



#### Board of Directors

##### President:

**Kathy Pease**  
(816) 468-1468  
kpease@planetkc.com

##### Vice President:

**Penny Balfour**  
(913) 722-4925  
hostalady@kc.rr.com

##### Treasurer:

**Bob Balfour**  
(913) 722-4925  
rbalfour@kc.rr.com

##### Secretary:

**Gwen Wheeler**  
(816) 228-9308  
gmwheeler@juno.com

##### Membership:

**Pat Mora**  
(816) 373-4950  
giboshidata@comcast.net

##### Hospitality:

**Kathy Butler**  
(816) 468-8129  
kathy.butler@nkch.org  
**Melana Cooke**  
(913) 381-3495  
mc417@juno.com

##### Volunteer Coordinator:

**Mary Brosnan**  
(816) 363-5365  
marycbrosnan@hotmail.com

##### Newsletter Editor:

**Rob Mortko**  
(913) 829-0760  
rob@hostaguy.com

# Shades of Heartland

SPRING 2005  
HEARTLAND HOSTA & SHADE PLANT SOCIETY

## President's Message

I love spring – a new beginning. I get so excited to see all of last year's plants come up bigger and better than the year before. When I first started growing hostas, I actually used to come home from work each day, grab a pen and pad and go out and count the hosta crowns. It's amazing how much they change each day. I

don't do that any more; there are simply too many crowns to count now.

I think we have a great year ahead for the Club. We'll have Dr. Bob Olson speak at our April 2nd meeting. He is a former President of the American Hosta Society and is currently Editor of *The Hosta Jour-*

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Spring Meeting - April 2nd

\*\*\*\*\* DON'T MISS IT \*\*\*\*\*

Saturday, April 2nd, 10:00 AM  
Rolling Hills Presbyterian Church  
9300 Nall; Overland Park, KS

\*\*\*\*\* DON'T MISS IT \*\*\*\*\*

Following on the great success of our fall meeting, our first meeting of 2005 will also include a very special guest speaker. Some of our charter members will remember our guest as a repeat speaker from 1993.

Bob Olson will be joining us to speak on "Hosta Hunting in Japan". In 1995 a small group of AHS members traveled to Japan to look for species hostas growing in the wilderness. During the 17 day trip they located *Hosta hypoleuca* growing on rugged mountainsides in the wilds of central Honshu and *Hosta pycnophylla* on a remote island in the Japanese Inland Sea among others. They also visited the famous Mt. Fuji nursery of Mr. Watanabe the legendary hosta hunter and had wonderful adventures along the way.

Bob is currently the Editor of the American Hosta Society's *Hosta Journal*. He has also served as both President and Vice President of the American Hosta Society. Bob co-chaired the 1990 AHS Con-

vention in Minneapolis where his gardens were honored with the Harshbarger Award for the best use of hostas in a landscape design. By day, Dr. Bob is a gastroenterologist at Ramsey County Hospital in St. Paul and at the Healthpartners Riverside Clinic in Minneapolis.



There will also be plants for sale at the meeting including: *Mertensia Virginica* (Virginia Blue Bells), *Asarum Arifolium* (Wild Ginger), *Podophyllum Peltatum* (Mayapple), *Trillium*, *Cyclamen Hederifolium*, *Cyclamen Coum* and *Itea Virginica* 'Little Henry'.



## 2005 Hosta of the Year

Every year the American Hosta Growers Association designates a specific hosta cultivar with the "Hosta of the Year" award. To receive this honor the hosta must:

- retail for about \$15 in the year selected
- be widely available & in sufficient supply
- grow well in all parts of the country

For 2005 this award goes to 'Stripease'. The late Rick Thompson discovered this mutation of 'Gold Standard' in the late 1980's and introduced 'Stripease' in 1991. The name originates from the thin white strip between the dark green margin and the gold center.

Compared to 'Gold Standard', 'Stripease' has a wider green margin and narrower gold center. Pale lavender flowers appear in late July into early August.

