

Hosta Happenings

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois Hosta Society

ISSUE 94

JULY 2016

2016 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- July 7-9, Midwest Region Hosta Society Convention in Champaign, IL
- July 17, Hosta Garden Walk #2, Naperville (two-fer)
- July 31, Hosta Garden Walk #3, Crystal Lake
- Aug 14, Hosta & Companion Plant Auction/ Fund Raiser, Hinsdale Community House
- Sept 18, Pot Luck & Annual Mtg, Lombard
- Dec 4, Holiday Party, Crystal Lake



Visit Bill Horn's mature garden on the July 31 Hosta Walk in Crystal Lake

President's Letter

An important part of this column has always been to give credit where credit is due. This month there is a lot of it to go around. I will start with that before moving on to other important topics.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE LATELY, AND WHO DID IT?

June 25 was the annual NIHS daylong **bus tour**. This year we visited the environs of Milwaukee, including several great gardens that were on the 2013 AHS Convention Garden Tour. We also took advantage of three plant-buying opportunities. Planning and coordinating this event with precision and attention to every detail was **VP Mark Rekoske**. Mark spends an immense amount of time contacting garden hosts and vendors, putting the schedule together and making sure we stick to it during the tour. En route he is our genial master of ceremonies who provides mental exercises to help keep us engaged while on the road. Mark, a huge **THANK YOU** from all of us who enjoyed the trip immensely because of the superb job you did organizing it.

Supporting Mark's efforts were **Nancy Bodinet**, Hospitality Chair, who put together an impressive array of snacks and beverages, and on-board servers **Mary Ann Brucher, Olga Swehla, and June Vandervest** who kept travelers well nourished and hydrated throughout the day.

Continued on page 2



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President's Letter *continued*

Many thanks to all of you for the considerable time and effort you spent to assure the rest of us a comfortable and enjoyable trip.

Sunday, June 26, was our first *hosta garden walk* of 2016 in Spring Grove, IL. Those of us who made the trip were rewarded with a beautiful, well-designed and perfectly tended garden created by **Robin and Joe Heinz**. Living on a large lot in a newer subdivision with few trees, they must indulge their passion for hostas by growing most of them in the sun. Extensive daily watering is a must, and the plants look great. An advantage of gardening in these conditions, as the Heinz garden demonstrates, is to be able to put carefully selected sun-loving perennials among the hostas to provide more color than one usually sees in a hosta garden. Thank you, Robin and Joe, for sharing your ideas and your lovely garden with us.

WHAT'S NEXT, AND WHO WILL DO IT?

Two more garden walks are coming up, one in Naperville (a "twofer") and one in Crystal Lake; information about them is in this newsletter. Walks like these are our most popular events. **Hosts** work hard to make their gardens look their best for us, so please do try to visit them. Once again we must thank **Mark Rekoske**, since he is the one who finds and schedules these special gardens for us to see.

A very important annual event is set for Sunday, August 14: **The NIHS Auction**, our only fundraiser. **YOU** as members are an important part of it. Hosta and companion plant donations from **members** are always needed, welcomed and appreciated. Be thinking about desirable plants **you** have that can be divided, then dig and pot them soon so they can recover and look great at the auction. We also want and need **YOU** there as buyers. Every year we offer many beautiful specimens of old and new cultivars to enhance **your garden**. Mark your calendar and plan to come early on August 14 to deliver your donations and to preview the auction plants. Then get ready to buy. Bidding starts at 1:30 with **Mark Zilis** as our auctioneer.

Work will continue at **the hosta garden at Cantigny** throughout the summer and into the fall. The garden is looking beautiful as the lush hostas and companions show their appreciation for the extensive spring rainfall. So far **the 24 members who volunteer** there have worked hard and have cleaned up winter debris, added chips to the paths, mulched most of the plants (that is, until the mulch ran out), planted a number of hostas and companions, and watered as needed. Our designation by AHS as a national hosta display garden is still pending because we held up the application so that we could add current photos of the garden at its best.

The last event of the year, an important one that will shape NIHS as we move forward, is our **Annual Meeting on September 18** when **the membership** will be asked to approve the 2017 budget and program, and to elect the following officers: Vice President, Membership Secretary, Hospitality Chair, and one Director. The Nominating Committee will soon begin work to prepare a slate to be presented at the meeting, though additional nominations may be made from the floor.

I would like to ask each of you to consider submitting your name to the Nominating Committee as a candidate for any one of these positions that might interest you. NIHS is always looking for new people to be involved in its leadership and infuse the organization with new ideas. Whether or not you want to make the commitment, the board always welcomes your suggestions for programs, activities, or anything else. Contact Nominating Committee Chair Penny Fulkerson at penncarl@yahoo.com if you are interested.

I look forward to seeing you at our events throughout the summer.

Barbara

BITS AND PIECES

Visit the Hosta Garden Walks on July 17 & 31 & bring a gardening friend.

Publicity Chair, we're still looking for you! Your main responsibility would be to get the word out to the public about our auction and other public-oriented NIHS events (there are hardly any now—most of our activities are member oriented). The ability to write press releases and distribute them electronically is the main requirement. This is an appointed board position, so you would be expected to 3 or 4 board meetings each year. Contact Barbara King.

Attend the Midwest Region Hosta Society convention nearby in Urbana, IL July 7 - 9.

