Country Garden & Gifts
- Doug & Mardy Beilstein
- Rick Goodenough
- Don Rawson
- Indianapolis Hosta Society & Randy Goodwin
- Jack Barta — Jack's Hostas
- Audrey Temmer

## Mark Rekoske Opened His Garden Fabulous!



*Pics by Ron Asselborn*



Mark & Marsha Rekoske opened their fabulous garden for NIHS on June 5. Hostas galore—in the ground, in pots and on the patio. Mark has incorporated great companion plants, shrubs & trees to provide a marvelous garden experience.



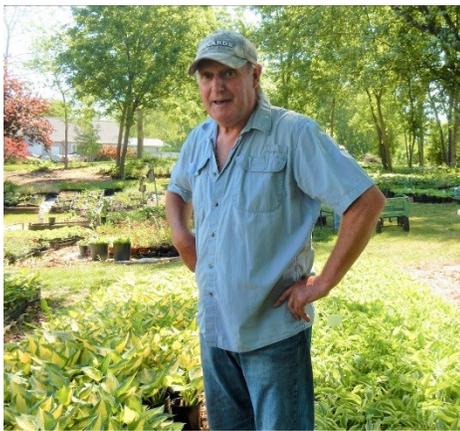
## Hosta Haus Buying Experience

June 5 for NIHS



Hosta Haus hosts Teri Holms (holding tomato plant, right) and Richard Baak (middle left) welcomed our NIHS hostaholics as a two-fer with the Rekoske Hosta Garden Walk.

Lots of lovely plants were snapped up by eager hosta enthusiasts. The day was lovely with moderate temp and sunny skies.

