



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

central illinois hosta society
www.cihshostaclub.org

april 2010
volume 16, issue 2

Sue's News

Well, I didn't think it would happen, but finally spring weather is upon us! I have begun my daily ritual of walking around my gardens after work, checking to see what is coming up, what need to be done, and enjoying whatever is looking good. I do this every day that I am able during the growing season. I have found that you can really learn a lot about your plants if you visit every day, even if it is very brief. It can help to head off problems before they get severe, take notice of other garden chores to be done, and really enjoy all your labors. My new hellebore is blooming, as are the pulmonarias and early spring bulbs. I see the pips of some of my eager hostas, which always makes me nervous this early in the year. I also, unfortunately, see some weeds that I need to take care of soon, before they begin to take over. I guess I see my garden as a good analogy for the rest of my life. Be aware of what is happening in your backyard, enjoy the flowers when they bloom, and accept that every garden has some weeds.

I really enjoyed Bob and Golda's presentation on the hypertufa troughs, and plan on doing some experimenting with that this summer. Thanks to Bob and Golda! I hope you can join us for our April meeting and potluck. Good food and good people, what more can we ask for? We had a good group of people last month, and it was wonderful to see so many faces! Make sure you are looking around your gardens, and enjoying all that Spring has to offer.

Sue Eckhoff, CIHS President

The Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 20, 6:30 pm
Potluck w/Lou Holverson
Freedom Hall
349 W. Birchwood Street, Morton, IL

Our featured speaker for the evening will be Lou Holverson, a past president and long time member of CIHS. She will share some her vast hosta experiences and hosta memories.

All you have to bring is a covered dish of your choosing (fried chicken will be provided by CIHS). Tables, chairs, table service and drinks will also be provided. **Bring a friend...all are welcome!**

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 Street.

Solberg Hosta

We have ordered 10 of each hosta, noted below. They will be sold on a first come first serve basis. To insure that you get the hosta(s) you must have in your garden, we are pre-selling them prior to their arrival in May. All you have to do is sign up for them at the meeting. In a future issue we hope to include the descriptions, but you can go to hostahosta.com for photos and descriptions. (*H. 'Blueberry Cobbler'*, *H. 'Cup of Grace'* & *H. 'Sun Shower'* are new introductions offered to clubs this year)

- H. 'Awakening Angel'*
- H. 'Blaze of Glory'*
- H. 'Blueberry Cobbler' (New!!!)*
- H. 'Bulletproof'*
- H. 'Cup of Grace' (New!!!)*
- H. 'Deanne's Dream'*
- H. 'Hideout'*
- H. 'Holy Mouse Ears'*
- H. 'Paradise Island'*
- H. 'Spartacus'*
- H. 'Summer Lovin'*
- H. 'Sun Shower' (New!!!)*



Hosta of the Month

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

The Hosta Library & Reference Desk

If you would like to check out a magazine or book from the Hosta Library, see Ella Maxwell at a meeting or call her at 309.444.3758.

The Hosta Lists will be arriving soon: a collection of 57 individual lists which group cultivars and species according to various facts and characteristics. Another great reference!!! It will sell for \$8.00 and Ella will have them available when they arrive.

The Hosta Finder is available! In its 16th year, a great reference tool and source for ordering hostas and their values; or for visiting growers and gardens. If you are interested, they can be ordered by sending \$19.00, payable to Steve Greene, 36 Elaine Road, Sudbury, MA 01776

Save the date...for the Bus Trip!! Saturday, July 17th



We're heading to Champaign/Urbana. We are planning to visit numerous personal gardens featured last year on the Midwest Regional Convention Tour... many more details to follow!!!!

2010 Hosta Happenings

Tuesday, April 20, 6:30 pm
Potluck & T.B.A. speaker
Freedom Hall
349 W. Birchwood Street, Morton, IL

Tuesday, May 18, 6:30 pm
Gloria Hicks' Garden
1608 Robin Court, Morton, IL

Tuesday, June 15, 6:30 pm
Bill and Toni Cottrell's Garden
201 Daniel Pkwy, Washington, IL

June 23-26, 2010 (New date!)
AHS National Convention
"Stars of the North"
Sheraton Hotel, Bloomington, MN

July 8-10
Midwest Regional Convention
Des Moines, IA

Saturday, July 17
2010 CIHS Bus Trip
Champaign/Urbana

Tuesday, July 20, 6:30 pm
Connie Zuercher's Garden
1448 W. Birchwood, Morton, IL

Tuesday, August 17, 6:30 pm
Hosta Auction
Illinois Central College, Land Lab

Tuesday, Sept. 21, 6:00 pm (earlier time)
Annual Banquet
Speaker: T.B.A.