Hosta Walk Garden Hosts, Our Program VP, Mark Rekoske, is always looking for special gardens for hosta walks. If you know of such gardens, or if you have one, please contact Mark at marekoske@gmail.com.

RIP The NIHS expresses its deepest sympathy to the family of **Florence Brennan** who passed on May 10th. Florence is survived by her husband, Don, in Palos Park.

Florence was active in hosta and gardening organizations including the Northern Illinois Hosta Society (NIHS) and Midwest Regional Hosta Society (MRHS) as a leaf show judge. Florence was one of the founding members of the NIHS back in 1992. She was a founding member of the Palos Heights garden club and a member of the Palos Park Garden Club. Florence will be missed by her gardening friends.

New Member Welcome!!

A special welcome to our newest hostaphiles!

- Myra, Melissa, Katie & Megan Griffey, St. Charles
- Cheryl McGarrity, Warrenville



Join the NIHS by contacting Mike Kraus, Membership Chairman, 6311 Carrie Ct, Crystal Lake, IL 60014 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 4 newsletters.

Email us at NI.hosta@gmail.com. Call Mike at 815-356-8569. Visit our website @ www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org and visit us on Facebook.

Two-fer Hosta Garden Walk Preview

July 17 Naperville Part 1

Sue & Brian Welker's wonderful garden back up to River Woods Park and the Du Page River with a view from the deck!

"I have a mostly green garden with over 140 varieties of hosta which are all labelled. I also try to note the year planted. In the last two years I have expanded into mini and small hostas and have a few fairy gardens set up with ferns & hosta. You will notice several mosaic pots and bird baths. I love to piddle around making some mosaic pots".



The Welkers have a walk-out lower level so their deck sits up high and west facing for the sun-loving succulents. "I love the ease of succulents and winter over several different varieties of succulents along with geraniums. Be sure to hop up to the deck to see what is hidden up there!"

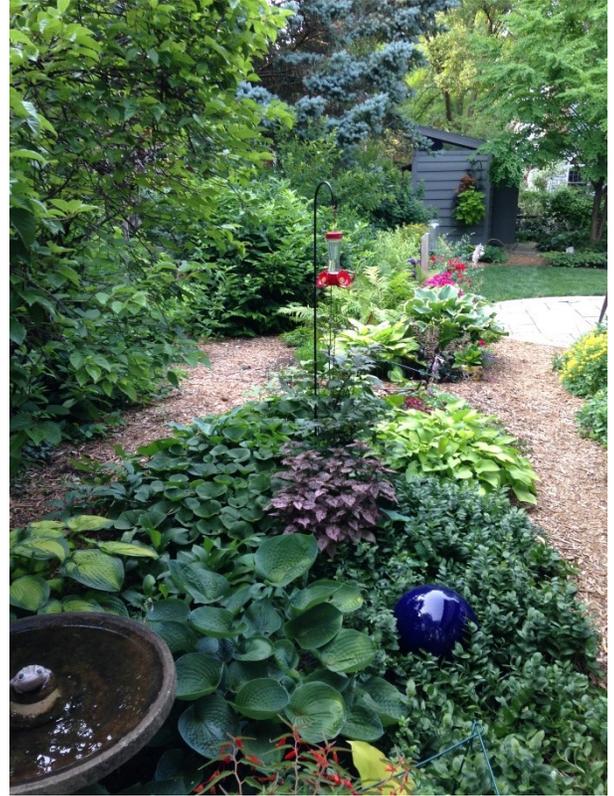


Driving Direction to the Welker garden: 2269 River Woods Dr. Naperville, Il 60565

Your destination is about 5.5 miles south of the intersection of I-88 & Naperville Rd. From I-88 or from Hobson Rd follow Naperville Rd to 87th St (stop light). Turn right and go west on 87th St. Follow the curve to the left onto River Woods Dr. The garden is on the west side of the street.

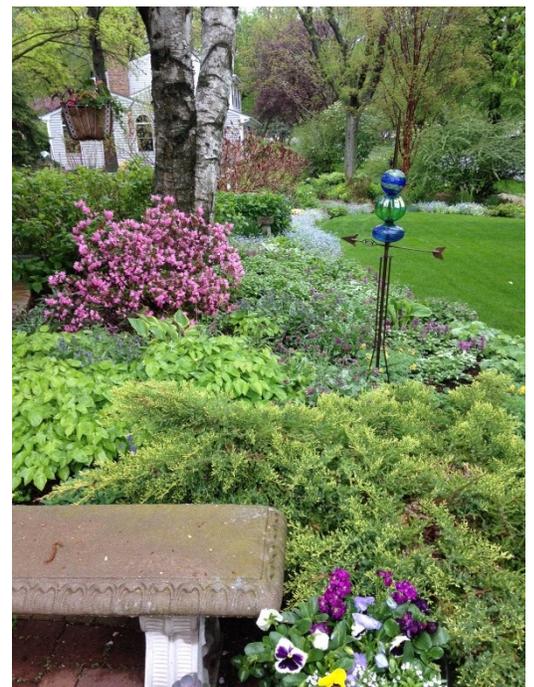
Two-fer Hosta Garden Walk Preview July 17 Naperville Part 2

Cindy Hennessy's design talent is evident in her plant selection and bed layout. Her garden is a blend of trees, shrubs, perennials and hostas. Cindy's appreciation for hostas began early but her collection has grown exponentially during the past few years (hostaholicism). The garden is a mixture of full sun to full shade that incorporates a variety of companion plants amongst the hostas providing a pleasing layered effect.



