

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

central illinois hosta society
www.cihshostaclub.org

july 2009
volume 15, issue 5

president's letter

(Top) Lee Garden,
(Middle) Eckhoff Garden,
(Bottom) Deitrich Garden

June was a busy hosta month and I need to say thank you to so many people for their contributions to CIHS. First, I want to recognize **Sue Eckhoff** for planning the bus trip to Wisconsin. The bus was completely filled with plants! Next, I want to say thank you to **John Machens** for organizing our hosta garden walk. The nine gardens that were part of the walk were incredible, absolutely gorgeous! But, despite the rainy Sunday, we had over 200 people purchase tickets.

CIHS thanks the following people for graciously having their garden featured this year: **Debbie Dietrich, Michael Higgins & Lynette Schurtz, Sandy Svob, Don & Cynthia Glover, Dan Callahan, Jalayne & Bob Lapke, Carolyn & Don Jones, Sue Eckhoff and Jan Lee.** A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered at the gardens to stamp tickets and sell our club hostas. I want to give another thank you to **Don and Cynthia Glover** for hosting the June meeting just several days before the hosta garden walk! We have posted photos of the bus trip and garden walk on our web site, www.cihshostaclub.org. **Al Kuhlman** is responsible for keeping our web site up to date. Lastly, we are looking for new board members next year. Contact a board member if you are interested in volunteering, and please say "yes" when we ask you help out. See you in Carol Koch's garden later this month!

Golda Ewalt, CIHS President

july meeting

Tuesday, July 21, 6:30 pm
Carol Koch's Garden
456 S. Montana, Morton

First of all our yard is small and you will see that I've tried to pack a lot into a small space. We moved into our home in 1987. The yard was small and the backyard was surrounded by a honeysuckle hedge. It took about three years for me to eliminate the hedge—one stretch one year, and another stretch the next. In 1995, our youngest son headed off to college and it was then I earnestly plunged into flower gardening—had to have something to nurture. Initially I resented the shady area of the yard. I had grown up with sun garden and that is all I really knew. In 1997, I was working on my 30th class reunion with Deb Dietrich and had the chance to see her beautiful shade garden. I went back home inspired that I could do something with my shady area. The shade garden is now my favorite area. One feature that is unusual is the mound between the two silver maple trees (yes, ugh). Many people are startled to see so much dirt piled on top of tree roots. It was piled up in 1986, when an addition was added to the house. When we moved in it held junipers, iris, and ground covers. When I entered the hosta craze, I steadily began replacing items on the mound with hosta--this has created a unique way to show off the hostas. A few weeks ago the neighbors behind us replaced their grey weathered fence with a white vinyl one. We are still adjusting to the new feel to the garden. In July, daylilies should be in full bloom, so for those who enjoy sun gardens in addition to hosta, I hope you will like your stop in my garden. **Notice:** To provide adequate time for viewing Host Gardens, each Garden will be open to visitors ½ hour early at 6:00, while the meeting starts at 6:30. **Directions:** From I-74 take the southbound Morton Avenue into Morton. Turn left on to Jackson (near McDonald's). Going through Main, turn right onto Missouri Avenue. Turn left onto East Jefferson Avenue and turn right onto Montana, proceeding to 456 S. Montana Avenue



hosta of the month

Hosta 'Hadspen Sapphire' (often misspelled as sapphire) A small hosta, it is a cross of *Hosta sieboldiana* 'Elegans' and 'Kabitan' introduced by Eric Smith. Medium sized, leaves with a luminescent gold color changing to chartreuse by mid summer. Lavender flowers in August and September. A real splash in the garden...this plant will knock your socks off in the spring. It has some of the brightest yellow-golden leaves in early spring that change to chartreuse by summer. Lavender flowers later in the season.

Hosta 'Holly's Dazzler' (R. H. Benedict 1987) A medium sized hosta (24" x 15") Large 8" leaves are rounded, slightly shiny and medium green with a rippled or piecrust edge. Deep lavender, fragrant flowers bloom in August.

