

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

central illinois hosta society  
[www.cihshostaclub.org](http://www.cihshostaclub.org)

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## Sue's News

Well, it is August, the time when everyone is thinking of the dog days of summer, and of the Hosta auction. What, not everyone is thinking of the hosta

auction!?! Well, I hope you are thinking of it now! I hope that everyone who is able to donate plants or garden items, or bid on those things, comes to our auction this month. It is our main fund raiser for the club, and requires the members to participate enthusiastically in order to be successful. It really is great fun to bid for items, and there is generally something for everyone - rich, not so rich, green thumb, black thumb, whoever you may be. I hope to see you there.

I want to thank Connie for sharing her garden last month. It was a perfect evening, and a wonderful garden! I used to think that I had a large garden, but Connie has convinced me otherwise! The variety of trees, hostas, and other plants she has is amazing, and I know that I have only scratched the surface on my visits. Thanks again to Connie, and I hope to see you all this month at the auction at ICC!

**Sue Eckhoff, CIHS President**



## The Next Meeting

**Tuesday, August 17, 5:30 pm (note earlier time)**  
**Hosta Auction**  
Illinois Central College, Land Lab

**4-6 pm** plant drop-off begins for donations (Hostas, companion plants, garden ornaments, etc.)

**6:15 pm** business meeting

**6:30 pm** auction starts promptly

As one of the few CIHS fundraising events, I encourage you to donate hosta, perennials, garden ornaments and etc. for the auction. It is a great time to bring a friend and be sure to bring your checkbook!

The Illinois Central College Arboretum, originally established in 1980 as a teaching garden, now contains significant collections of hostas, dwarf and unusual conifers, and small maples. Over 300 taxa of hostas are arranged as much as possible by their species of origin. Beds are on display for hosta species, Tiaras, Tardianas, Hostas of the year, and those derived from *Hosta sieboldiana*, *nakaiana*, *sieboldii*, *plantaginea*, *montana*, *tardiflora*, and 'Fortunei'. In addition, the *Classic Hosta Collection*, established in 2000 by the CIHS and ICC, displays 31 varieties of hosta that were some of the original selections, and are still in commerce. The dwarf and unusual conifer collection is one of the best in Illinois. Many of the specimens are one-of-a-kind or one of only a handful in the country. The brochure highlights many of the unusual taxa and will help the reader to a greater understanding and appreciation for conifers.

**Directions:** enter Illinois Central College via the Highway 24 entrance. Turn left into parking lot G at the first left, about ¼ mile from the college entrance.



## Hosta of the Month

**Neat Splash S-** Dark green leaves with creamy white edge that extends into the leaves causing wonderful streaking. Extensively used for breeding as it has very fertile lavender flowers.

**Regal Rhubarb ML-** Large semi-upright mound of green leaves with distinct red/purple petioles. Dark flower buds. Not as vivid as Hosta Red October but still a really tidy looking hosta with great colors.

**Julie Morss M-** Light gold centered leaves with a chartreuse/green edge in spring, leaves later go green in summer.

**Fortunei Aureomarginata ML-** One of the more under appreciated hostas out there. This beauty has green leaves with a pretty gold edge.

**Craig's Temptation S-** A small clump with green wavy leaves. Grows quickly. Lavender flowers are held above the small clump.

## Annual Banquet!!!

The final event on the 2010 calendar is our banquet. The gala will be held Tuesday September 21<sup>st</sup> at the Kickapoo Creek Winery (6605 N. Smith Road, Edwards, Illinois). The cash bar will open at 5:45, dinner will start at 6:30 and the program is to start around 7:30.

The cost is \$35 for CIHS Members and \$40 for the public. The cost includes a lovely buffet dinner, an outstanding hosta selection and an entertaining program presented by Rob Mortko.