Mark Zilis lists the mature size of 'Stripease' at 20" high by 50" wide putting it in the "medium" size category. Speaking of Mark Zilis, he mentions in his handbook that



he was initially quite sceptical regarding 'Stripease'. When Rick Thompson first described this sport to him, Mark was convinced it was only a temporary phenomenon based on seeing thousands of other 'Gold Standard' sports. Only later after actually seeing a leaf did Mark become convinced that Rick had discovered something of value.

## President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

nal. He'll speak on the Hostas of Japan. I hope he brings pictures of his own garden. I had the pleasure of seeing it in 1996 and it was absolutely outstanding. He had the largest 'Great Expectations' that I've ever seen and that was nine years ago. We will also have some perennials for sale at the meeting.

Our annual hosta sale will be on May 14. We'll have lots of new varieties of hostas and some of the classics. We've acquired the much sought after 'Orange Marmalade'. We'll also have 'Earth Angel', 'Dancing in the Rain', 'Old Coot', 'Mister Watson', 'After Five Somewhere' and many others.

We're trying to put together another brunch this year although nothing has been finalized as yet.

For the fall meeting we're going to have another garden art exhibition. Some of you may remember the garden art meeting we had about three years ago. Everyone seemed to like it. If you have a hobby or skill that you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you. We'll have tables set up around the room so that members can freely roam from art station to art station. It's fun to share and inspire others to create items to add to our garden's

beauty.

I hope to see all of you on April 2nd. Come on out and get inspired to dig some holes and get your hands dirty. I for one can't wait.

*Kathy Pease*

### Heartland Hosta Balance Sheet

<b>Starting Balance</b>	<b>\$17,123.72</b>
<b>2004 Revenues</b>	
Membership	510.00
Plant Sales	10680.51
<b>total</b>	<b>\$11,190.51</b>
<b>2004 Expenses</b>	
Meeting Room	475.00
Plant Sale	10067.47
Newsletter	234.78
Hospitality	2204.70
Association Dues	500.00
Hosta Finders	90.00
Misc Admin/Bank Fees	141.31
Supplies	338.83
Speaker/Entertainment	856.73
<b>total</b>	<b>\$14,908.82</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$13,405.41</b>



## Heartland Hosta Society Dues

To ensure your continued newsletter mailings, please make sure you're current on dues. If you're not sure, check your mailing address label for the year next to your name. You are paid up through that year. Dues are only \$5 per year. We ask that you prepay at least 2 years dues at a time.

## Join the American

## Hosta Society

The publications alone are worth the annual dues. Visit the AHS website ([www.hosta.org](http://www.hosta.org)) for the latest membership options.

## Join the Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The MRHS (including both KS and MO) publishes two newsletters a year, holds an annual Summer Convention and a Winter Scientific Meeting. Dues are only \$10 per year payable to MRHS.

Send dues to:

Scott Hildebrandt  
MRHS Treasurer  
1020 Redwood Drive  
Norwalk, IA 50211





## 2005 Events

April 2  
Heartland Hosta  
Spring Mtg  
(Rolling Hills Church)

May 14  
Annual Heartland Hosta  
Plant Sale  
(Rolling Hills Church)

June 2-4  
Midwest Regional Hosta  
Society Convention  
(Springfield, MO)

June 16-18  
American Hosta Society  
National Convention  
(Cleveland, OH)

June ??  
Heartland Hosta Brunch  
and Garden Party  
(details to follow)

July 9  
First Look 2005  
(Burlington, VT)

Sept. 10  
Heartland Hosta  
Fall Mtg  
(Rolling Hills Church)

## A New Introduction for 2006

by Rob Mortko

2006 - No that's not a typo, just a word of caution to those hostaholics anxious to get their hands on the most recent hosta introductions.

You may recall our Fall Meeting last year when Hans Hansen presented slides of a number of new introductions. One of those new introductions was 'Queen of the Seas' which drew many "oohs and aahs" from the crowd. Subsequently there has been considerable anticipation and discussion of this long awaited hosta introduction, and for good reason.

'Queen of the Seas' was the sensation of the 1997 American Hosta Society national convention where it won Best of Show. It was introduced by the legendary Mildred Seaver and features turquoise blue heart-shaped leaves with a pointed tip along with piecrusted margins.