Hosta 'Tenryu' A large Striking vase-shaped hosta with upright powder blue leaves. It will have six foot flower scapes, bearing pale lavender flowers in mid July.

Hosta 'Tom Schmid' Large (Schmid) Great sport from *H. 'Krossa Regal'*...long leaves have a blue center surrounded by a wide white border. Substance is very good and the margin is slightly rippled. Clump is topped with lavender flowers.

Hosta 'Prairie Sky' Medium (Hansen) Wonderful hybrid from *H. 'Blue Jay'* with nicely cupped powder-blue leaves topped with pale lavender flowers in midsummer. This hosta really makes a tight clump.

Hosta 'Tongue Twister' (*Donated by Bob Solberg*) Small, (8" X 18") With its dark green leaves that twist upward out of the clump, this great little hosta looks as fresh in October as it does in May. It has great substance, rich color, and is cute to boot. The light purple scapes produce light lavender flowers in September and light purple pods in October.

Douglas Drenckpohl

welcome new members!!!

Cindy Worner
Dick and Patty Young
Ron & Judy Rosenow
Mary Hodgen
Teresa Kelly
Roberta Koscielski
Nancy McMullen
Mary Lou Price

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

It's time now to have fun with our hosta. At our **August Meeting** at Luthy Botanical Gardens, we are going to have our own "leaf show". Not the formal kind but the fun kind!

We are looking for the biggest leaf, the smallest leaf, the ugliest leaf (no nematodes, slug damage, or disease – just an ugly growing leaf), the bluest leaf, the most yellow one, and finally, one with a yellow leaf edge and a yellow center (ask Ella, she says there are only 9 registered hosta of this kind). Prizes will be awarded and the judges will be our education committee. If there is a tie between leaves, the judges will grade the leaves on their condition. Just wrap your leaf in a paper towel and we will label them with the owner's name. Any questions contact Kathy Allen 645-7908.

2009 meetings & events

Tuesday, August 18, 6:30 pm

Luthy Botanical Garden

2218 N. Pospect, at corner of Gift & Prospect; Peoria

Tuesday, September 15, 6:30 pm

Annual Banquet

(note earlier time)

Speaker: Mark Zilis

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Central Illinois Hosta Society
\$10/year, form on back cover

Midwest Reg. Hosta Society
\$20/2 years

Send dues to:

Pete Postelwaite, Treasurer
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Kildeer, IL 60047

American Hosta Society
\$30 individual, \$57/2 years
\$34 family, \$62/2 years

Send dues to:

Sandie Markland
AHS Membership Secretary
Post Office Box 7539
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

Cihs Banquet

The 2009 annual banquet will be held Tuesday September 15th at the Kickapoo Creek Winery (6605 N. Smith Road) in Edwards, Illinois.



This year's keynote speaker is Mark Zilis. Mark is owner and founder of Q&Z Nursery in Rochelle, Illinois. He is most noted for his tissue culture work with hosta and introducing over 200 new hosta; some of which are: 'Frosted Mouse Ears', 'Holy Mouse Ears', 'Pineapple Upside-down Cake', 'Victory', 'Sweet Home Chicago' and 'Summer Breeze'. He is a recipient of the American Hosta Society's Alex J. Summers Distinguished Merit Award,

In addition, Mark is a noted author. His work includes *The Hosta Handbook* and his latest, *The Hostapedia*. He will have copies of his new book available for sale. This is a huge book, a hosta encyclopedia, which is the most definitive work on hosta, in print and a must for every collector and gardener. It's on everyone's wish list.

The Banquet cost is \$35 for CIHS members and \$40 for non-members. The cost includes a dinner buffet, the program and a very special gift hosta from Mark's breeding program. Dinner will be served at 6:30, with a cash bar available at 5:45. After a brief meeting, the program will begin at 7:30. Sign up started at the June meeting. Please make checks payable to CIHS. Contact Shirley Metz for more information at 309.263.7103 or jametz@comcast.net

Note: University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners will receive continuing education credit for attending the Zilis program.