Rob is the owner of **Made in the Shade Gardens**, located in Olathe Kansas. He will present a program titled "Miracles out of Nowhere - in Your Hosta Garden and Mine." Miracles surround us in the world of plants. Some may be less obvious than others, but no less marvelous to the discerning eye. Most amazing is that these miracles can and do happen in our very own gardens. Hosta are the most popular of all perennials and provide an excellent example of how Mother Nature brings us an endless array of such miracles. In the presentation, Rob will explore how hosta sports occur and how they often defy our best understanding. Rob's journey with his own little miracle, *Hosta* 'Stitch in Time,' has been rewarding, challenging and even frustrating; often leaving him and the experts with more questions than answers.

An added bonus, Rob will have a great selection of many of his introductions available for us to purchase.

Sign up for the Banquet starts at the upcoming July meeting. Make checks payable to CIHS. Please contact Shirley Metz for more information: 263.7103 or [jametz@comcast.net](mailto:jametz@comcast.net)



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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

# Change that Plant Label

There have been a number of hosta name changes for a variety of reasons over the years. I have chosen the following examples because these hostas are all likely to be in a number of central Illinois gardens, and in some cases labels / markers may have not yet been updated.

Non-current/Incorrect Name	Correct Name as of 2010
§ <i>H. montana</i> ‘Praeflorens’	<i>H. montana</i> f. <i>macrophylla</i>
§ <i>H. fluctuans</i> ‘Variegated’	<i>H.</i> ‘Sagae’ or <i>H. fluctuans</i> ‘Sagae’
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Great River Sonata’	<i>H.</i> ‘Sagae’ or <i>H. fluctuans</i> ‘Sagae’
‘Great River Sonata’ was the gift hosta for the 2004 MRHS convention in Dubuque, Iowa. This hosta was originally thought to be a white-margined sport of ‘Moonlight Sonata’, but due to a mistake at the tissue culture lab, all plants with this name are actually ‘Sagae’.	
§ <i>H. nigrescens</i> ‘Elatior’	<i>H.</i> ‘Elatior’
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Moerheim’	<i>H.</i> ‘Antioch’
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Spinners’	<i>H.</i> ‘Antioch’
‘Antioch’ has also been sold as ‘Moerheim’ and ‘Spinners’.	
§ <i>H. venusta</i> ‘Variegated’	<i>H.</i> ‘Masquerade’
Prior to being registered as <i>H.</i> ‘Masquerade’ in the early 1990s, this hosta was marketed as <i>H. venusta</i> ‘Variegated’.	
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Geisha’	<i>H.</i> ‘Ani Machi’
The plant Kevin Vaughn registered in 1983 as ‘Geisha’ is believed to no longer exist. Plant labels for the hosta widely sold as ‘Geisha’ should be changed to ‘Ani Machi’.	
§ <i>H.</i> ‘J.W. Matthews’	<i>H.</i> ‘Jim Matthews’
Before being registered, this cultivar was known as ‘J.W. Mathews’.	
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Golden Prayers’	<i>H.</i> ‘Little Aurora’
The plant sold as ‘Golden Prayers’ since the early 1980s is actually ‘Little Aurora’.	
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Emerald Island’	<i>H.</i> ‘Emerald Ruff Cut’
The name ‘Emerald Island’ introduced in the late 1990s, changed to ‘Emerald Ruff Cut’ when registered in 2003 to avoid any confusion with ‘Emerald Isle’.	
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Polar Moon’	<i>H.</i> ‘Clifford’s Polar Moon’.
What was commonly marketed as ‘Polar Moon’ is actually ‘Clifford’s Polar Moon’.	
§ <i>H.</i> ‘Dancing Eddy’	<i>H.</i> ‘Uzu-no-mai’
‘Uzu-no-mai’ is sometimes incorrectly listed under its translated (Japanese to English) name, ‘Dancing Eddy’. The popularity of this cultivar, widely considered the smallest hosta, has been negatively impacted because of its difficulty to maintain and overwinter.	

Whether one elects or chooses not to change labels to coincide with what the American Hosta Society (AHS) considers to be the most current and correct names is a personal choice. I personally suggest following the guidance of the AHS. Those that keep track of their hostas in a spreadsheet or database may want to retain both the original and updated names.