Now for the catch. This hosta was just placed in tissue culture last year and will only be available to growers as tissue culture (TC) plugs from Shady Oaks Nursery starting this spring. While there were no listings in the 2004 Hosta Finder, there are no less than 8 retail

sources of 'Queen of the Seas' listed in the 2005 Hosta Finder.

So what are you buying if you place your Spring 2005 order for 'Queen of the Seas'? Basically you're getting a first year TC plug which is not much different in size than a bedding plant commonly bought in 6 packs. Generally speaking the rule of thumb is that these TC plugs require a full year of growth to get them to a "sellable" size which ensures an adequate crown mass and root mass for good transplant success directly into the garden.

The point here is really not to single out any or all of these retail sources. In fact some of them actually mention that the plants will be "small". The more important point is that these TC plugs require considerable care their first year. Even when grown in a greenhouse setting, the success rate for TC plugs is still less than 100% under these nearly ideal conditions.

The bottom line - know what you're buying. You may find it advantageous to wait a year for that "new" introduction. And the price will invariably be lower!

## Spring Hosta Tips

from Bob Solberg

Spring  
Foliage Emergence Begins  
March - April - early May

Fertilization: Apply Osmocote 2 weeks after emergence, or apply granular 10-10-10 mid-March, or begin applications of liquid fertilizer mid-March.

Irrigation: As needed to maintain moist soil, but not wet. Remember this Bob Solberg rule: If you aren't going to water -- **DON'T START**. If you are going to water -- **DON'T STOP**.

Protection: Protect from late frosts with lightweight cloth, pots, boxes or newspaper.

Division: Not the best time, since roots are not growing until after leaves form.

Pests: Begin slug control before foliage emerges.

Late Spring  
Period of Rapid Foliage and Root Growth  
Mid May - early June

Fertilization: Apply granular 10-10-10 May 1, or continue weekly applications of liquid fertilizer. For rapid growth, foliar feed high-nitrogen fertilizer. Add a pinch of magnesium per gallon of water (Epsom Salts).

Irrigation: Maintain moisture needed for growth (overhead watering may damage blue hostas).

Protection: Thin layer of coarse mulch to conserve soil moisture.

Division: OK to transplant entire hosta, being careful not to damage roots. Do not divide.

Pests: Continue to watch for slug and vole damage, apply bait as needed.



# Spring Dessication Burn

by Ray Rodgers

(Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Central Illinois Hosta Society newsletter and is reprinted with the author's permission.)

Spring Desiccation Burn (SDB, spring burn or burning) is the small to large brown areas that develop most notably on the yellow leaf sections of Sieboldiana cultivars\*. The non-yellow portions of the leaf are not affected. Spring burning is not to be confused with light frost damage nor the little reddish brown spots that often are visible on yellow leaf hostas in mid-summer. These spots are caused by a fungus most commonly referred to as anthracnose and can be avoided by regular applications of a fungicide prior to the development of the spots. Light frost damage is non-discriminatory, damage can occur to any leaf color and any variety of hosta.

SDB is one form of Necrosis, which is a generic botanical term defined by the American Hosta Society (AHS) as the death or dying of cells, tissues or whole plants.

Probably the most talked about hosta that suffers from burning is 'Frances Williams' (note that Frances is spelled with an "e", not an "i"). Many of the plants thought to be 'Frances Williams' in gardens today are actually 'Aurora Borealis'. It is my understanding that the most recognizable difference is 'Aurora Borealis' has taller bloom scapes. 'Frances Williams' bloom scapes barely extend over the top of the clump and some don't even make it outside the clump. They both will burn.

'Frances Williams' is one of the first variegated hostas, and despite its genetic flaw, remains a perennial favorite as voted by members of the AHS. I'm guessing the majority of the people listing 'Frances Williams' on their top 25 list live in cooler climates. As a general rule, Sieboldianas do not perform as well in hotter climates. For votes cast in 2002 (results published in 2003), 'Frances Williams' rank slipped to number 20 on the AHS Popularity Poll. After so many years of love it or hate it, combined with the continual influx of new introductions, it appears 'Frances Williams' may soon disappear from this poll, but it will remain a Classic for many years to come.

