



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

central illinois hosta society
www.cihshostaclub.org

march 2009
volume 15, issue 1

president's letter

Welcome to the 2009 Central Illinois Hosta Society (CIHS) season! We have some changes and big plans in place for this year. Here is an update:

- The potluck will be held inside this year. Let it snow or rain and we will be dry and warm in Morton indoors!
- We celebrate the 20th CIHS anniversary this year and in April Mary Pratt will talk about the history of CIHS. Mary is one of the charter members who have contributed so much over the years!
- A great bus trip is being planned for you – we will be heading to Wisconsin with a stop at the Flower Factory. This is one of the premiere nurseries in the Midwest!
- An outstanding banquet speaker is lined up! Yes, Mark Zilis, will be our guest speaker. His new book is out now! The book is a huge compilation of hostas, pictures and interesting hosta information!
- Check out the updated CIHS website—www.cihshostaclub.org Al Kuhlman has done a fabulous job in overseeing the renovation!
- We are selling Solberg hostas on the Garden Walk as our club fundraiser instead of hosting the annual auction. The auction will return next year!

The board is working to make 2009 a great hosta year for you. This is just a glimpse of what is ahead for us. A hosta event to consider attending is the Midwest Regional Convention, held in Champaign-Urbana in June. John Machens is our Garden Walk Chair. We have set the date for the walk, it will be held June 20 and 21. I know he will be asking for garden helpers, so please say yes when he asks! I can't wait to see all of you on March 17th to officially kick off the hosta season!

Golda Ewalt, CIHS President

march meeting

Tuesday, March 17, 6:30 pm

“Unique and Unusual Shade Plants”
Morton Park Building/Freedom Hall
349 W. Birchwood Street, Morton

Ella Maxwell will explore “Unique and Unusual Shade Plants.” Bring more texture, interest and color with companion plants for your hosta gardens. From Coral Bells to Toad Lily, there are so many options for the shade garden. Ella's presentation will place a special emphasis or focus upon the genus Epimedium.

Directions: From interstate 155 take the Birchwood Exit, east, into Morton. The Birchwood Exit is the first exit south of the I-74 and I-155 junction. Morton Park will be off to your left and the building is at 349 W. Birchwood.

community projects

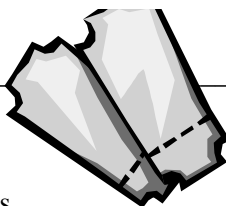
The board is requesting proposals from the membership for community projects. Throughout the years, CIHS has been involved with many wonderful community projects and we want to continue our commitment to the community. If you have any potential projects, please send a brief proposal to one of the officers.

In Memoriam

One of our recent, past board members, Art Engelbrecht, passed away this winter. Art, and his wife Marilyn, served on the board and were members of the Hospitality Committee. Our sympathies go out to Art's family.

hosta of the month

Due to the complexity and uncertainties of forcing hosta this early, we will have some very cool garden prizes



garden walk

This year the CIHS Garden Walk will be held June 20-21st.
John Machin???, Garden Walk Chair

Also, included with the walk, we will conduct a plant sale, featuring some very nice hosta from Solberg's Green Hill Farm. Of course, CIHS Members will get an opportunity to shop early; stay tuned for more details. The cultivars include: 'Baby Blue Eyes,' 'Barbara May,' 'Corkscrew,' 'Dragon's Eye,' 'Fat Cat,' 'Friends,' 'Frost Giant,' 'Lime Smoothie,' 'Margie's Angel,' 'Ocean Isle,' and 'Strawberry Banana Smoothie' (**exclusive, sold only to clubs!!**)

dues reminder

If your address label says 2008, this will be your last newsletter. It is time to pay dues for 2009. If it says 2009, 2010, 2011, etc., you are paid up through that year. You can pay dues at the March meeting or fill out the membership form (see back) and mail it. Remember!!!! Dues are \$10, for both single and family memberships.