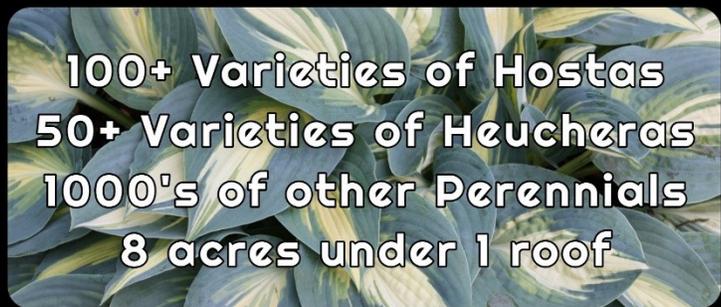
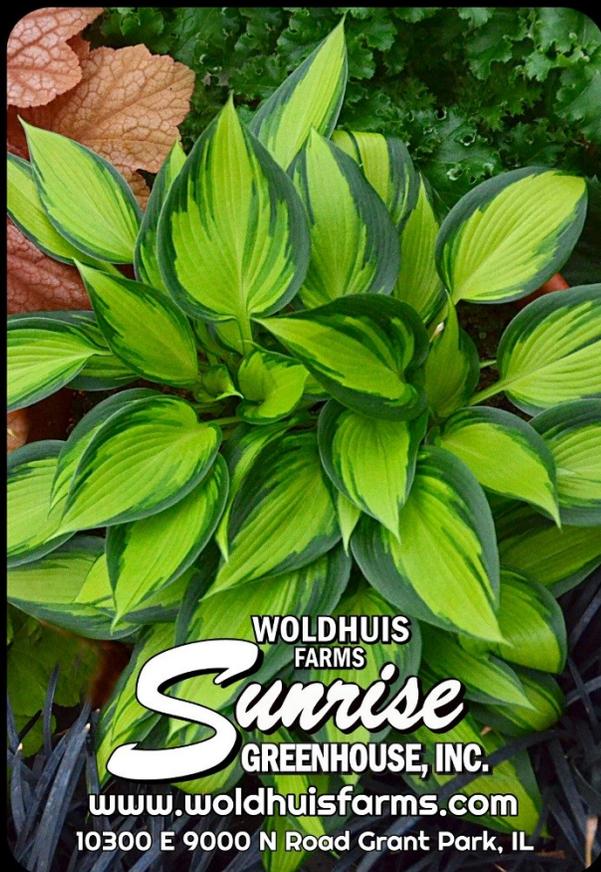
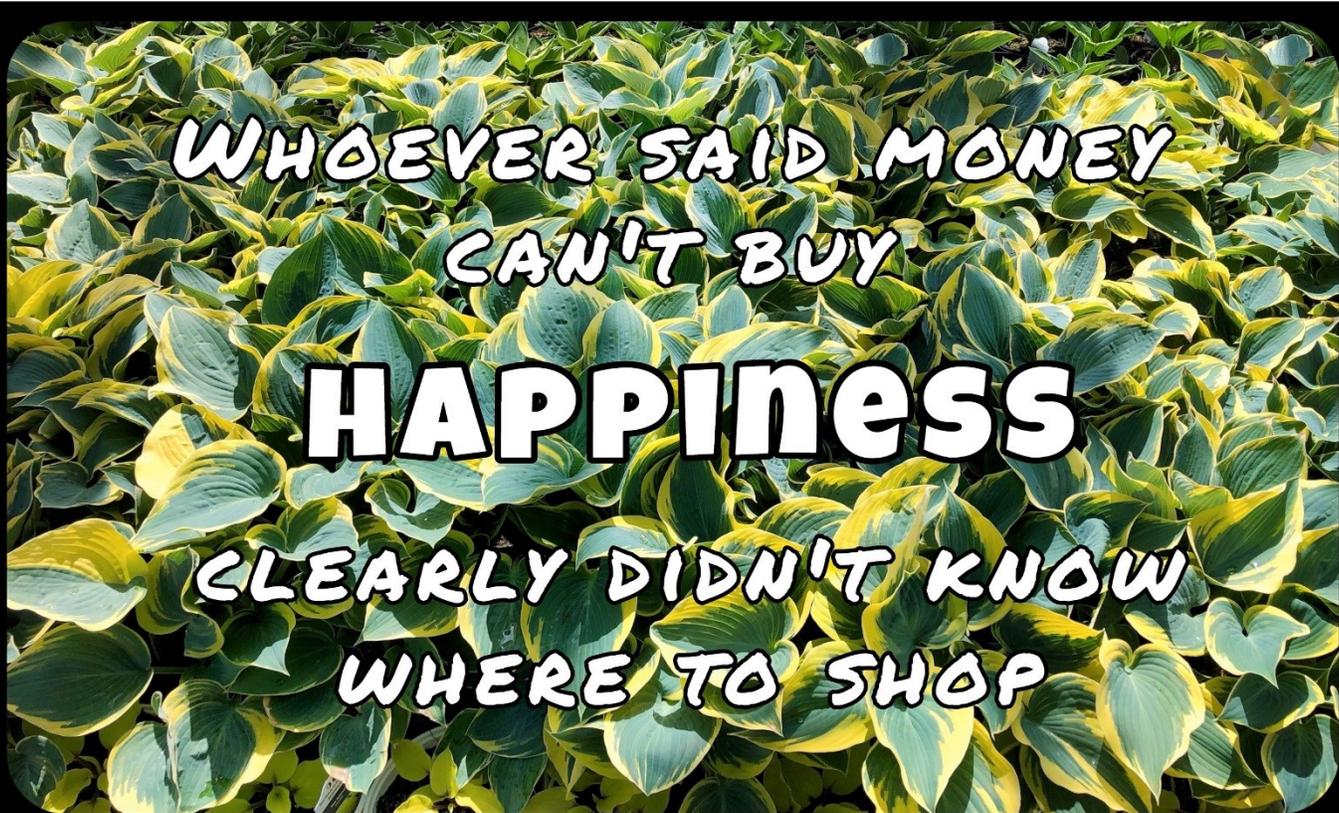


Our Hosta Garden Walks are a great way to see great gardens and develop new relationships with fellow gardeners.



*Pics by Ron Asselborn except for bottom right pic from Hosta Haus Facebook page.*





## Hosta Caravan to Wis June 26

Great Gardens!



Our first Hosta Caravan took us to Cedarburg WI for a delightful display of hosta gardens. Glenn & Terry Herold ( upper right) provided an in-depth tour of their gorgeous gardens and unusual specimens (upper page).



Jack Barta (below left) opened his gardens during a light rain for hosta sales. Jack is dividing a hosta for a customer.