Driving directs to the Hennessy garden from the Welker garden to 1577 Clyde Dr. Naperville:

When leaving the Welker garden head north on River Woods Dr which turns into 87th Street. Turn left onto Coach Dr. and drive about 0.75 mile. Turn left onto Bailey Rd. and drive west past the stop light at Washington and continue about 0.5 mile to Cindy Hennessy's home on the right at the corner of Bailey & Clyde Dr.



Join the Fun at the NIHS Auction Sunday August 14

The Community House, Hinsdale

Contribute Plants & Take New Hostas Home

Our annual NIHS auction, plant sale and raffle is our only annual fundraising event and we need your help to make it a success. The auction will be held on Sunday August 14 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Please plan to be there to support the NIHS and have fun bidding on plants that may be hard to find elsewhere. Extraordinary bargains are always a possibility. Once again, **Mark Zilis will serve as our auctioneer.** Bidding will be friendly but fast-paced and things could get exciting. There will be a sale of many plants at low fixed prices for bargain hunters. We will sell raffle tickets with some mature hostas and other items offered as prizes. We may also have a number of Kincaid stainless steel garden markers for sale. Mark Zilis' books will also be available. **Refreshments will be provided.**

The auction will be held at The Community House in Hinsdale from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. **Plan to arrive at 12:30 pm** to donate your plants, register to bid and preview the plants you will want to bid on. Your participation and the addition of attendees from outside NIHS are critical to the success of the auction. The more bidders we have, the more interesting the bidding becomes.



We need your donations of potted plants (hostas and companion plants) to be delivered by about 12:30 pm to the Community House. We are looking for good quality pest & disease-free plants that you would be happy to have in your garden, especially newer varieties or hard to find older plants. Dig or divide your plants as soon as possible so they look good for the auction. Donations from our members make up the majority of the plants auctioned, but we expect some donated plants from vendors.

Here are some other ways to help make the auction a success:

- bring a non-member friend to the auction
- copy this page and share with your gardener friends and plant club members

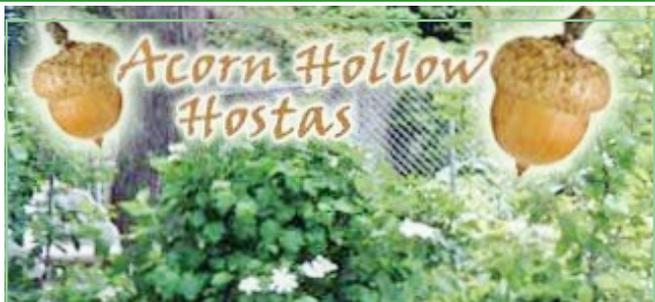
Driving Directions: From Ogden Ave/IL 34 in Hinsdale turn South on York Road which turns into Garfield Ave and continue to Eighth St. Turn Right to the Community House , 415 W. Eighth St.



Pictures this page show the fun from our 2015 Plant Auction.

Photos by Ron Asselborn

Webmaster Wanted, We need you if you are interested in learning how to maintain and update our NIHS website. It's important to have more than one person available who has website experience or is willing to learn. Contact Mike Kraus at NI.hosta@gmail.com or (815) 356-8569.



In 2016 I will offer 20+ hosta cultivars grown here for four years but never offered before by me. My 2016 Hosta Sale is Saturday May 28th from 8 AM to Noon.

Other times by appointment.

**Lou Horton 1N735 Ingalton Ave
West Chicago, IL 630-293-7735**

Advertise to our gardening enthusiasts who love to buy plants - especially hostas! Contact Ron Asselborn at rasselborn5@gmail.com

	<u>Per issue</u>	<u>Per Year—4 issues</u>
Full Page	\$60	\$150
1/2 Page	\$35	\$90
1/4 Page	\$20	\$55



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Hosta Sale and Bolivian Arts & Crafts Fundraiser
June 4, 2016 August 27, 2016
9am - 4pm

All proceeds from hosta sales benefit Heifer International and Bolivian arts & craft sales benefit Mano a Mano International Partners.
Cash or Check only.

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Lovely shade-tolerant conifers and Japanese maples make great companion plants for hostas. Tour the nursery and see unusual conifers, ginkgos, Japanese maples, European beeches and more.*

March 19 - November 23: 8:00 - 4:30 Monday - Saturday
November 28 - March 17: 8:00 - 4:30 Monday - Friday

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phone: 815-338-7442 fax: 815-338-7446
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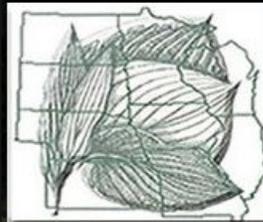


The
american
HOSTA
SOCIETY

www.americanhostasociety.org

*Check out the coverage of the recent
AHS convention in St. Louis. See Tom
Micheletti's Let's Talk Hostas column on
page 10 and pictorial coverage on page
14.*

*Check out the MRHS Convention activities in
Champaign on page 23.*



Midwest Region Hosta Society

Visit: www.midwesthostasociety.org/



Specializing in *Hosta*

Please visit our website for an online catalog of offerings.

We have over 600 varieties of *Hostas* for 2016.

We have purchased all of the hostas from The Hosta Patch, and will be adding many more varieties later this spring.