2009 meetings & events

Tuesday, March 17, 6:30 pm

"Unique and Unusual Shade Plants"
Morton Park Bldg./Freedom Hall
349 W. Birchwood Street, Morton

Tuesday, April 21, 6:30 pm

Annual Potluck
"The History of CIHS"
Morton Park Bldg./Freedom Hall
349 W. Birchwood Street, Morton

Tuesday, May 19, 6:30 pm

Theresa Roth
300 W. Birchwood, Morton

Saturday, June 6th

Annual bus trip

June 11-13, 2009

Midwest Regional Convention
Champaign, Illinois
mrhs2009.com

Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 pm

Don & Cynthia Glover's Garden
3320 N. Bigelow, Peoria

June 20-21

CIHS Garden Walk

June 24-27, 2009

AHS National Convention
Lansing, Michigan

Tuesday, July 21, 6:30 pm

Carol Koch's Garden
456 S. Montana, Morton

Tuesday, August 18, 6:30 pm

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

Tuesday, September 15, 6:00 pm

Annual Banquet
(note earlier time)
Speaker: T.B.A.

officers

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goldaandbob@hotmail.com

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309.243.5925
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to join:

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

Midwest Reg. Hosta Society
\$20/2 years
Send dues to:
Pete Postelwaite, Treasurer
21172 Andover Road
Kildeer, IL 60047

American Hosta Society
\$30 individual, \$57/2 years
\$34 family, \$62/2 years
Send dues to:
Sandie Markland
AHS Membership Secretary
8702 Pinnacle Rock Court
Lorton, VA 22079-3029

Hosta...Q & A



This is a feature in our newsletter; where your gardening questions will be answered as they come to us (Kay, Ella and Bob) through the mail, email or conversation. Please indicate in the email subject line that it is a garden question and not junk mail and noted below, is some contact information. We hope to hear from you soon

Kay Dye Kdye1@aol.com
Ella Maxwell ejm601@insightbb.com
Bob Streitmatter goldaandbob@hotmail.com

Q. What do the words glaucous and viridescens mean?

GLAUCOUS – a waxy coating (or bloom) producing a white to blue coloring over the plant parts, the coating is capable of rubbing or washing off especially in hot conditions.

VIRIDESCENS - possessing of leaves which begin the season lighter colored and become greener as the season advances *In addition, there are a number of other terms used frequently in describing hosta leaves... we have listed few more below.*

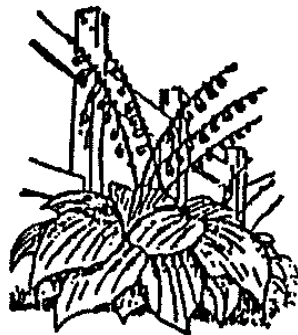
ALBESCENT – possessing leaves that begin yellow or more pigmented and become whiter as the season progresses; e.g. *H. 'Gold Standard'*.

DRAWSTRING EFFECT – the leaf distortion caused by the expansion of the interior of the leaf blade with a correspondingly

lesser expansion of the margin tissue. This usually occurs as the result from a narrow white margin and green to gold center; e.g. *H. 'Lunar Eclipse'*.

SEERSUCKERING – the gathering of a leaf between the veins giving the leaf the bubbled effect as if thread had been pulled out of a piece of material.

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Evolution of the CIHS Newsletter Header

CIHS History Trivia

Receiving my first Central Illinois Hosta Society (CIHS) newsletter in early 1995, the name / title of the publication was simply, “Central Illinois Hosta Society”.

Starting in December 1995 and running continuously through October 2000, our newsletter was entitled “Crinkled Leaf News”. Editor, Kasandra (Kass) Speerly is credited with this name.

Transitioning to a new title, the header of the March 2001 issue once again simply displayed “Central Illinois Hosta Society”.

Editors' Note: Spearheaded by Lou Holverson, President and Marilyn Walters, Newsletter Editor, a search for a new title was conducted by requesting submissions from the membership.