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Pics by Ron  
Asselborn

## Hosta Caravan to Wis June 26

continued



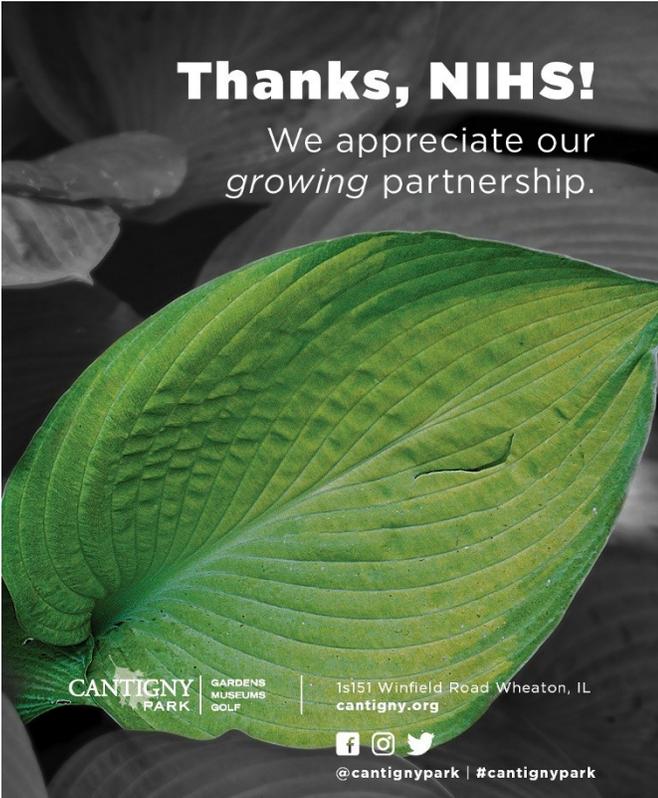
Linda Wenthur (left in center) showed off her lovely English Country style garden to visitors. Gorgeous accent pieces included the Stained glass windows ) top left.



Jodi Hosale (lower right) guided us thru their garden (Ken was helping Jack Barta). Jodi delights in the concentration of hostas, her collection of pink flamingos & Ken's new obsession with dwarf conifers.



**Thanks, NIHS!**  
We appreciate our  
*growing* partnership.



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**SOCIETY**

[www.americanhostasociety.org](http://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.

## Exquisite & Elegant!

### Jansen Hosta Garden Walk on June 19



Joe & Monica Jansen, pic left, amazed and delighted visitors with their exquisite collection of 800+ hostas, 50 varieties of Japanese maples and many rare conifers. These were artistically displayed in a stunning palette of color and texture.

A delightful afternoon!



*Pics by Mark Rekoske*



A central graphic with a sun-like circle containing the text "Spring into Summer". Surrounding it are five hand-drawn notices:

- Garden Center Open**  
Mon-Fri 9-5  
Sat. 9-4  
Sun 12-4
- Like Butterflies?**  
We have pollinator plants
- Bulk Premium Hardwood Bark Fines**  
\$48/cu.yd.  
Free delivery to Genoa/Kingston
- Lloyd Landscaping and Garden Center**  
662 Park Ave  
Genoa, IL
- Check for upcoming events**  
www.lloydlandscaping.com