*NIHS Members are welcome to come view our offerings.
Please call for an appointment and directions when you are going to be in our area.
Open Garden Days are June 4, 5, 11, and 12, 2016 - Noon to 4 P.M.*

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Let's

Talk Hostas

By Tom Micheletti



Having just returned from the American Hosta Society convention in St. Louis, this is fresh on my mind. There were many activities that stood out for me that are memorable. First of which is seeing friends that I only see once a year at the convention. Getting together with these fellow hosta lovers is always a highlight for me. Also up there as a highlight is seeing the beautiful gardens that are on tour. There were 10 at this year's convention. Each garden is different with an individual mix of plants and decorative features that exhibit the character of the gardener. Some of the gardens are pure hosta gardens with the majority of plants being hostas. Some are very diverse gardens with a wide variety of plants that complement the hostas. There are also a few gardens that have a wonderful mix of plants and decorative features such as sculptures, water features, whimsical items, etc. This year's gardens were not disappointing with a great mix of each. One thing they all had in common was a large selection of exquisitely grown hostas. Every garden had at least one plant I had never seen grown as well before. These gardens will be featured in the fall On Line Journal of the AHS. If you are a member you will be able to read about them and see photos when it comes out later this year. If you aren't a member, you might consider becoming one as you will then have access to the member's only area of their website where the On Line Journal will be posted, as well as the other wealth of information there. Next year's convention will be in Indianapolis, which is also within a short driving distance.

Along with the above mentioned activities was the leaf show, where leaves are displayed in vases and judged for their perfection. It's always interesting to see all the leaves and see ones that are new to me and never seen before. There is also a section of new hybrids and sports which feature hostas that may become upcoming introductions.

The auction is always entertaining and interesting. Hundreds of plants are auctioned to raise money

for the society. Since there are no common hostas donated for the auction it is always exciting to see what prices will bring for some of the new and rare plants.

For those that can't resist adding to their hosta collection vendors from all over the country sell plants. Many are new introductions that are being offered for the very first time. Since there are a number of vendors the variety of plants one is able to purchase is astonishing. Since hostas are the focus there were 6 vendors selling hostas as well as vendors that sold other plants, and even a few offering decorative items for the garden.

The 3 day extravaganza is a fun, educational, and enjoyable way to immerse oneself in an activity focusing on our favorite plant. Consider attending one and experiencing it for yourself. Often our members will drive together and share a hotel room, and to participate in the event with a friend. There is also the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention usually in mid-July, which is a smaller version of the AHS convention. This year it is in Champaign, IL. Try them out and intensify your hosta immersion.

Since this spring was cool and moist, our hostas are pumped full of water. As the season progresses and becomes hotter and drier, it is necessary to supplement the water if Mother Nature doesn't cooperate. If you don't keep the plants watered well they are subject to browning on the leaf edges as well as wilting. But since you will be adding moisture you will also be providing an ideal environment for slugs. Remember our conversations last year about these creatures?

Until next time happy hosta gardening and I hope to see you at an upcoming convention.

Plan on Hosta Garden Walk at a Landscaper's Dream Garden Sunday July 31, Crystal Lake

Bill Horn is the Owner of Bill Horn Ornamental Landscaping. Bill reminisces that “many years ago, as a young landscape contractor, I learned the hard way that many hosta varieties could be grown and used near full size. I had clients who wanted instant gardens now! The embarrassingly small Blue Angels, Sum and Substance & Krossa Regals I first planted included many explanations and apologies. Since that learning experience I have created wonderful shade gardens for my clients that wanted to enjoy a mature garden of new and cool hostas now.



Today I still grow many types of hostas in the ground and sell them as specimens. Over the years we have created many sophisticated gardens and plant these large specimens in them. I enjoy doing it. “

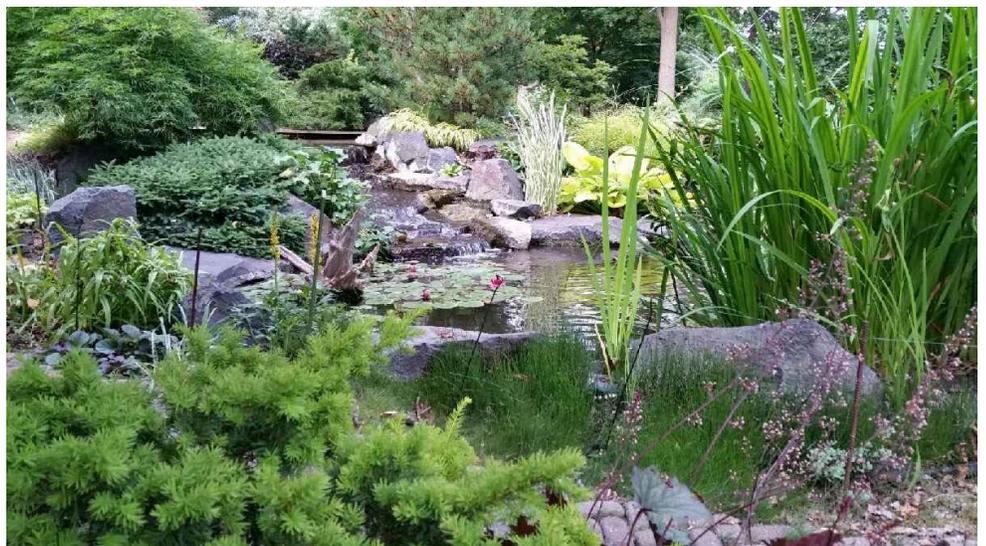
Bill's garden includes two ponds connected by a rambling stream and dramatic waterfall. He has a large variety of companion plants amidst the big hostas. More than 25 heuchera varieties and many unusual varieties available to “insiders” also accent his gardens. Bill is a plant collector always searching many out of the way nurseries.