Following a vote by CIHS members in attendance at the March 2001 meeting, the new title, “Great Expectations, and other Hosta News” first appeared on the April 2001 issue. The new name, under the umbrella of a hosta leaf, was the creation of Debbie Dietrich.

Hosta 'Great Expectations' is a very popular hosta. Most true gardeners have a never ending supply of great expectations for their gardens. Debbie undoubtedly was searching for such a connection as she pondered an appropriate name for our newsletter.

Starting with the May 2004 newsletter, new editor Bob Streitmatter upgraded the header, providing a more professional look, without losing the integrity of the original design. Since that time, Bob has remained the newsletter editor, and on a few occasions has slightly tweaked the print type and design and added the CIHS website URL. Starting with the March 2008 newsletter, the “& other Hosta News” was omitted from the header. (*current newsletter masthead*)

Thanks to both Debbie Dietrich and Bob Streitmatter for their contributions in providing CIHS membership with a unique and professional looking “Great Expectations” newsletter header.

Additional thanks to Bob for doing such an outstanding job as newsletter editor these past five years!

By Ray Rodgers

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.

Singing the Praises of the Blues ...

The longer I grow hostas the more I love the blue ones. There is nothing in the garden that has that rich blue color, so frosty on a bright spring morning. No other hostas have the deeply ribbed texture and heavy substance that speaks of permanence and tranquility. Blue hostas create a mood of excitement in the spring and calm in the summer. They are the most regal of all.

For all their mystic qualities, blue hostas are just green hostas with wax. They are hostas that produce a white wax from their epidermal cells as part of the photosynthetic process. These cells continue to make the wax until the leaf has reached full size or "maturity." Then the process of wax production is turned off and can not be turned on again. This is why blue hostas turn green. They stop making the wax.

Most all the blue hostas we grow have *H. sieboldiana* or 'Tokudama' in their background and their ability to make the white wax comes from them. The bluest group of hostas, the "Tardianas," are a cross of 'Tardiflora' with 'Elegans'. Other hosta species produce white wax on the backs of their leaves and can be useful in the

hybridization of blue hostas. *H. hypoleuca* yielded 'Azure Snow' and 'Carolina Blue' has *H. pycnophylla* in its background. White wax on a dark green background produces the blue hostas.

Unfortunately, like all creatures, blue hostas have their genetic faults. While *H. sieboldiana* and 'Tokudama' gave them the genes to produce white wax they also gave them the genes for slow growth rate, few number of leaves produced and early dormancy. Both parents are "short season" hostas. They emerge late in the spring, flush out 3-4 leaves per shoot and bloom early. They are really designed to be three to four month plants. The creation of the "Tardianas" merged the genes of a "short season" hosta with the "long season" 'Tardiflora'. 'Tardiflora' emerges early in the spring, flushes out 3-4 leaves and blooms very late. The "Tardianas" generally then fall somewhere in between their parents in bloom time and last much longer into the season than 'Elegans'.

The "Tardianas" while very blue in color in spring have the drawback of producing only one flush of leaves. As these leaves reach maturity, both in size, (to what extent they are going to expand that season) and photosynthetic activity, they stop making the wax that makes them blue. To keep a hosta blue all season one of two things must happen. Either the hosta must produce wax all season or it must make new photosynthetically active leaves in several flushes over the summer. The first option would require the hosta to be evergreen or at least semi-evergreen and would require a major change in hosta biology. It would probably require many mutations.

The second option is obtainable. There are hostas, especially those from *H. plantaginea* that produce 3-4 flushes of foliage each year. A cross of say 'Halcyon' and *H. plantaginea* may produce a hosta that continued to make new leaves late in the summer and thus stayed blue until it flowered. 'Fragrant Blue' is probably just such a plant. It does send out multiple flushes of leaves, the new ones over the old, so that the leaves appears bluer longer. Unfortunately, it has other genetic traits that keeps it from being a great hosta. 'Bell Bottom Blues' with 'Royal Standard' in its background, is more sun tolerant but only flushes once, maybe twice.. *H. sieboldii* may be another parent to try on your blue hostas but beware, it comes with the baggage of a host of unpleasant genes.