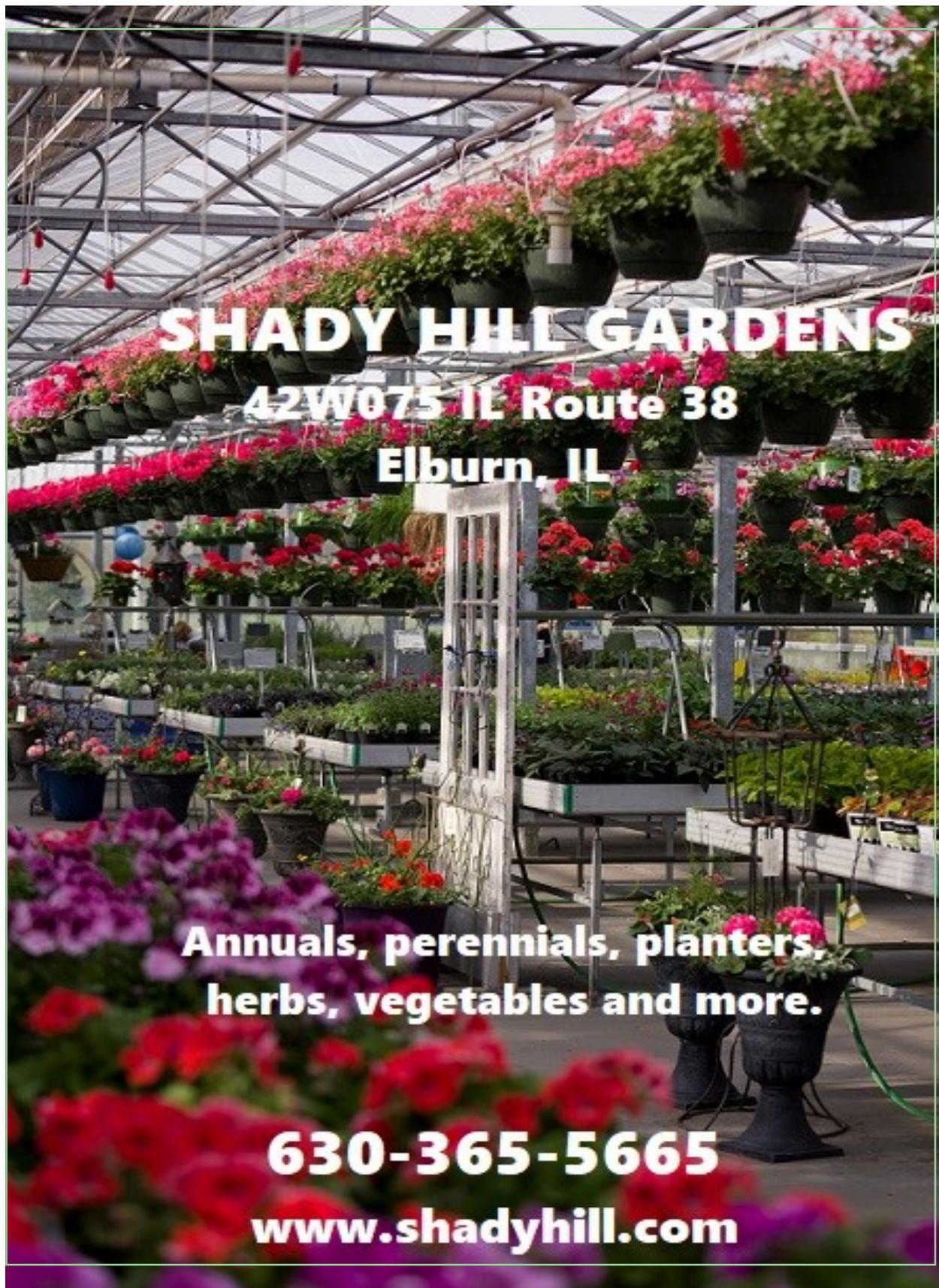
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## DAVE'S VIEW

By Dave Trollope

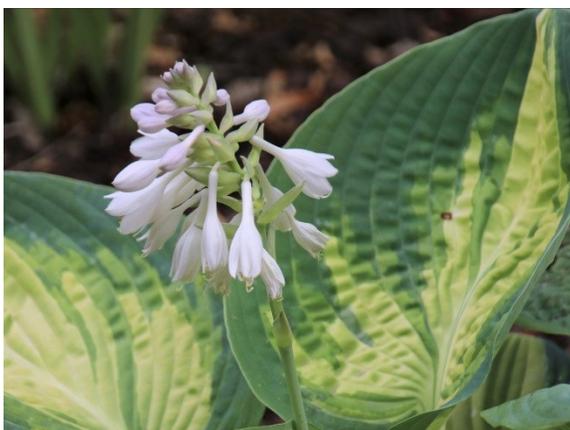


### Blooms!

Our hostas provide intriguing flowers that are under-appreciated. The pics are from our garden in June & July.

*Hosta blooms clockwise from top right:*

*H. 'Brother Stefan', H. 'Elegans', H. 'Simply Sharon', H. 'Mississippi Delta', H. 'Queen of the Seas', H. 'Frances Williams'.*





## Northern Illinois Hosta Society

HOME ABOUT US CALENDAR MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTERS & FLVRS RESOURCES CONTACT US MEMBER'S ONLY

CART (0)



### Some of our Programs, Events & Activities



#### Annual Membership Meeting- September 12, 2021

The purpose of this annual meeting is to discuss and approve the NIHS annual Budget and election of new officers to fill vacant positions. Our meeting is usually scheduled on a Sunday in



#### Sponsor Plant Pick-Ups-May 2021

You will be notified by email regarding your member purchases from March & April 2021 regarding pick up location

As Lou Horton, NIHS Past President, 2003-2011, has always said, "the Sponsor Plant Program is designed for the benefit of

## Join the Northern Illinois Hosta Society

Join the NIHS by going to our website [www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org](http://www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org) and scroll over on the navigation bar to Membership. You can pay your membership dues on-line on our secure server or print out an application form and mail to our membership secretary with a check payable to NIHS. Pls mail to: Stevie Meginness, Membership Secretary, 84 Dunham Place, St. Charles, IL 60174 with your check for \$25. Please include your name(s), address, phone #, and current email address.