Of course Bill's garden has evolved to today's mature size including removal of several large trees. More sun for more plants. “There is much to see and yes we will have many hostas for sale”

Driving Directions

*The Horn garden is located at **4504 E Crystal Lake Ave, Crystal Lake, IL 60014.** Follow I-355 or I-294 north to I-290 and Il Hwy 53 all the way to*

Lake Cook Rd where the freeway ends. Take Lake Cook Rd west about 4 miles to US Hwy 14 in Barrington. Turn right onto US 14 for about 10 miles to the ramp to IL Hwy 31 North on the right. Follow Hwy 31 north for about 1 mile to Crystal Lake Avenue and turn right. Your destination is on the left. Go past the garden to the first right which is Scott Lane where parking is permitted. For those coming from the far west use Hwy 31 or Randall Rd to Hwy 31 to get to Crystal Lake Ave.



Heinz Sunny Hosta Garden Walk
Highlights June 26



A gorgeous sunny day showcased Joe & Robin Heinz' (top left) sunny hosta garden. Robin says the key to growing great hostas in the sun is daily watering. Above John & Sharon Stancik enjoy the stuffed hosta beds. Below left, Carole Murphy, Allen Kent & Connie Kent chat in the front garden.

Photos by Mark Rekoske & Ron Asselborn



NIHS Facebook Update

by Gary Antonich

The NIHS Facebook page is now a 'Group Page' which enables a post originator to have their input aligned with the middle of the page just like an individual's Facebook page. This will make all postings visible in the order they were presented. (See above example of a recent post by Gary - Editor).

I have started showcasing pictures of hostas that I myself am contributing to the hosta auction in August. I have dug specimens of 'Ladybug', "Cloudburst", 'Centerfold', 'Pin Up Girl', 'Lemon Zest', 'Azuretini' and 'Celestial'. My intent is to put them into decorative pots for the auction.

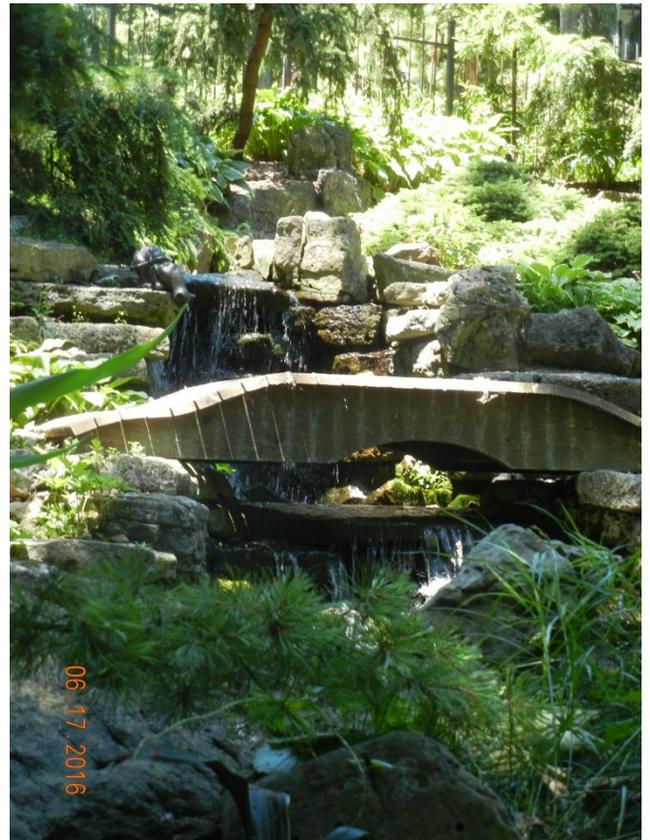
2016 AHS National Hosta Convention St Louis Highlights



The weather & 16 display gardens were really 'HOT' at the AHS convention in St. Louis this past June. A wonderful assortment of sophisticated gardens pleased the senses. Many folks left the tour gardens marveling at the hard work and sense of style of the creators / gardeners. No large sweeps of landscaper plants here! Nicely done.



*Photos by
Ron Asselborn*



Highlights of June Hosta Leaf Display

On June 4 & 5 at the Chicago Botanic Garden NIHS volunteers displayed 179 different Hosta varieties/cultivars with multiple submissions of some leaves reported Colleen Gaudins. The display was well attended by the weekend visitors. Seminars on hosta cultivation were provided by Lou Horton. The several vendors reported brisk sales.

Voting results for favorite leaf :

- #1 - June Fever
- #2 - Wheee!
- #3 - Baby Kim
- #4 - Cracker Crumbs
- #5 - Love Pat



Hosta leaves prepped and ready to show.



Above, Left to Right - People's favorite H. 'June Fever', 4 most popular leaves, & H. 'Whee!'

Below left, Rosemary Sieverin readies the mini leaves.

Below right, crowd scene from 2015 display.