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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:
Barb Schroeder, Treasurer
1819 Coventry Drive
Champaign, IL 61822-5239

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

Gardeners, Collectors, Splitters, Clumpers

The exercise described here is meant strictly for fun. Regardless of how you rate yourself, your membership in the Central Illinois Hosta Society will not be revoked, you may still be asked to serve on the Board, and your smiling face at each of our monthly meetings will continue to be appreciated.

The first phase of this self-assessment is to determine whether your gardening traits make you more of a gardener or a collector.

The purest of “**Gardeners**” have a predetermined place for every purchase and every plant must be in its place. Planting three or more of a particular variety often makes good design sense. Such gardeners have a seemingly never-ending thirst, or possibly an addiction, to work in their gardens. Gardeners typically are not concerned with exactly how many hostas they have, and are not terribly concerned about labeling or keeping track of plant purchases in any way. Their primary concern is to possess diverse plantings, providing ever-changing seasonal appeal.

Gardeners that join hosta societies often gradually move at least slightly towards becoming collectors, while still retaining the seasonal beauty of their gardens.

“**Collectors**” do not make purchases based on need. In the mind of the most avid collectors, there is always room for more hostas, even when available space dictates otherwise. In their minds, there are friends, neighbors and relatives’ yards to relegate the less desirable hostas, creating space for more exciting varieties. More so than gardeners, collectors have a hard time resisting the lure of newer introductions. At least on occasion, collectors are more willing to exceed their price comfort zone for “must have” hostas. When doing so, they may choose not to share the purchase price with their spouse. A collector would rather purchase three different varieties than three of one variety.

Collectors may do what is required to display their hostas well, but when given a choice, will often opt for another buying trip or the opportunity to visit someone else’s garden, rather than work in their own.

Such collectors most often keep track of all hosta purchases, usually in some sort of hard-copy or electronic spreadsheet. At any time, collectors typically know at least approximately how many hostas they have, especially during the early years of their

addiction. To the most avid hosta collector, a good companion plant would be another hosta.

Those that start out as true collectors, find it difficult to spend very much of their available funds on other types of plant material. In my opinion, gardeners that become collectors are more apt to have beautiful gardens than those of us that start out as collectors.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 exhibiting only traits of the purest gardener and 10 being the most avid collector), where are you? For the sake of this exercise, let’s say the person exhibits some traits of both the gardener and the collector, but lean a bit more towards the right. Let’s rank this person as a 7.

Through the eyes of this long-time hosta lover and admirer of great gardens, a 6 or 7 is optimal.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Gardner | Collector | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Regardless of how you have rated yourself to this point, there are two other traits for consideration. Gardeners as well as collectors can be splitters, clumpers, or somewhere in between.

When “**Splitters**” purchase double or multi-eyed hostas, their mind eventually gets around to dividing. Sometimes it is right away, sometimes the action happens the following year. For these folks, more is better than big! Splitters are quick with the knife when it comes to sharing, trading, selling, or feel the need for a hosta to have a presence in another location. Newer hosta fanciers often consider dividing as a way to quickly increase their total number of hostas. Some splitters don’t know, or choose to ignore the fact, that unlike iris and daylilies, hostas do not need to be divided.

In contrast, “**Clumpers**” are basically the exact opposite. They take great joy in nurturing their hostas into large mature clumps. For these folks, bigger is truly better than more! When clumpers feel a particular hosta is not sited for optimal growth, they would rather move the entire clump than chop it up. Clumpers don’t make great trading partners.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 always having a reason to divide hostas, and 10 almost never wanting to divide a hosta), where are you? For this part of the assessment, let’s consider the person as an 8.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Splitter | Clumper | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

In my opinion, single clumps grown to perfection are far more impressive than multiple smaller plantings of the same variety. Yet, dividing is certainly recommended for hostas that are sporting, reverting, or to a lesser extent experiencing center clump dieback. **Continued on page 4**

Thusly, I would consider something in the 7 to 9 range as being ideal.

So, based on the example, the fictitious person is rated as a 7 on the Gardener / Collector scale and an 8 on the Splitter / Clumper scale. Combined, this person would be a 7/8.

| | |
|----------|-----|
| Combined | 7/8 |
|----------|-----|

What are your numbers?

Keep in mind that no matter where you rate yourself today, your numbers may change as your gardening experiences continue to evolve.

By Ray Rodgers, CIHS

February & March

Editor's Note: The following article is written by Bob Solberg in North Carolina, thus it would probably be more appropriate to be March-April for central Illinois.