Family membership dues of \$25 for 2 years include email versions of 5 newsletters.

Email us at [NI.hosta@gmail.com](mailto:NI.hosta@gmail.com). Call Stevie at 331-235-4114 . Visit our website @ [www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org](http://www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org) and visit us on Facebook.

## New Member Welcome!!

*Welcome to our newest hostaphiles!*

Ed & Bonnie Bogdan, Algonquin

Ed & Becky Booth, Rolling Meadows

Janet Byrnes, McHenry

Paul & Jo Chenell, Monee

James McNeal & Rob Dennis, Harvard

Bill & Pat Graves, Roscoe

Marsha Hankermeyer, Countryside

Richard Baak & Teri Holms, Genoa City, WI

Eva Hyndman, Prospect Heights

Rob & Ann James, Rockford

Charlie & Sue Johnpeter, Naperville

Dana & Linda Kipker, Mundelein

Sheila Kirby, Roseville

Wally & Francine Kott, Geneva

Ron & Wendy Mauer, Freeport

Pamela & Diane Oster, Gurnee

Saysana Songkharm, South Elgin

Susan Strasser, Elburn



**MRHS CONVENTION RESCHEDULED FOR  
JULY 14 – 16, 2022**

**T**HE COVID-CURSED CONVENTION first planned and postponed for 2020, then 2021, is now officially back on the MRHS schedule for **July 14 – 16, 2022, in Lisle, IL**. The virus appears to be in retreat, more people receive vaccinations each week, and signs point to a more benign environment next year, when Covid should not be the dominating factor in our lives.

**Hostas Chicago Style** will be hosted by the Northern Illinois Hosta Society (NIHS), and we are trying to make this convention unique: Speakers you haven't heard before to educate and excite you. Fabulous gardens where other distinctive plants and unique designs share top billing with hostas. Two new cultivars from Bob Solberg as choices for a gift hosta. An evening garden visit. A Chicago-style pizza party.

Of course, the features you've always expected at hosta conventions remain part of this one. Reunions with hosta friends. Vendors with the newest hosta cultivars, companion plants and other items for your garden. Hosta leaf show. Seedling display. Good old-fashioned midwestern hospitality.

Make plans now to be part of it, and join fellow hosta lovers in Chicago's western suburb of Lisle for **Hostas Chicago Style, July 14 - 16, 2022**. **Mark your calendars now, and keep an eye out for new developments on the MRHS website, <http://www.midwesthostasociety.org>.**



**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 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW  
Rochester, MN 55901**

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

WE'RE GOING  
*Virtual!*

Join us!  
JULY 15–17, 2021

AHS2021.org



AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY NATIONAL CONVENTION  
KALAMAZOO, MI

While we're incredibly disappointed that we won't be able to enjoy the fellowship of friends and other hosta lovers in person, it creates a wonderful opportunity to put on the first-ever virtual AHS convention! The team in Kalamazoo is planning an exciting, action-packed virtual event!

Registration is now open! Visit the convention website at [www.ahs2021.org](http://www.ahs2021.org) to register for the event being held **July 15–17**.

- *You'll also learn more about all the great activities and opportunities, like the convention gift Hosta 'Silly String' (mailed to each registrant)*
- *Schedule for speakers, workshops, judges clinics, and more*
- *On-demand, professionally recorded virtual garden tours*
- *Seedling photo competition*
- *And much more! More details about other activities are coming soon, so keep checking the website for updates*
- *As a reminder, registration is **\$49 per household**.*

## The Bigger, the Better Part III: Growing Humongous Hostas

by Don Rawson

Humongous hostas make outstanding focal points in the garden. These impressive giants readily attract attention whenever we encounter them, and we are lured by their beauty and stature. However, enormous hostas grown to perfection seldom are the work of happenstance... they are the product of a gardener's careful planning, hard work, nurture and care. With this series, we are covering 12 tips on how to provide the perfect environment for cultivating humongous specimens in your own garden because, if you are like me, the bigger, the better!