The problem with hybridizing is that every good trait that you capture in a seedling seems to come with an unwanted one. I do not mean they are genetically linked in any way but the cute little mini always seems to have a 24-inch floppy scape. For that reason I do not use certain species in my breeding. I love the ruffling that *H. hypoleuca* gives. (Did you see Hans Hansen's article 'Neptune in Audra Wilson's Garden?'). I hate the growth rate and limited number of leaves that it gives more. I use *H. pycnophylla* instead. It brings with it poor substance and floppy scapes but I can take care of that in a generation or two.

Living here in the South, I do long for hostas that stay blue until frost however unrealistic that is. I will settle for blue hostas that bloom as late as possible and look good up until frost. 'Deane's Dream' and 'Carolina Blue' do fairly well even in bad years, 'Blue Monday', unfortunately, does not. *H. montana* types like 'Blue Angel' and 'Bodacious Blue' are pretty good as is 'Millennium' from 'Sagae'. Some "Tardianas are better than others.

I am often asked what is the bluest hosta. Frankly, I do not know. Hostas are ever changing. The first week in May it may be 'Blue Mammoth', the next week it may be 'Ultramarine' or 'Venetian Blue'. 'Blue Monday' is very blue early but fades quickly, while 'Deane's Dream' is blue longer and 'Barbara May' longer still. The "Tardianas" and their children are still the best with 'Camelot' having the most dependable blue color here.

If white wax causes a green hosta to become blue then more white wax will make a hosta bluer. Well, not exactly, it makes the hosta whiter. Blue hostas that produce heavy amounts wax like 'Powderpuff' and 'Starlight' appear to be a frosted, light blue color not a richer blue. If the border of 'Touch of Class' is any indication, richer blue colors may be achieved in blue tetraploid hostas sometime in the future.

Finally, how do we get the most "blue for the buck" out of our blue hostas? Is it all genetics or does environment play a role? We are frequently told that blue hosta prefer shade to sun. Based on their genetics, blue hostas generally need a cool, moist spot in the garden. Besides, hot sun will melt the white wax, reducing your blue hostas back to green ones again. However, any blue hosta will produce more white wax in bright sun than in total shade. Try it. Plant one clump of 'Halcyon' in a very shady location and another where it gets at least a couple hours of direct sunlight. The one in the sun will be bluer! Because of the increased direct sunlight the plant will photosynthesize at a higher rate and thus produce more white wax. This may provide your hosta with a defense mechanism to its leaves overheating since by the plant becoming blue instead of green, blue sunlight, which is higher energy than red, is reflected and not absorbed.

When placing blue hostas for the maximum effect, the trick is to try to split the difference between sun and shade. Cool morning sun is better than hot afternoon sun or even an hour or two in the middle of the day. The bottom of the garden where cool air may collect overnight is better than up against the west side of the house. A couple hours of direct sunlight will yield bluer hostas and they will recover that blue color faster than those hidden in the shade.

Now, here's a question for you. Do hostas stay bluer longer into the summer in Minnesota because it is cooler there or do they just come up that much later?

This article, originally published in *The Green Hill Gossip* in March 2005, was written by Bob Solberg of Green Hill Farm, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

2009 Midwest Regional Hosta Convention

The Illinois Prairie Hosta Society proudly hosts the 'Grand Prairie Hostas' Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Champaign, Illinois, June 11-13, 2009. (Registration Form on page 6)

The convention location is the I Hotel and Conference Center, a brand new luxury hotel and state-of-the-art conference center. The convention includes four meals, Thursday evening cocktail party, convention hosta and handbook, auctions, vendors, hosta leaf show, garden tours, raffles, educational seminars, hospitality suite, and optional golf outings on Friday and Saturday. Contact the I Hotel for room reservations at (217) 819-5000 or www.stayatthei.com and mention attendee code AHOS.