Did You Know

Hosta

- Walters Gardens Inc. (tissue-culture lab & wholesale nursery) donates 25 cents for every plant sold of *H. 'Remember Me'* to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Contributions have exceeded \$27,000.

- Grown in more shade, hosta leaves will be bigger, yet fewer.
- Hostas will grow faster in the sun vs. shade if given sufficient water. They may not look good though.
- Hostas grow best in moist, well-drained, highly organic soils with a pH between 5.5 and 7.5.
- Leaf mold (shredded decomposing leaves) makes excellent mulch, yet larger; slowly decaying heavy wet leaves provides fungus, bacteria, and insects a perfect environment to grow. *Editor's Note: I make leaf mould by running the leaves through a mower once or twice.*
- All forms of decaying mulch should be kept away from hosta crowns to avoid crown and/or petiole rot.
- According to Bob Solberg, Green Hill Farm, hosta leaves can be tested by most State Labs to determine the amount of nutrients that actually are available in the plant, not just in the soil.
- Dividing hostas is a choice, not a requirement.
- When dividing a hosta, if one or more of the divisions do not have enough roots to support the plant, characterized by droopy leaves and/or petioles, it is advisable to cut the top half of the leaves off.
- The first hosta to be granted a Patent was *H. 'Royal Standard'* dated January 19, 1965.
- Hostas are completely dormant during the winter.

Trees

- Trim oak trees in the winter, not the summer, to avoid the incurable deadly oak wilt disease.
- Although it may take years, adding a few extra inches of soil under oak trees could eventually completely suffocate / kill the tree. Decaying mulch does not have the same effect as the heavier soil.
- During prolonged drought, watering trees is more important than watering lawns. Lawns can go dormant, trees can not.
- When trees are hit by mowers, weed-eaters, etc., permanent damage to the tree will likely occur. Create a mulch ring around all trees grown in grassy areas.
- The canopy of an ash tree infested with Emerald Ash Borer begins to thin above infested portions of the trunk and major branches because the borer destroys the water and nutrient conducting tissues under the bark. Heavily infested trees exhibit canopy die-back usually starting at the top of the tree. One-third to one-half of the branches may die in one year. Most of the canopy will be dead within 2 years of when symptoms are first observed. **continued on page 4**

Sometimes ash trees push out sprouts from the trunk after the upper portions of the tree dies. Although difficult to see, the adult beetles leave a "D"-shaped exit hole in the bark, roughly 1/8 inch in diameter, when they emerge in June.

- The adult beetle emerald ash borer is dark metallic green in color, 1/2 inch-long and 1/8 inch wide.
- The EAB is thought to have arrived in ash wood used for stabilizing cargo in ships or for packing or crating heavy consumer products.

Reuse and Recycle Plastic Plant Containers

Until plastic plant containers are totally replaced by degradable containers, we all should consider ways of keeping them out of our landfills. Plastic containers take up substantial space in landfills. They do not readily decompose and remain intact for many years.

More and more plastic containers are marked on the bottom with a recycling symbol. Inside the symbol is a number from 1-7 (see examples below). The numbers represent the type of resin used to make the container.



Area options to consider instead of placing plant containers out with the garbage include:

- Luthy Botanical Garden (Peoria Park District) recycles plastic horticulture pots. Homeowners can drop off, for reuse, 6", 1 gallon or 2 gallon pots. Pots should be in good condition and loose dirt. Bob Streitmatter is the Luthy manager and also our CIHS Newsletter Editor.
- Illinois Central Collage (ICC) (East Peoria) reuses nursery pots, especially the 1 quart to 2 gallon sizes. They need to be in good condition, without cracks, to be useful. No cell packs (thin inserts that typically house four or six plants) or the type of pots that annuals and vegetables come. Acceptable containers can be dropped-off at the ICC Land Lab building at any time. If no one is around (such as on weekends), just leave them next to the large garage door on the south side of the building. If you want to call first, call Glenn Herold's cell, 369-2383.