The snow here has finally all melted, all two feet of it! Now the days are becoming warm, hinting of spring. As the crocus bloom and the daffodills begin to stretch, it is time again to go out and scratch around the garden for signs of life.

Let's hope the hostas are still asleep for cold nights are sure to return. Hostas actually do just that during their winter dormancy, they sleep. Their roots do not grow during the winter as is the case with many other perennials and they will not make new roots until after their new foliage has emerged and started to harden off.

So as we wander the garden in this time of hosta pre-emergence what can we do to make our hostas happy when they awake in the spring? First and foremost, be on "vole patrol", especially if you have had a good snow. Look for fresh holes about the size of a nickel. Poison can be put down these holes and then cover the hole with a something make the voles feel safe and to keep other animals out. In the garden we now use a piece of asphalt shingle with a heavy brick on top to cover the hole. Small mouse traps baited with peanut butter or apple placed under clay pots work well also. If you can reduce your vole population now, there will be less hungry voles to feed in the spring and more roots on your hostas.

The same population control theory works with slugs and snails. If you normally trap them with beer, grapefruit rinds, or newspaper or apply slug baits, start early, before your hostas emerge. There is less for them to eat at this time so baits may be more attractive and reducing the slug population now will pay off later.

Cleaning up the garden, removing old foliage and leaves, will also help reduce the populations of voles and slugs by removing those daytime hiding places. A thin course mulch like pine bark nuggets will also make the garden less hospitable for pests while keeping your hostas moist. A fresh layer of mulch always makes the garden well kept, like making your bed in the morning.

Finally, look for labels. This may be your last chance to read those plastic stick labels that came with your hostas before all the ink has faded away. Pencil will last much longer than markers, but both will last indefinitely if the label is buried beside your hosta. They can be easily found if you put them in the same place for each hosta, say, at 3:00 as you look at the clump. Also, making permanent garden labels is a great late winter project.

To get you in the mood for spring, I have also included a short list of hostas that are some of the earliest to emerge in the spring. This should help you know where to start poking around the garden first.

Some Early Emerging Hostas:

- H. *montana* 'Aureomarginata'
- H. *plantaginea* and most fragrant flowered hostas
- H. *lancifolia*
- H. *sieboldii*, 'Kabitan'
- H. *yingeri*, 'Korean Snow', 'Lakeside Looking Glass'
- H. *venusta*
- H. 'Tardiflora'
- H. 'Undulata' and 'Undulata Albomarginata'
- H. 'Sagae'
- H. 'Crispula'
- H. 'Wolverine'
- H. 'Sum and Substance' and sports
- H. 'Piedmont Gold' and sports
- H. 'Guacamole'
- H. 'Fried Bananas'
- H. 'Fried Green Tomatoes'
- H. 'Blue Angel'
- H. 'Big Boy'
- H. 'Golden Tiara' and sports
- H. 'Shiny Penny'
- H. 'Peedee Gold Flash'

By Bob Solberg of Green Hill Farm

Reprinted from the February issue of Michigan Hosta Happenings

What I Learned at Hosta College

Author's Note: At the recent Hosta College in March, I had the opportunity to attend a lecture by hosta breeder, Bob Solberg on how to grow the best hostas. The following is a summary of the lecture.

We all love our gardens and want to grow bigger and better hostas. So before we begin, let's start by throwing out the idea that hostas are carefree, low maintenance plants. To grow the best hostas, we must create the perfect environment for them. The environment is made up of 4 components, light, water, nutrients and air.

Light

The number one reason hostas don't grow to their potential is too much shade. All hostas would probably like more light than most of us give them. The trick is to give them lots of light without overheating them. But shade can sneak up on you. Even a carefully selected site can become shadier each year as trees grow. So observe your garden periodically to study the light throughout the day and prune some tree limbs if necessary to let in more light and create a more ideal environment. Dappled sun is the best, but longer periods of full sun in the morning and short periods of sun in the afternoon are also good

Water

Sufficient water is critical to growing healthy hostas. Lack of water causes dehydration and subsequent tissue damage. We know to water in the heat of summer but we tend to underwater our hostas in spring. Low humidity and winds on a beautiful spring day can dry the soil even if the temperatures are cool. The first 6-8 weeks of spring is when hostas make their leaves and their ultimate size will be determined by how much water is available to them during this time.

Trees are voracious competitors of water with hostas and the trees usually win. Even distribution of water with an overhead sprinkler is best rather than drip irrigation or hand watering each individual hosta. This will help slow the growth of tree roots into the hosta planting area. Morning watering is the best. Irrigation can be reduced in the summer except in severe heat and drought. Don't forget to water hostas before they go to sleep in the fall. Fall can be very dry and additional water may be needed to fatten up the hostas before the first hard freeze and will pay off with stronger plants in the spring.