Here are the first 6 tips which were previously offered:

1. Select the Best Location
2. Prepare the Planting Site Well
3. Plant on a Raised Mound
4. Select a Cultivar that gets BIG
5. Allow Enough Space
6. Provide Adequate Light



H. Komodo Dragon

*pic by Bill Goff*

In Part III, Tips #7 - 9 will focus on tree root competition, mulching and fertilizing, and watering your hostas. I invite you to join me on this journey to grow these jaw-dropping mammoths to their greatest potential.

### Tip #7: Prevent Root Competition

Tree roots are fierce competitors for water and nutrients. A dry, shady area with low nutrient content and compacted soil is great for a moss garden, but hostas will need to fight hard to survive. If you've notice that your hostas are mysteriously getting smaller year after year, even with varieties that are supposed to be large, there's a good chance that something else is sucking the water and nutrients away from the plant. The number one culprit is buried tree roots. Just under the surface, there's an invisible battle going on. Trees are like giant sponges, wicking up an enormous amount of water. If a hosta is planted nearby, the tree takes all the energy and unfortunately, there's nothing left for the hosta. Roots of trees often extend two to three times the radius of the crown, and they grow where the moisture and oxygen are available. In fact, most absorbing



*Pic by Jane Hanna*

Continued next page

## The Bigger, the Better Part II: Growing Humongous Hostas

continued

roots are found very near the surface - in the upper 12 inches of soil. Furthermore, besides taking the water and nutrients, some trees create an environment which is just too shady for good hosta growth. Remember that our #1 favorite plant is shade tolerant, not shade loving. Hostas need sunlight to grow!

Tree selection is important when laying out a garden. The best trees for the hosta garden have a deep root system, few fibrous roots, and an open canopy. Avoid ashes, aspens, beeches, lindens, silver maples, red maples, and willows. Some trees which are highly recommended for hosta gardeners are hickory, honeylocust, katsura, kousa dogwood, Japanese maple, paperbark maple, oaks, and witchhazel

Preventing root competition may involve spading around your hostas to shear off encroaching tree roots, planting in containers or raised beds, or installing a barrier to keep tree roots out. Adding a few inches of rich topsoil around your trees is also an option, as long as you don't overdo it. Too much additional soil or mulch around trees can suffocate roots which need oxygen, so raising the grade excessively could eventually kill a sensitive, mature tree.



- Choose the right trees.
- Prune off tree roots.
- Plant in raised beds.
- Plant hostas in containers.
- Install a root barrier.

In any case, large hostas which are vigorous growers can compete with trees much better than small, young plantings. However, hostas planted near trees require additional water and fertilizer. If you eventually find that tree root competition is too great in your garden, you may need to dig up your hostas and relocate them to a new area, even if it requires building a pergola or shade structure. Or, you could consider eliminating a few of your trees.

### Tip #8: Mulch and Fertilize

The benefits of mulch should not be under-estimated. Mulch holds moisture, maintains roots at an even temperature, [www.HostaHappenings.com](http://www.HostaHappenings.com) 6 Photo by Jane Hanna Vol. 31: No. 2 April 2021 blocks weeds, reduces erosion, and helps to keep fungal diseases down by reducing splashing on plants. Mulching around your hostas and allowing the mulch to decompose year after year will help keep your soil in good condition and will also keep the soil under the mulch moist. Hostas love this!

Moreover, mulch makes the garden attractive. A freshly-mulched, weed-free garden is so appealing! Suitable

*Continued next page*

*Are your hostas mysteriously getting smaller year after year? The likely culprit is tree root competition.*



*If you choose to ignore it, your hostas will continue to decline and may eventually die!*

## The Bigger, the Better: Growing Humongous Hostas

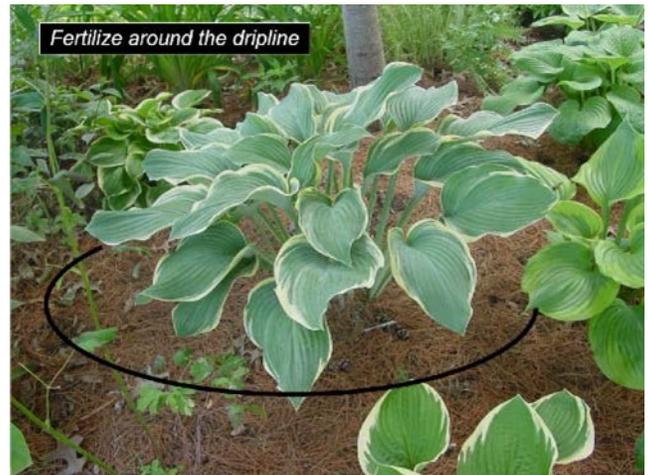
continued

materials are shredded bark, wood chips, pine needles, cocoa hulls, shredded leaves, or stone/ lava rock. Apply mulch in late spring or early summer, 2-3" deep. Landscape cloth and black plastic are a no-no! And don't mulch over the crown of the hosta, as good airflow around the crown is important to preventing disease.