- Hornbaker Gardens (Princeton) only accepts and reuses containers that were originally purchased from them, including pots in which perennials, trees and shrubs were bought. Cleaned pots are certainly appreciated, but not required.
- Hoerr Nursery (Peoria) accepts all sizes and brands of pots except for cell packs. Pots that match current production pots may be reused. Most of the rest are sorted and stored until being sent to a pot manufacturer.
- Green View Nursery (Dunlap and Normal) serves as a drop-off location for plastic pot recycling. Large bins are designated for various types of plastic included in the recycling program. Plastic pots can be dropped off during normal business hours. All containers should be clean, free of wire and separated by type of plastic. For more information, call 243-7761.
- Washington Greenhouse (Washington) accepts the return of plant trays (hold cell packs), but not actual plant containers.
- A number of gardeners reuse containers in a variety of ways, including division / repotting for plant sales, growing seedlings and protecting plants from late spring frosts (placed upside-down over plant). Large pots can be cut to form cylindrical root barriers. Sturdy pots can be used as bases to elevate ornamental potted plants, or to support a plank of wood for low shelving. Use your imagination!

I am aware of two CIHS members that at least on occasion gladly accept used pots (there are likely others).

- Debbie Dietrich would like approx. quart to gallon size pots for her annual plant sale.
- Sandy Svob would much appreciate one and two gallon size pots for her annual sale.
- Some non-profit organizations and churches may accept donated pots.
- I have even seen used plant containers being sold on eBay!

The above is not intended to be a complete list. If not listed, please ask your preferred nursery, garden center, or home center if they accept used plant containers.

Regardless of whether the above are reusing or recycling, they are providing a service that reduces the amount of plastics entering our landfills. Unless stated otherwise, drop-offs should be during normal business hours. If there are any questions regarding what is and isn't acceptable, please ask. **continued on page 5**

Outside the Peoria area:

- Chicago Botanic Garden has a reuse program and depends on volunteer labor to clean pots. They also save up surplus plastic pots to be shipped by the truckload to a firm for recycling. On June 6 & 7 of this year, the Chicago Botanic Garden sponsored a Plant Container Recycling Program. Number 2, #4, #5, and #6 garden pots, containers, polystyrene cell packs and trays were accepted. With success, hopefully this will become an annual event.
- Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis reportedly operates the only large-scale program in the nation for gardeners to recycle pots. The garden has its own granulator machine to grind up the pots. It only takes polystyrene #6, high-density polyethylene #2 and polypropylene #5 containers. The containers are processed into 2 x 6-inch plastic lumber in 8-foot lengths. Perfect for the construction of raised beds, plastic lumber is a durable alternative to CCA-treated lumber. It is completely waterproof, will not rust, is not affected by ants, termites, or other insects. Plastic lumber is low maintenance and never needs to be primed, painted, or sealed. Best of all, the use of plastic lumber saves trees and is 100% recyclable. See <http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Hortline.asp?code=3938>

There are an ever-increasing number of options to reduce the amount of plant containers being sent to landfills. Collectively, gardeners around the world can have a significant impact. Please do your part and encourage others to do so also.

By Ray Rodgers, CIHS

the red-leafed hosta

History

For as long as most hostaphytes can remember, the 'Holy Grail' in hostadom has been the illusive red-leafed hosta. At every hosta gathering the recurring 'Is there ever going to be a red leafed hosta?' question was always asked of those in the know. Those with the background in the field of botany and genetics had always issued the same disheartening answer, "No. It's not in the genes."

Time has muted that answer into a —Probably someday. □ To that end Dr. Bob Solberg spoke to the Midwest Regional Hosta Society's Winter

Scientific Meeting in Chicago on January 17th, 2009, on this topic, reviewing plants from the past and present that could be doorways to the future.

The plant first whetting interest in the red hosta dream originated with Herb Benedict. This particular cultivar expressed a pink or red blade coloration only to have the color fade with the introduction of warmer temperatures. Tony Avent has a plant with red veins and partial blade coverage in red. It was the rage at a recent national leaf show winning best sport/seedling. Unfortunately, the blade collapses with the advent of warm weather.

