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Heartland Hosta & Shade Plant Society

Fall 2010

President's Message

Hello hosta gardeners! We are definitely in the dog days of Summer. The hostas and other plants in my gardens are thirsty. I give them a healthy drink every 3-4 days.

Our September 11th meeting will begin at 10:00. Doors open at 9:30. Our guest speaker will be Bob Solberg, owner of Green Hill Farm. Also we will have an election of new officers for the next three year term. After the meeting we will have a pot luck lunch. The club will supply BBQ meat from Oklahoma Joe's and drinks. Please bring a side dish with you.

Bob Solberg was born and raised in Miami, Florida and grew palm trees from seed in his backyard nursery as a kid. He attended Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina and graduated with a B.S. in Biology and then studied bryophyte ecology for three years at the University of North Carolina.

In 1981, after experimenting with azaleas and rhododendrons, Bob chose to specialize in hostas in his new backyard nursery. He became founder and head of the Carolina Hosta Society in 1986 which hosted the

1991 American Hosta Society National Convention and again in 2001. He has served in many positions in that organization until the present.

In 1992 Green Hill Farm outgrew the back yard and moved to its current location. It is now a wholesale and retail nursery introducing new hostas into the Trade. From its hosta hybridizing program, new hostas are shipped nationally and internationally to nurseries, hosta clubs and hosta collectors throughout the year.

Bob has introduced more than 50 hostas to date and has plans to add five or so to that number each year. 'Guacamole' was introduced in 1994 and Hosta of the Year in 2002.

Bob will speak about mini hostas and will bring minis to sell at the meeting.

We are adding a new option for Heartland Hosta yearly dues. If you purchase a 3 year membership, the cost is \$25, saving you \$5.

Please RSVP for the pot luck, call me at 913-722-4925 or email at rbalfour@kc.rr.com.

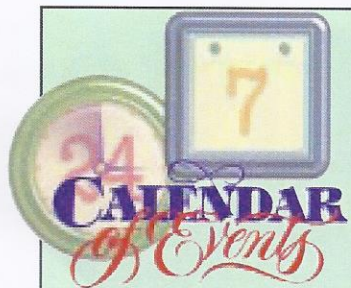
Hope to see you on the 11th of September!

Penny

Heartland Hosta Meeting Location: Faith Lutheran Church, 67th & Roe, Prairie Village, Kansas

*Keith Wheeler will have
plant stands and
hypertufa pots for sale*





2010 Events

September 11

Heartland Hosta Fall
Meeting
(Faith Lutheran Church)

2011 Events

March 26

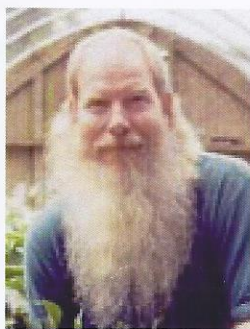
Heartland Hosta Spring
Meeting
(Faith Lutheran Church)

May 14

Heartland Hosta Annual
Plant Sale
(Faith Lutheran Church)

September 10

Heartland Hosta Fall
Meeting
(Faith Lutheran Church)



Articles from Bob Solberg's web site, *Hosta Gardening Guide* **Preparing the Garden for Winter**

With all the cool wet weather we've had this summer, (if it was so hot and dry in the plains it had to be cool and wet somewhere), I fear we will

have an early winter. As the hostas in the garden are already looking forward to their long winter's nap, my mind drifts off to winter cleanup. Here's a checklist:

1. **Label, label, label.** Don't wait until those plastic tags have faded or been scattered by the leaf blower, re-label all your new hostas now. I like to bury a plastic label with the hosta name written in pencil at the same position for each hosta clump in the bed, say 3 o'clock as you view it from the path. They will last for years underground.
2. **Make one last check for pest problems,** especially voles and foliar nematodes. In the latter case, remove badly damaged plants from the garden.
3. **Leaf removal, both tree and hosta.** If it is not an overwhelming task, try to remove the dry hosta foliage from the garden, (do not compost), after a couple of nights of hard freezing weather. This will help decrease next year such pest problems as slugs, fungal infections, and foliar nematodes. Also, cutting scapes will prevent unwanted hosta 'weed' seedlings from appearing in the Spring. Piling the fallen tree leaves will provide a good winter mulch for the garden but will also make excellent winter housing for voles. It is probably best to remove those leaves from the beds by gently raking or blowing with a leaf blower. Then a thin layer of mulch, (pine bark is my favorite), can be applied to prevent heaving and protect the hosta crowns.
4. **Stop watering the garden.** Sounds silly but hostas would rather be dry in the winter than wet. Also the lack of water will encourage newly planted

hostas to go dormant and not keep throwing up new leaves.