THURSDAY: The convention begins on Thursday when the vendors open. Only a short distance from the convention hotel, enjoy an alfresco cocktail party in the adjacent gardens of two hostaholics. After returning to the hotel, the evening concludes in the hospitality suite with a variety of refreshments and

FRIDAY: Friday features several educational seminars and a judge's clinic. The hosta leaf show, a major attraction, opens in the afternoon. The vendor area is open to attendees and the public all day, so come early for the best selection. During evening cocktails enjoy the silent auction, followed by dinner and the live auction. The evening concludes in the hospitality suite.

SATURDAY: Saturday begins with breakfast and a tour of six great gardens. After the garden tours the buses proceed to a local nursery for a barbeque lunch and shopping, of course! After lunch the buses return to the hotel with time to relax, visit the vendors and hosta leaf 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' Idea Garden, Japan House, and Allerton Park in nearby Monticello, Illinois.



2009 MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA CONVENTION

Hosted by
Illinois Prairie Hosta Society
June 11-13, 2009

I Hotel and Conference Center
1900 South First Street Champaign, IL 61820

1. One Form for Each Person – Please Print

Name (as you want it on your badge): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____

Publish in Convention attendee list Do not publish in Convention attendee list

2. Judges Clinic and Handbook

I will attend the Judges Clinic I - Friday, 8-11 AM. A current Judges Handbook is required.

I will download the free handbook in advance at www.hosta.org.

I will purchase the official handbook and binder at the clinic. Fee of \$10 payable at clinic.

3. Hosta Leaf Show

Check if you plan to: Judge Clerk

Check your entries in each division:

Cutleaf (Limit 25 entries) Educational Display Artistic Design
 Container Grown Hosta Non-competitive Exhibit Specialty Division
 Trough/Container for Effect

4. Auction

I will donate plants or garden items for the Friday night auction. Approximate number: _____

5. Reservations – Refunds through May 11, less \$25 processing fee

Registration Fee includes four meals: Friday banquet, Saturday breakfast, BBQ lunch, and banquet. Fee also includes: Thursday evening cocktail party, convention hosta and handbook, auction, vendors, hosta leaf show, garden tours, educational seminars and hospitality room.

Contact the I Hotel directly for room reservations at (217)819-5000 or www.stayatthei.com and mention attendee code AHOS. The group rate of \$109 plus tax is available through May 11, 2009.

Full Registration (by May 11) **\$135.00**
 Late Full Registration (after May 11) **\$160.00**
 Request vegetarian meals
 Plan to attend Thursday evening alfresco cocktail party with educational speaker.
 Send more information about optional golf outings on Friday and Saturday at an additional cost of \$65 payable on arrival.

6. Send Form and Check

Mail to: Siska Kallio, Registrar
201 Sherwin Circle
Urbana, IL 61802
siskak@isp.com

Total Registration Amount: \$ _____

Checks payable to: Illinois Prairie Hosta Society

For additional information, schedules or questions, see www.mrhs2009.com.



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10am "Spring Transitions: Pruning for the Season"

11am "Spring Transitions: Planting Techniques"

Saturday, March 28

10am "Outdoor Style: Designing your Space"

11am "Outdoor Style: Accessorizing your Landscape"

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If your newsletter mailing label says 2008 it is time to pay dues for 2009. This will be your last newsletter. You can pay dues at the next meeting or fill out the membership form and mail it. Remember!!!! Dues are \$10, for both single and family memberships.

For information regarding dues or membership, please contact Jo Ann Blank

april newsletter deadline:
march 20th, 2009

submit items for publication
to: Bob Streitmatter
309.264.4813
goldaandbob@hotmail.com

cihs membership form (please print)

name(s) _____

address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____

phone _____ e-mail _____

Dues are \$10/year: new renewal amount enclosed _____

Make check to CIHS; mail check and form to: CIHS, P.O. Box 3098, Peoria, IL 61612-3098