Nutrients

Hostas need the greatest amount of nutrients in the first 6-8 week period in the spring when the leaves are emerging. Nitrogen is the most important nutrient but magnesium is also important. Miracle-Gro Tomato Plant Food is high in nitrogen with built in magnesium. But you can also add a pinch or two of Epsom salts per gallon of your favorite liquid fertilizer to add a little magnesium. Slow release (Osmocote) sprinkled around the plants in early spring before the hostas emerge supplies a steady supply of nutrients and has less tendency to wash away than other granular fertilizers.

A secret is to give an additional foliar feeding before the first flush of leaves harden off. Just use a hose-on sprayer, like Miracle-Gro, and get the leaves totally wet with very little runoff reaching the ground. (Remember you have already spread Osmocote.) All your hostas will not reach this stage at the same time. Timing is important for this foliar feeding and it is better to be a little late than too early. Make a second foliar application two weeks later and if it is still cool, try a third application, but no more!

Air

The only air we can control in our gardens is the air in the soil and it is just as important as light, water and nutrients. We know how bed preparation is an important step in creating the perfect environment for hostas by incorporating organic material and air into the soil. Yet, even the best prepared beds compact and fill with tree roots after about three years. Remember when the air is gone from the soil, the entire system breaks down and growth slows. Our goal to creating the perfect environment is to keep the hosta roots healthy. Healthy roots create healthy leaves. Unlike other plants, hosta roots do not grow in the winter. New root growth only begins in the spring AFTER the spring foliage has hardened off. If the hosta's leaves are smaller this year than last, this is a sign that something is wrong. Do not be afraid to dig up the plant and check its roots. Tree roots may be strangling the hosta or the soil may need to be reworked to incorporate more air. And resist the temptation to divide hostas. Allow time for your new hostas to establish good root systems while the new planting area is still full of air, three years minimum

By Mary Schindler; reprinted from the Hosta Addiction, the Newsletter from Hostas of Kentuckiana

2010 MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY CONVENTION

**“AMERICAN GOTHIC”
Hosted by Russ O’Harra Hosta Society
July 8-11, 2010**

Renaissance Savery Hotel, 401 Locust, Des Moines, IA 50309

1. One registration form for each person – Please print

Name(as you want it on your badge) _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ E-mail _____
Publish my name in Convention attendee list Yes _____ No _____

2. Judges Clinic and Handbook-Thursday July 8 from 3:00 to 6:00 PM

I will attend the Judges Clinic 1 Yes ___ No ___. A current Judges Handbook is required.
I will download the free judges handbook at www.hosta.org. Yes ___ No ___
I will purchase the official handbook and binder at the clinic. Yes ___ No ___ Cost \$10.00

3. Hosta Leaf Show-Preparation time Thursday 10:00 AM to 9:30 PM

Check if you plan to: _____ Judge _____ Clerk
Judging will begin on Friday, July 9, 2010 at 7:30 AM
Check if you plan to have entries in each division:
___ Cutleaf (limit 25 entries) ___ Educational Display ___ Artistic Design
___ Container Grown ___ Non-competitive Exhibit ___ Specialty Division
___ Trough Container for Effect _____ Seedling and Sport Award (limit 5 entries)????

4. Auction

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

5. Reservations-Refunds through June 7, 2010 less \$25.00 processing fee

Convention registration fee includes four meals: ___ Full registration (by June 7, 2010) \$170.00
Friday banquet, Saturday breakfast, lunch, and ___ Late Full Registration (after June 7, 2010)
\$190.00
barbeque. Fee also includes: garden tours and ___ Vegetarian meals
entrance to all activities including the Thursday Bash.
___ Yes, I will attend the Thursday Bash.

Hotel room reservations for the event may be made by individual attendees directly with
Marriott reservations
at 800-514-4706, and asking for MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY CONVENTION or
by visiting www.renaissancesavery.com and entering the group code HOSHOSA. Reservations
must be received on or before Thursday, June 17, 2010. Group rate is \$92.00 plus tax per day
through June 17, 2010.

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May newsletter deadline:
April 20th

Submit items for publication
to: Bob Streitmatter
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CIHS Membership Form (please print)

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Dues are \$10/year: new renewal Amount. Enclosed _____

Make check payable to CIHS; mail check and form to: Central Illinois Host
Society, P.O. Box 3098, Peoria, IL 61612-3098