2016 photos courtesy of Colleen Gaudins



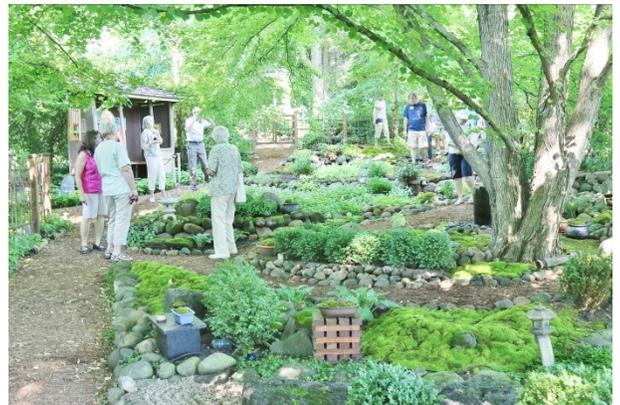


June Bus Trip Highlights Visiting SE Wisconsin Gardens



The June 25 Bus Tour was a bonanza of gardens & shopping! Forty-nine members and guests made the trip. The weather was ideal. We visited 5 private gardens, one commercial garden and the historic Cedar Creek Settlement. There were many shopping opportunities in Cedarburg and plants were purchased at two of the gardens as well as at the garden center. The luggage compartment was crammed with our purchases when we returned after a long day in hostadom.

Mark Rekoske *Photos above & right by Andy Campbell*



The Sievert 'moss & Japanese' garden was first on the schedule and high on many attendees favorites list.

'Below - 'Wonder' in the Sievert 'moss garden'. Photo by Mike Kraus



June Bus Trip Highlights
Visiting SE Wisconsin Gardens
continued



Above & right - Chuck Steele greeted tour participants and to help insure we could see all his garden's nooks & gems.



Below & left - Jack Barta's garden provided a relaxing garden entrance and many buying opportunities with beds showcasing his wonderful mature hostas.



*Photos
by Andy
Campbell*



June Bus Trip Highlights
Visiting SE Wisconsin Gardens
continued



Ken Hosale's garden was spectacular. Folks wished for more time to ask questions. Ken with Mark Rekoske, right. Hosale garden pics above & left.



The Henricks' garden was all about buying hostas - pics below.

Photos by Andy Campbell



HOSTA HAPPENINGS

MEN - And the women that train them!

By Jayne Christiani

Just kidding! But let's face it, 90% of the people that are gardening are women. Okay, maybe 80/20. Which makes perfect sense if you think about it. Women are the ones that want to beautify their homes, picking the right furniture, the right colours, the right accessories... and that includes the outside. So how do we get the men in our lives interested in what we are doing in the gardens? Oh, they will cut and trim the lawns and do some weeding if we ask them nicely. But how do we get them interested in the plants, especially our beloved hostas?

Spring has finally sprung and we have been out in the gardens, looking for the little noses under the debris left as a result of the winter. We've hopefully cleaned up our beds by now and are anxiously looking for new growth. The winter was a hard one for plants in Central Ontario... warm, cold, warm, cold. As I was out cleaning one of the beds on the weekend, I came across "Rainforest Sunrise." I've had it maybe four or five years. This winter it had heaved right out of the ground. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that it was hardy enough to survive, but I saw no sign of growth. (Heavy sigh!) Regardless, this is an exciting time of year for me. It's almost as if my babies have left home and one by one, are returning to bring me joy. After decades of gardening, I still get so thrilled with the signs of growth and the wonder of Mother Nature. This is the reason why we pour over websites, why we make the trek from garden centre to garden centre, why we seek out the latest and greatest. Because come spring, we get such a thrill to see the return of our beloved children, knowing that their beauty will bring us nothing but joy as they grow and mature over the coming season. This is what gardening is all about. In a previous article, I touched on theme gardens, but I think this

requires more clarification. There are so many hostas available and most of us buy them as they grab our attention at the garden centres.

Or if you are like me and have OCD (Obsessive Colour Disorder) you have to have them all. But once you hit 100 or so, the inclination is to try to put some order to the chaos. At least that has been my experi-



H. Lakeside 'Butterball'

ence ... like I said ... OCD! My first hosta gardens were started in memory of two beloved Cairn terriers that had passed away within three months of each other. We have a lovely stand of honey locust trees, where the ashes of the dogs are buried beneath two small concrete benches. The hostas were a result of wanting to beautify that area. And frankly, prior to living in this house, our other yard had south exposure and growing hostas was next to impossible. Now, finally, my passion for these lovely plants could be fed.

And so I started buying hostas and even though I

continued on next page

HOSTA HAPPENINGS

MEN - And the women that train them!

continued

kept track of the names and where they were planted, (I've always made charts of my gardens) if it was a hosta that I didn't have, I bought it. Within a few years, I moved all my Lakeside hostas to one area. I now have around 60 of them, and a few of the sports of some of the Lakesides are in that garden as well. I'm really liking the Foxfire series and have started another area for that group. I try to keep all the ones with people's names in one area... Rebecca, Janet, Timothy, Steffie. You get the drift! If you are looking for a theme and don't really know which direction you want to take, check out Don Rawson's website, www.hostalists.org. There are 60+ suggestions for theme gardens. I guarantee that you will find something there that piques your interest.