By Ray Rodgers

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## Plant Label Information

*Here is the information about the plant labels we saw at the Meyer Garden last Saturday. I am not sure who was interested but please forward to anyone you remember or in the newsletter.* Judy Ziembra

Karen Meyer says: The labels that I use for perennials (one leg w/ nameplate) are made by See-Fine Marker Co, 1009 N. Street, Lewiston, ID 83501. Telephone number is (208) 743 2137. The last time I checked, the company did not have a web site, so you do have to call. I use the labels that are about 13 inches tall. I believe they come in other heights. The more you order, the less expensive per marker they become.

The stainless steel ones she used for shrubs were described by her friend Deb Guardia. Deb says: They are called Forever Plant Markers from Wildrose Distributing. Ken Harris runs this business and he is big into hostas. At the website, look for the link for the markers, and that should take you to the price and shipping/ordering info. Here are the details:

Wildrose Distributing  
4N221 Ferson Creek Road  
St. Charles, IL 60174  
[www.wrdist.com](http://www.wrdist.com) (website)  
630-513-1011 (phone)  
[info@wrdist.com](mailto:info@wrdist.com) (email)



*Editor's Note: I just had a discussion about shrinking hosta so I thought this bears repeating*

**Why are some of my hostas getting smaller each year?** The main reason for hosta decline is insufficient water in August, September, and October. *H. sieboldiana* types are especially bad about "fading." This fading happens when (after blooming) the rhizome needs to store up sugars for next years blooming and seeding. For this it needs abundant water in August and September, just as the species in Japan do. Lacking water, the rhizome

cannot grow and uses sugar reserves that were accumulated to maintain size. During the drought most hostas decrease in size because they cannot build up sugars for next year's growth and huge clumps vanish.

Once hosta are in decline, dig up the plant remnants, dust with a rooting hormone, and put in pots for extra care. If you prefer to keep the plant in the ground, improve the soil before replanting and apply half-strength Peter's fertilizer. Sometimes, just moving a hosta will help correct a problem you could not detect.

**Will hostas have stronger root systems in the sun, in spite of burned leaves?** Yes, growing hostas in the sun will increase the root size. Photosynthesis increases and excess sugars produced are stored in the rhizome/root system for stronger roots.

**I have had most of my hostas for 2 years now and, unfortunately, they ended up a few inches lower than ground level. Should I dig them all up and replant them?** Hostas do best if the crowns are at ground level. However, as compost in your soil mixture degrades, the hostas may sink. Replant them so the plants sit closer to ground level. It will not hurt to move them, and may stimulate growth.

**By Ann Bentsen and reprinted from the Georgia Hosta Society Newsletter.** (We held three Education Corners in 2007. George Schmid, Chuck Zdeb, Jack Driskell, and Toni Wright were our experts at various times.)

## Attracting Birds with Feeders & Houses

(If you have cats that are routinely let outdoors, you should not feed the birds. Feeder birds are easy prey for cats and it is very difficult to protect them from sneak attacks.) Start your feeders in the fall, and be patient. It sometimes takes a while to get birds coming. Scatter some seeds on the ground under the feeders as an attractant. It's a myth that you have to keep feeding all the time, so don't worry if you have to stop feeding, the birds will move elsewhere. But regular feeding is the key to attracting a variety of birds.

Locate the feeder at least 8-10 feet from trees, and use a stove pipe baffle on the pole to prevent climbing predators. Cheaper still, use PVC pipe, and cut it to fit the pole.

**Continued on page 5**

Cover the PVC with a plastic baffle to prevent birds from getting trapped down inside the pipe. If you hang a feeder from the tree, use a long S shaped hanging hook, and a large deep dome baffle. Trim any branches the squirrels can use to jump on the feeder. While the birds need some nearby shrubs or trees to dart to safety from a hawk attack, it's important to make sure cats can't hide under them within pouncing distance. If necessary, use 12-14 inch high chicken wire under evergreen boughs or shrubs. With bamboo stakes, circle the problem area with the chicken wire. A hiding cat will have to jump over this barrier, usually alerting the birds to their presence and making escape easier.