Marketed this past year is a cultivar, *H. 'Purple Haze'* with purple coloration radiating about a third of the way into the blade starting at the petiole. Again, warming temperatures create a coloration fade leaving a common green blade. Next year, Green Hill, Bob's nursery will have a plant or two available for the buying public that expresses red or purple colors at certain times during the growing season. Each has colored veins with the addition of an almost visible red outlining of the blade. It is Bob's hope that with more people having plants based on his hybridization successes expressing the beginnings of red, some lucky seed grower will create a plant with red leaves completing the search for a red-leafed hosta and proving the adage that even a blind hog can find an acorn, occasionally.

The pathway to a red hosta

The colors being sought by hybridizers are basically any color outside what is already in the color palate at present: white, green, yellow, and blue (a wax distortion of green). Other colors present come from specific species with red and purples in their petioles. These colors, although contrasting and desirable, are hidden by the plant leaves. Getting those colors onto the hosta leaf (the blade) is what hybridizers are attempting to achieve. What these colors are and what they do in the plant structure is where problems develop.

The purples and reds come from a pigment, anthocyanin, created or found during photosynthesis and placed by the plant into the food holding areas called vacuoles within each cell. They are produced during the growth stage of the vegetative plant parts (leaves and stems) in spring. They develop when a plant receives the most light (before tree leaves develop) combined with cool temperatures. The plant produces these colors as a sun screen during these high light periods. **continued on page 6**

As temperatures increase and shade increases, the need for these pigments decreases and the plant stops anthocyanin production and the colors fade, at least on the blade.

The problem mentioned in the above paragraph becomes the starting point for the hybridizer. Knowing these colors are already placed or 'located' in specific plant parts, i.e. the bud sheathes, spring leaf tips, petioles, scapes, pods, veins, and petioles, gives a starting point for placing sustained color on the blade. The hybridizer's task develops into finding genes that will locate their anthocyanin into color-holding vacuoles on the blade from these mentioned plant parts. This is accomplished by the age-old, time consuming process of crossing plants using Mendel's laws of dominant and recessive genes. Finding that correct combination is the trick.

To that end Bob stated that good results have shown up in his breeding program after the second cross, using siblings, but the third generation starts to show less vigor stemming from too much red to sustain vigor. This has created a need for out-crossing, using a plant outside the original cross, to sustain plant vigor. This example continues to illustrate that the locator gene of dominance is resisting color on the blade. At some point a breakthrough will probably occur when a hybrid will be produced that is able to express pigment on the blade in a viable plant. Therefore, red-leaf hosta in the near future may well be a plant that produces a red leaf in spring that fades as summer temperatures increase yet remains a viable garden plant.

By Bob Solberg and reprinted from the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Newsletter, Spring 2009



Ray Rogers, Don Glover and Al Kuhlman at the July meeting at the Glover's garden

the library

If you would like to check out a magazine or book from the library, make out a check in the amount listed next to each book. This will be held as a deposit, which will be returned when the book(s) are returned. One month is generally the checkout time; however, they can be renewed for an additional month. See Ella Maxwell, librarian, at the meetings or call her at 309.444.3758.

hosta finders & hosta adventure

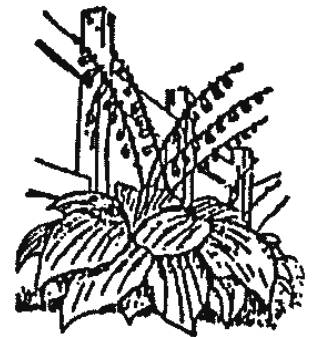


Both will be available at clearance prices at the meetings...while supplies last

Hosta Finder, the 14th edition, lists the complete offerings of 55 nurseries and growers.

New Hosta Adventure! It is a very good reference with 32 total pages, and color throughout! Your journey into the world of hosta is incomplete without it. Sections include: Hosta background, Landscaping, Floral arrangements, Hosta Buying, Planting and growing, Propagation, Pests and Diseases, New hostas, Hosta societies and a list of other resources.

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Follow the signs.

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august newsletter deadline:
july 20th, 2009

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