Or, if you have always had an affinity to a certain hybridizer, for example, Mary Chastain's Lakeside series, that is certainly another area to explore. As I'm sitting here reading this back, I'm realizing that not everyone wants a theme. They just want hostas. GREAT! Go for it! You can't go wrong with the beauty and growing performance of these amazing plants. Very few of them are finicky. Dig a hole, plant them, and watch them go!

So, back to the men. My own husband has finally stopped calling the hostas "your flowers". He finally gets that they are plants. Our final breakthrough was the day we had visitors to the gardens and he actually remembered the name of one of the hostas without looking at the tag. The fact that he remembered 'Striptease' is a

whole other conversation. What interests your partner? Cars? Sports? Science fiction? Bring home hosta



H. 'Captain Kirk'

Recycling for Mother Earth

By June Vandervest

Imagine the trash that 49 Bus Trip troupers can generate in 12 hours. More than six large garbage bags!

These bags of garbage were collected on the bus by June Vandervest & helpers and then sorted and condensed into ½ bag of actual trash. Not going into the landfill was an entire 30 gallon garbage bin full of plastic water bottles, containers and snack wrappers, as well as 8 aluminum cans that will all be recycled.

'Captain Kirk' and note the interest in his eyes as you tell your man the name of it. Mark my words, he will ask where you planted it and when you are out watering the gardens the next morning, he will join you with his morning coffee in hand and casually meander over to the plant. Add a few more... 'Battle Star', 'Captain's Adventure', 'Starship' ... you got him! He's hooked, now reel him in. Mention a few others that you would like to get, and ask his opinion. There are lots of pictures on-line to pique his interest. Before you know it, he'll be out there tending to those babies and consider them his. Okay, okay, in a perfect world this could work. But at the end of the day, when all is said and done, being out in the garden is your "MY TIME." Do you really want your man out there with you?

Reprinted from the Ontario Hosta Society newsletter, Summer 2016

Jeff Miller: Hybridizer's Perspective*Winter Scientific Meeting 2012 by Reldon Ramsey**Part 2 of 2**Jeff Miller
& Hosta
'Giantland
Mother's
Love'**Continued from previous newsletter*

Scapes are harvested when the first pods are older than two months since the last pods formed also need two months to mature. "We wait until the pods are just starting to open." They are placed in brown paper bags labeled with the mother plant and stored on Jeff's boat to finish drying. "I'm too busy. I can't fish anymore." Seed cleaning is a learning process. "It's really important to make sure that this is the envelope, this is the seed, this is the cross. Without that information if you're going to an f2 or an f3 to try to develop something more, you're struggling a little bit." Jeff planted his 2011 seeds on December 1st – later than his usual starting date – for several reasons. When seeds were started earlier, the seedlings grew too big before the temperature was warm enough to move them outside. "At the end I've got 5,000 seedlings – there's so much humidity in my basement. Just trying to keep these things alive... It's a whole lot more like work instead of fun so I started them later." "The first year I grew seedlings I ended up keeping 1,000, and out of that I've kept 50 to this point. Nothing's named yet."

After the seeds are cleaned, packaged, and labeled, they go into the freezer. Jeff uses 7 oz. plastic cups (with three drainage holes) for planting because it works well to keep the crosses separated, and the cups fit perfectly into 32-cell trays. He has tried planting directly into the cells, but found it difficult to keep the seeds in the right cells. Crosses are written on the cups they are planted in. He uses Grower's Select Seed Germinating Mix that has been sterilized with boiling water. "I've got friends that don't do anything, and they have great luck, too. I do it just to be cautious. "The trays are placed on heating pads at 78°F in the dark for 10 days. "The heat really

helps the germination process."

When seeds begin germinating, they go under lights. Not all seeds are viable or germinate well. "Even if I can only get one seedling out of that cross, I'm happy." Jeff culls, as he up-cups seedlings into individual 7 oz. cups with Grower's Select Professional Growers Mix. To make watering and misting the seedlings easier, Jeff made a watering tool from easy-to-find parts that can connect to any sink or garden hose. It has significantly cut down the time he spends watering. He bottom waters and fertilizes with half-strength Scotts MiracleGro Tomato Fertilizer each watering. The fertilizer is mixed in a 35 gallon trash can with a submersible garden pump. The inside of the trash can is marked in 5 gallon increments. He only mixes the amount of fertilizer needed each watering when the seedlings are small. "At this point 90% are gone – they're in the garbage. You just can't grow them all. You're really trying for the different – the best of the best."

If he likes the cross with a streaked pod parent, but doesn't get any streaked seedlings he will keep a couple of the blue or yellow seedlings. "I try to keep all my yellows." Showing a picture of the huge number of first year seedlings he's kept after culling, Jeff said, "My partner has just as many seedlings that she keeps. We grow a lot of seeds and keep a lot of seedlings."

Showing H. 'Blue Mouse Ears' seedlings, Jeff commented, "I use H. 'Blue Mouse Ears' a lot. The flower is very delicate. You can't hardly touch it, and it falls off in your hand. So you make the cross, and to put the tag on it, you've got to be just SO gentle with cinching the

Continued next page

Jeff Miller: Hybridizer's Perspective

continued



*H. 'Giantland
Mother's
Day'*

tag a little bit (or) that flower will fall off. The seedlings from H. 'Blue Mouse Ears' or the H. 'Blue Mouse Ears' pollen is amazing. Thick substance on anything you put to it."