5. **Plant early Spring bulbs** for early color in the garden. Crocus and tulip foliage will be out of the way by the time the hostas start to spread.
6. Finally, or maybe this should have come first, **plant all the hostas you bought this Summer** in the ground. Hostas overwinter much better in the ground than they do in pots and if they are not in quite the right spot when they come up next Spring, they can be easily moved. This also removes any lingering guilt that you may have next Spring when it comes time to buy more hostas.

Hopefully, it will be a long warm autumn so that we can get all our gardening chores finished before the snow flies.

To Divide or Not to Divide?

One of the most often asked hosta questions is, "When do I divide my hostas". Traditionally the answer has been, "In the Spring, just as they are coming out the ground".

Spring may be the easiest time to divide hostas with all their foliage out of the way. And Spring is the time of year that we are all in the mood to clean up the garden and envision the way we want it to look in Summer. It is only natural to want to dig those hosta clumps and spread them out all over the garden especially when we see how many more divisions there will be in each clump this year than last.

Honestly, Spring is not a bad time to move hostas, especially those that multiply the fastest and are in the greatest need of being divided. But there are dangers. So what is the best time for the hosta? Let's look at how a hosta grows and see when it might like to be divided.

Hostas sleep all Winter, they are dormant. They do not make new roots like other perennials do. In the Spring their buds swell

To Divide or Not to Divide?—Continued

and the leaves emerge first. If the hosta was mature, these will be large mature leaves. If the hosta was grown in the sun, these will be narrowed leaves adapted for sun. A hosta grown in deep shade will have larger more rounded leaves adapted for shade. These leaves will emerge, expand and harden off in about three or so weeks depending on whether the Spring weather is cool or warm.



As the first leaves harden off and second flush of leaves begins to appear, the hosta will be making new roots from the base of the new shoot. Thus hostas do not make new roots until the first foliage hardens off or about three weeks after they emerge. Cool spring soil temperatures may slow or delay this root formation even longer.

So what is the danger of dividing hostas in the Spring? Timing. In the Spring when the weather is cool and the soil is slow to warm, your newly divided hostas will have large mature leaves and no new roots for weeks. What we call beautiful spring days, those of bright sun, cool breezes and low humidity, are very stressful for new hosta leaves. On those days the desiccation rate is very high and the new hosta divisions with their reduced and possibly damaged root systems, dry out rapidly. If the weather turns suddenly hot for even a day or two, the hosta leaves will burn. While this damage may not prove permanent, the clumps will certainly be reduced in size.

So if you must divide your hostas in the spring, do not over divide them. Split the clumps in half or at most quarters. Divide only fast growing cultivars in spring that can recover quickly, avoid *H. sieboldianas* and 'Tokudamas'. Dig them with a fork not a shovel so as to damage their long roots as little as possible. Hosta roots only grow at the tip, if you cut the roots they rarely branch and will not get any longer. New

roots will have to come to take their place.

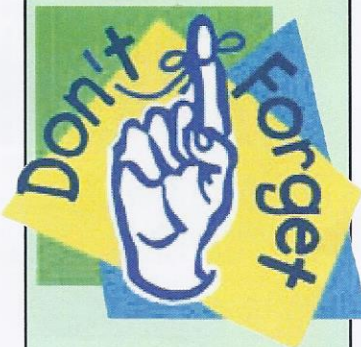
When do I prefer to divide my hostas? I like to do it in August or early September, at least 30 days before the first frost date. The conditions then are more favorable to rapid root growth. The soil is warm and the air is more humid than in the

Spring. While people prefer the cool sunny days of spring, hostas grow well on 85-90 degree days with high humidity.

Also, hostas usually put on a little growth spurt in August. Frequently, they will throw up a small flush of leaves as the temperatures moderate from the heat of July, especially if there has been rain. Many hostas at this time of year begin to actively grow again after their Summer heat dormancy. Thus, hostas will make all new foliage before frost and hold it well into Fall. Some may even bloom again.

The only danger in dividing hostas in August is excessive heat or extended drought. Keep newly divided hostas wet. Do not let them dry out for the first two weeks. Removing some of the older, larger leaves or cutting the foliage back at the time of dividing will reduce water loss. Any leaves that suffer burned edges will be taken by the frost in a few weeks anyway.

One other aesthetic point. I would rather have my hosta garden look "divided" as it goes into fall when hostas are usually past their peak anyway than to see it that way all season long. Hostas divided in August will come up next Spring in their new homes with more divisions, better proportioned leaves and established root systems. They will look better too. So save your heavy hosta dividing for those humid late Summer days. It will be tougher on you, but your hostas will thank you in the Spring.



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. We ask that you prepay at least 2 years at a time.

Join the American Hosta Society

The publications alone are worth the annual dues. Visit the AHS website (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:
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