The application of a balanced fertilizer (such as 10-10-10) will give your hostas a boost in the spring, but ideally, a soil test should be performed first to see what nutrients need to be added. Then apply a second feeding 4 to 6 weeks after the leaves emerge to give your hostas an extra nudge.

Some gardeners prefer a slow-release granular fertilizer such as Osmocote. Organic amendments such as blood meal, alfalfa meal, or Plant-tone are very beneficial as well. Fertilizer should be sprinkled around the dripline, not applied directly over the crown.

In any case, try to find a fertilizer that has some added Magnesium, or apply Epsom salt. Epsom salt is hydrated magnesium sulfate; it consists of 10% Magnesium and 13% Sulfur, both of which are secondary essential nutrients after Nitrogen, Phospho-



rus, and Potassium. Magnesium in Epsom salt increases water retention, helps in better intake of nutrients, and most importantly, in the creation of chlorophyll, on which the process of photosynthesis depends. Similarly, sulfur [www.HostaHappenings.com](http://www.HostaHappenings.com) 7 Vol. 31: No. 2 April 2021 also participates in the development of chlorophyll, increases the plant's resistance to diseases, and helps in growth. Mix 2 tablespoons of Epsom salt in 1 gallon of water and spray once in a month on the foliage in the rapid growth period. When growth slows, reduce the quantity to 1 tablespoon. This foliar application will keep your hostas lush and healthy.

In addition, Bob Solberg recommends fertilizing your hostas at least once in spring with a liquid fertilizer. Even if you use a slow-release granular fertilizer, foli-



## The Bigger, the Better Part III: Growing Humongous Hostas continued

ar feeding can make a big difference. You can use a 20-20-20 formulation or one with a higher nitrogen amount (the first number), but try to find one that has some added Magnesium. It is best to apply this bonus fertilizer just as the second set of hosta leaves are starting to flush out, or 4 to 6 weeks after the hostas emerge. This little extra boost will help that second set of leaves expand to a size similar to those first big leaves.

### Tip #9: Water, Water, Water!

Hostas are thirsty, especially on hot, windy days and during extended dry spells. Like people, they need plenty of water, especially during the driest periods of summer. They thrive naturally in damp areas of Asia, so try to mimic their natural habitat as best as you can. Conscientious gardeners ensure that they provide a good water supply to keep large leafy plants growing well all season long. Hostas survive well in drought, but to grow these monsters to their fullest, don't depend solely on Mother Nature. Water regularly at the base of the plant.

There is a wise saying: You cannot over-water a hosta. Drown the plant thoroughly once a week with a heavy watering until the ground is well-saturated, then come back with a hose two hours later and water until the ground is saturated again. Wait a week, then repeat the process. They will appreciate the attention! For overhead watering, water every two weeks with Miracle-Gro. Hostas get really huge when given a liquid fertilizer at 50-100 ppm nitrogen. In the next edition, we will cover the final tips on growing huge hostas to their fullest potential. Following these tips will help you to have some humongous specimens in your own garden, because when it comes to hostas, the bigger, the better!

*Reprinted from Michigan Hosta Society Hosta Happenings April 2021, many thanks to Editor Michael Greanya*



*Don't depend solely on Mother Nature. Water your hostas regularly!*

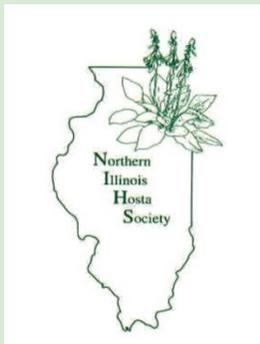
*Pic by Michael Greanya*



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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.

*Visitors embraced the serenity of June Vandervest's garden on our Hosta Garden Walk July 11 in Downers Grove.*



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*Some of the volunteers at the AHS Display Garden at Cantigny Park on June 29— Linda Lood, left, and Diane Barrowman and Judi Asselborn (l to r).*