The nicest specimen of 'Frances Williams', which I have personally seen, belongs to past AHS President, and current Editor of *The Hosta Journal*, Dr. Bob Olson. When viewing this plant at the 2000 AHS Convention, I saw no signs of Spring Desiccation Burn. Grown in Minnesota, Bob has owned this very large and spectacular plant for 15 years. Bob believes placement is the key. This plant is not exposed to any direct sunlight. It is in an enclosed back yard, situated in the corner of his lot and protected on two sides by a solid, tall fence.

There are several Sieboldianas that regularly suffer from



Spring Desiccation Burn, to varying degrees. Several, but not all, are sports of 'Frances Williams'. The following is a partial list of hostas that suffer from spring burn, which are commonly available today (none appear on the most recent AHS Popularity Poll):

## Green to Blue Green w/ Yellow Edge

- H. 'Frances Williams'
- H. 'Aurora Borealis'
- H. 'Samurai'\*\*
- H. 'Wagon Wheels'

## Yellow w/ Green to Blue Green Edge

- H. 'DuPage Delight'
- H. 'Super Nova'
- H. 'Borwick Beauty'
- H. 'Color Glory'\*\*\*
- H. 'Queen of Islip'
- H. 'Carriage Wheels'

In my opinion (an opinion that is shared by many), the absolute worst of all hostas that are susceptible to SDB is the all yellow sport of 'Frances Williams', named 'Golden Sunburst'. Being all yellow, its entire leaf surface is subject to burning. This sport regularly appears in clumps of the parent plant. It most likely also occasionally occurs when tissue culturing 'Frances Williams'. I would guess that these two factors are why some nurseries continue to sell this extremely flawed ugly duckling. I am proud to state that I know of no Peoria area nursery that still offers this plant. I am equally disappointed with the nurseries that continue to sell this plant to buyers who are unaware of its problems.

Some of the nurseries that offer 'Golden Sunburst' are very well respected nurseries and sell a wide range of won-

(Continued on page 5)



## Spring Dessication Burn (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

derful plants. Owning this plant, or even selling it to someone that is aware of the severe burning is fine, but advertising it in one's catalog is irresponsible, in my opinion, unless the problem is well documented, i.e. "susceptible to Spring Dessication Burn" or "Caution, this hosta may make you sick!"

Based on information from a variety of sources, including thoughts on this subject recently provided to me by a well known and respected plantsman from New Jersey (Bill Meyer), I believe the Sieboldianas that are susceptible to burning have a genetic flaw. According to Bill, SDB is believed to be the result of cold temperatures experienced when the leaves are just emerging and are still soft and tender. It might not even require below-freezing temperatures to trigger spring burn, which would indicate that temperature changes rather than ice crystal formation may be the cause. One may notice that frost on hosta leaves in early spring sometimes leaves watery-looking areas in the foliage. Sometimes these areas collapse and die in short order, while other times they seem to recover well, only to go downhill by mid-season. If you look at 'Frances Williams' at this time you may spot some slightly lighter areas in the gold tissue. It appears that these slightly lighter or opaque areas are the first visible signs of Spring Dessication Burn damage.

Bob Solberg writes in his January 2000 "The Green Hill Gossip", that Spring Dessication Burn usually occurs in the morning on bright cool days with low humidity and a brisk breeze. Bright morning sun only compounds the problem.

My personal advice is not to purchase any of the above

mentioned plants, unless you are willing to accept the inevitable flawed leaf surfaces.

If you really love H. 'Frances Williams', except for the burning, the best alternative may be 'Olive Bailey Langdon'. The yellow edge on this 'Frances Williams' look-alike does not develop as quickly in the spring, most likely the reason why it has less of a problem. This plant will occasionally show minor signs of burning, but it is certainly much better than the previously mentioned hostas and is certainly well worth growing. A smaller substitute is 'Tokudama Flavocircinalis' (not a Sieboldiana), which is an outstanding plant and is not susceptible to Spring Dessication Burn.

For an alternative for the yellow leaf with green to blue green edge plants, I recommend H. 'Dick Ward' (sport of 'Zounds').