Some seeds can be a nuisance - sunflower seeds for example, with their hulls. If you clean them up regularly, they won't kill the grass, but an easier way is to clear a circular area under the feeder, and mulch so it looks more attractive. You will still need to clean the debris periodically, but the area will stay much neater and easier to clean if you mulch it.

#### **Black Oil Sunflower**

Cardinals, Blue Jays, Chickadees, Goldfinches, and Woodpeckers love it. Use special tube feeders, or tube feeders with a wire mesh surround that allows the smaller birds to enter, but restricts the larger birds.

**Nyger**(thistle, but not the thistle that is a garden problem) Expensive. Use special tube feeders or mesh bags. Buy small quantities at first until you get birds coming. Shake the feeder every day, as the small slits in the plastic tube can get clogged with the debris in the seed. Attracts American Goldfinches, House Finches and (when they invade from up north about every other year), Pine Siskins, and Common Redpolls.

#### **Mixed seed, corn**

Use in hopper feeders or spread on the ground for Mourning Doves and sparrows. If you put these feeders off to the sides of your yard, you can put other feeders closer to your viewing area and hopefully keep sparrows and blackbirds off to the sides.

#### **Suet**

Suet cakes placed in special baskets will attract woodpeckers, Chickadees, and nuthatches. We've found that buying animal lard (available in the cooking oil section) and spreading it on the sides of a tree in the cracks in the bark really works well as it's more natural for these birds to cling when they eat. A small log with 1 inch holes drilled in it and hung from a screw eye is good also.

#### **Water**

Birdbaths are a must as birds like to drink and bathe frequently in the summer. In the winter water is very important for drinking; you can use a heated bird bath or a

small, thermostatically controlled heater you just lay in your present birdbath.

#### **Peanuts**

Expensive. Woodpeckers and Blue Jays love them but cages are necessary to keep the squirrels out.

#### **Clean feeders!**

Cleaning your feeders at least once a month is essential if there is heavy use. Outbreaks of avian illnesses can occur if you allow dirty conditions at your feeders. Ground areas should be swept up and the dropped seed and waste thrown out. Feeders should be scrubbed out, perches and all, once a month with a bleach and water solution. Be sure and rinse thoroughly and let dry completely before using again. I buy two of each feeder so one is in use while I clean the other ones.

#### **Bird houses**

The easiest birds to attract with houses are House Wrens. They require an entrance hole no larger than 1 inch. If larger than this, you will just get house sparrows! Chickadees also will use wren houses.

Feed the birds as often as you like, winter and summer. They don't really need it as much in the summer, but it's a thrill when the parents bring their baby birds to teach them how to use feeders. Feeders and seed are available at many different stores. If you use a large amount of seed for feeding, you may find it cheaper to purchase your seed from local feed stores or garden centers. (Reprinted from the NIHS May 2010 Newsletter)

## **Summer Alert - Beware of the Drought**

Most reference books on hosta will report that they are quite adaptable to dry shade conditions once they have become established. While this may be true, there is also a practical limit to most generalizations.

During the growing season the hosta rhizome or crown is building reserves that will be used the following spring. Large amounts of water are also required to replace the natural transpiration that occurs with the large leaves. If (as we typically do in the Midwest) encounter a prolonged spell of hot, dry weather, the rhizome will spend reserves to support the plant.

Ever wonder why a hosta appears OK at the end of the year, but appears much smaller and/or less vigorous the following spring, or (even worse) fails to reappear altogether the following spring? This is most likely the result of a decline in the crown mass the previous summer. **Continued on page 6**

So what to do if we do encounter a typical Kansas City summer with day upon day of hot temperatures and extended dry spells? Avoid the stress by watering deeply at least once a week during the summer if we don't receive any help from Mother Nature. Optimum moisture is reported between one and one and a half inches of water per week during the growing season. This is especially important if your hostas receive significant levels of direct sun exposure.

Watering time is also important. Watering in the morning will help discourage both slugs and fungal activity. Use of soaker hoses works well. When watering blue leafed hostas avoid overhead watering of the leaves which can slowly destroy the glaucous bloom (i.e. the waxy covering that makes a green hosta appear blue). Residual water droplets on any leaf which is followed by sun exposure can also result in leaf burn.