Talking about the genetics Jeff showed a two year old H. 'Blue Angel' seedling next to a quarter. "You see the quarter. You see the size. And to me this is what's intriguing about growing hosta seeds. This is the genetic thing that just interests me SO much. How can H. 'Blue Angel' being just an unbelievable great big huge blue plant give us something like this? Land of the Giants."

Showing several pictures of the subtly streaked H. 'Azure Snow' seedlings he'd mentioned earlier, Jeff remarked, "I put them in the ground and there was no streaking on them at all, and they were pretty good-sized when I put them in there. You can see the dark green and the light green. If I had not kept those seedlings, I would have never known that that did that. "This is a seedling that I just started noticing this year. It's just a real minty green and that is a cross of H. 'Justice' x H. 'Nancy Gill'. There's no streaking in it, but REAL white backs."

In his seedling beds, he plants seedlings in rows of the same pod parent. A label with the pollen parent is placed in the roots. Later as plants are culled from the row, Jeff removes the pollen parent label and notes in his records that he wasn't happy with the results of the cross. "On the culling process, what I've noticed that between the third and fourth years, the characteristics really come into play on plants. I want to give them enough time, but... I need the garden space for other things so when it's time to cull, I cull. If ifs got some merit, I keep it." Jeff showed a hosta that he had seen at the Stegeman's. "Every single leaf has this palmated (look). They said when it opened it tore, but actually that's veining going up, and I would love to use this and cross it to

itself. To me if you could get a hosta leaf that was palmated, that would be really, really neat." Dave Stegeman said, "We'll see if it does it again this year." "Exactly."

"That one is actually a cross of H. 'Fickle Blue Genes' x H. 'U.S. Grant' that's starting to get the H. 'U.S. Grant' leaf on it. Here's a H. 'Spilt Milk' seedling. It has unbelievable substance. I think I grew about 5000 seeds for one, but it's a nice plant. One of the seedlings – the ripples are super thick. Just look at the ripples in this thing. Those ripples are 'this' (3") deep." "Right now after all the culling, I've probably got about 11,000 seedlings in my garden. Nothing is named or anything. You get a little partial to them when they're you're 'babies'." "I do want to get them out on the market. I want to make sure it's worthy. It's credible. I don't want to just put anything out there. So I really try to take the personality out of a plant and look and critique it as a garden worthy plant. Bob talked a lot about that today which was an unbelievable talk." "About the three-year stage, I start culling really heavy, and I just keep a couple of the best of each cross to see which one is going to get me what I want."

As he showed a picture of himself with hybridizing friends from the Hosta Seed Growers Forum, Jeff said, "The best thing about hybridizing is the great people you get to meet. In the hybridizers, we're a family. We all strive to do the same thing, we help each other out. In the olden days, I heard that everybody kept all the secrets to themselves, they didn't talk a lot. We want our secrets out. We want to be able to help each other. And in turn that helps me and everybody else too. The greatest thing is the people. The people are UNbelievable!"
Reprinted courtesy of Russ O'Harra Hosta Society, April 2012 .

2016 MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA CONVENTION

Hosted by Illinois Prairie Hosta Society in Champaign

July 7-9, 2016



The Illinois Prairie Hosta Society is proud to host the 'Grand Prairie Hostas' 2016 Midwest Regional Hosta Convention in Champaign, Illinois, July 7-9, 2016. The convention location is the Hawthorn Suites, 101 Trade Centre Drive, Champaign, IL 61820. The convention includes all the expected activities such as national vendors, live auctions, garden tours, banquet, hospitality suite, and optional garden

tours on Sunday. New events include a Thursday evening Wine and Cheese party, educational seminars on Friday and Saturday.

2016 CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

THURSDAY: The convention begins on Thursday when the vendors open. Only a short distance from the convention hotel, enjoy a wine and cheese party in the adjacent gardens of a *hostaholic*.

FRIDAY: Friday features garden tours and several educational seminars as well as the seed growers show. The vendor area is open to attendees and the public all afternoon so come early for the best selection. During evening cocktails enjoy the dinner followed by the live auction. The evening concludes in the hospitality suite.

SATURDAY: Saturday begins with garden tours. After lunch you can return to the hotel with time to relax, visit the vendors, attend educational seminars and the seed growers show, and get ready for the convention banquet. The evening concludes in the hospitality suite.

SUNDAY: Before leaving on Sunday, take optional tours of beautiful private gardens or the University of Illinois' Arboretum with Idea Garden, National Trial Gardens, Japan House, and Illinois Prairie's National Hosta Display Garden. All in Champaign.

2016 CONVENTION VENDORS



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Made in the Shade Gardens

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Peggy's Flowers The Papercrete Potter

Jack's Plants

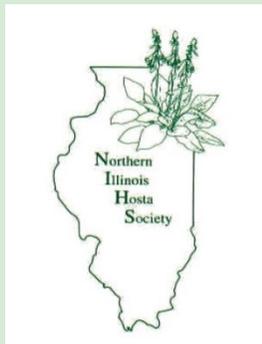
Champaign Artists Barb Dalenberg-The Artists Gallery & Beth Darling – Beth Darling Studio

Land of the Giants Hosta Farm

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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.



These could be your treasures at the upcoming **Aug 14 Hosta & Companion Plant Auction in Hinsdale**. Plan to participate in the fun, donate some plants and bring some gardening friends!

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