\* Sieboldiana describes a particular group of hostas. A cultivar is defined by the AHS as a contraction word for "cultivated variety"; a plant that is clearly distinguished by identical physical characteristics through proper propagation means. In simpler terms, I am referring to plants that were derived from the species *sieboldiana* or from other hostas in the Sieboldiana group.

\*\* Reportedly the same as 'Frances Williams', any differences are within the realm of normal variability found in this plant.

\*\*\* The gold-centered Sieboldiana being sold today under this name is believed to actually be 'Borwick Beauty'.

## AHS Virus Policy

In response to recent concerns about hosta viruses (specifically the recent outbreak of Hosta Virus X or HVX), the American Hosta Society has formulated a 'Virus Policy'. Basically it states that all hostas with symptoms consistent with a viral infection should be destroyed.

More specifically the AHS is encouraging its members to:

- Understand what virus symptoms look like
- Destroy any infected plants they may have in their collections to avoid further spreading the disease
- Quit buying and encouraging sales of virus-infected plants
- Help inform others who may have infected plants that there is no cure and that the plants should be destroyed
- Quit registering virus-infected plants

While there is no cause for panic, until this outbreak subsides one needs to be really careful where they purchase their hostas. Ask your hosta supplier about their awareness of HVX and whether they comply with the AHS Virus Policy. Also be on the lookout for symptoms in your own

garden especially on hosta cultivars purchased over the last couple of years. When in doubt have a leaf sample tested by Dr. Ben Lockhart at the University of Minnesota.

Typical virus symptoms include irregular blotchy patches of darker leaf tissue, circular spots with rings around them, and small lighter flecks. The virus is spread from the sap of an infected plant coming in contact with an open wound on a clean plant. This could occur with weed eaters, with garden tools (for example pruning leaves or bloom scapes or dividing plants), or by animals/insects feeding on an infected plant and then spreading the virus.

Look for additional information to be posted on the American Hosta Society website in the near future. In the meantime there is a good article and pictures currently posted on the Hosta Library website ([www.hostalibrary.org](http://www.hostalibrary.org)).

On a related topic you will notice at this year's annual Heartland Hosta plant sale in May, that only hostas grown from tissue culture will be offered. Conversely there will be no hostas for sale that originated from bare root division. This represents the club's best attempt to minimize the spread of these viruses.



Heartland Hosta & Shade Plant Society  
Rob Mortko, Newsletter Editor  
16370 W. 138th Terrace  
Olathe, KS 66062



Craig & Charlene Wendel 06  
10013 E 71st Terrace  
Raytown, MO 64133

#### SHADES OF HEARTLAND

## 2006 Hosta Convention Update

The Greater Ozarks Hosta Society invites you to start your summer with "An Ozarks Hosta Adventure" at the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention to be held in Springfield, MO on June 2-4. The convention will be hosted at the Oasis Inn and Convention Center with special room rates ranging from \$54 to \$64 per night. Registration is \$100 per person before May 1 and increases to \$150 after May 1. Of special interest will be the Friday evening barbecue and garden tour of Bill Roston's Garden of Dreams. You may recall Bill as a guest speaker at our summer meeting a couple of years ago. For more information please visit the MRHS website at: [www.midwesthosta.org](http://www.midwesthosta.org)

The American Hosta Society National Convention is being held this year in "The Hosta Heartland" of Cleveland, OH from June 16-18 with optional tours on June 15. It is being hosted by the North Coast, Midland

*Include  
Springfield  
and  
Cleveland  
in your  
summer  
travel  
plans.*

and Central Ohio Hosta Societies at the Holiday Inn in Independence.

The optional Wednesday tour includes a day long bus trip to the Beilstein and Walkerly gardens in addition to Wade and Gatton Nursery.

Garden tours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday include:

- Homestead Division: Pete & Jean Ruh
- Kuk's Forest Nursery
- Buddy Miller's Garden
- Dave & Sue Mills' Garden
- Gray Horse Farm, Allison Titgemeier & Dick Herr
- Pat & George Raeder's Garden
- Angelica Gardens

The convention concludes Saturday evening with the awards banquet and a look to next year's convention in Philadelphia.

For more information please visit the North Coast Hosta Society website at: [www.northcoasthostasociety.org](http://www.northcoasthostasociety.org)