By Rob Mortko

## The Hosta Gardening Calendar

Summer: June-July-August



The time of bloom in hosta species and their cultivars varies from late May or June to September. A particular hosta will normally bloom once for about 3 weeks during the summer, producing a flower scape from the growing bud that just finished producing the flushes of leaves. The scape has a number of lily-like flowers that are open for one day only and are bee pollinated. (*H. plantaginea* opens in the evening and may be moth pollinated.) Seed pods are formed from fertilized ovaries at the base of the pistil and swell in size. Black, single-winged seeds are usually ripe in 6-8 weeks.

**Labeling:** Replace the labels that the squirrels have pulled up.

**Light:** This is the brightest and more importantly, hottest light of the year. The sun is at its maximum height in the sky and often beds that were bathed in shade in early May are now in full sun. Hostas can tolerate direct light but they hate heat! If leaf margins begin to brown, it may be time to move that hosta to a cooler spot in the garden. On the other hand, year by year shade gardens become shadier. Consider removing a branch here or there during the summer to create spotlights of bright light in the garden. Maybe even consider removing an entire tree, but that should probably wait until winter.

**Nutrients:** Blooming hostas still need nutrients to maintain their foliage and produce seeds but not a high nitrogen diet. If you are liquid feeding weekly, continue if there is

ample rain. In times of drought reduce feeding to every other week. Discontinue any supplemental foliar feeding; hosta leaves have expanded to their maximum by now. Remember if it doesn't rain, then your slow release fertilizer is not being released. Irrigation may be a good idea.

**Pests:** If it turns dry, the deer will show up looking for some lush hosta foliage full of water. Spray deer repellent every 3 weeks or more often and rotate your favorite brands. Leave the electric fence on at all times.

Be on the look out for the symptoms of foliar nematodes, those nasty brown streaks. If you have a major problem, remove the most highly infected hostas and water less and feed less. Starve the hostas and stress the worms. Quarantine your garden. If you have a minor issue, remove infected hostas and all the ones touching them. A few years of this may eliminate the problem almost completely.

**Protection:** Watch for petiole rot. This fungus attacks the base of hosta petioles, secreting a substance that eats through the plant tissue causing the leaves to fall on the ground. This usually occurs in the first hot dry weather of the summer. Pull back mulch. Treat with 10% bleach solution immediately and retreat if necessary. There are also fungicides (e.g. Terrachlor) that can be applied. Other fungi may attack the hosta leaves, especially in hot, humid climates in wet summers. Apply fungicides (e.g. Daconil) as a preventative in late June every 2 weeks as necessary. Rotate fungicides.

**Propagation:** Divide hostas as the heat of summer passes. August is the best time to drastically divide and plant or pot hostas. Try to give your hostas 6 weeks before the first frost to establish new roots in their new home.

**Water:** Like nutrients, a hostas demands for water are reduced after their leaves are mature. Increased temperatures however, increase the transpiration rate, the rate at which the water is pulled out of the hosta leaves, requiring more water to replace it. Transpiration affects trees to an even greater degree as they pump water up and out of the garden soil. In hot weather sometimes keeping your hostas full of water all day long is a constant battle. Continue the fight. Dry soil may cause your hostas to go heat dormant or worse, dry rot at the bottom of the crown. In heavily shaded gardens, irrigation during the day can cool those hot leaves.

**Fun!** Cut some scapes after a couple of flowers have opened and bring them inside to enjoy for two or more weeks. Cut and remove the other scapes when 75% of the flowers have opened, unless you wish to save the seeds. Take in a hosta convention, regional events are inexpensive and allow plenty of time to socialize. Visit other local gardens and get some new ideas. Remember to bring a hosta along as a gift. Begin to plant new acquisitions.

*From The Green Hill Gossip by Bob Solberg*

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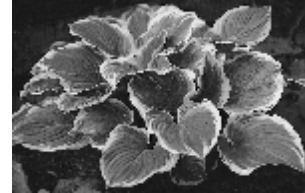


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