



Heartland Hosta & Shade Plant Society

Spring 2010

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President's Message

Hello hosta lovers! I know everyone is sick of the snow and cold and hoping Spring will arrive quickly.

Our March 13th meeting will be here before we know it. Our guest speaker will be Don Dean. His message will be "hybridizer born or evolved?" Don recently retired after 32 years of teaching Middle Schoolers. He now has more time to hybridize hostas.

Don was first introduced to hostas in 1984 when his mother gave him a sizeable chunk of Undulata taken from an old established clump in her yard. 1987 found Don moving his family, Gail and Jesse, to their current home site. It was a move from a prairie lot to a heavily wooded lot. He joined a local garden club and began touring members' gardens. He was looking for solutions to a newfound gardening problem, shade. A visit to Betty Peterson's garden created the 'hook' and set Don on a path involving hostas from that point to the present.

Betty convinced Don to volunteer as a bus captain for the 1990 AHS tour in Minnesota. Don met Ken Anderson and began to purchase hostas from him. Quickly recruited by Ken, it was a short step from becoming an AHS member to also becoming a Midwest Regional Hosta Society member. Conversations the summer of '91 led Don and Ken to co-found the Minnesota Hosta Society a year later. Don became its first president. 1991 also began the years of growing hosta seeds under lights. He became the auction chairman for the AHS in 1997 and served for



Don Dean

several years (remaining involved each year since). He started and continues to run the AHS online auction from 2002 to 2010

Those first seeds grown indoors during the winter of '91-92 began a continued passion for creating new hostas. He continues to dab pollen.

Don has had the good fortune of having several great mentors along the way through relationships with Ken Anderson, Herb Benedict, Hideko Gowan, and many others who proved to be excited to share their passion for hybridizing. Growing a plant for five or more years prior to selection, obtaining several of his peers' views about his seedlings and being sure that distinction is present is a must for Don prior to releasing a plant.

Don began registering some seedlings in 1999. H. 'Silver Bay,' H. 'Faith,' and H. 'Pewterware' are three of his solids currently available. H. 'Bedazzled,' H. 'Frosted Dimples,' and H. 'Heartbeat' are each marginal variegated plants Don has introduced.

We will have one of Don's introductions, Frosted Dimples, for the May 8th Plant Sale. Naylor Creek has several of Don's introductions. There will be a number of their catalogs available at the March meeting. We will have over 60 varieties of Hostas and several shade perennials at our May 8th sale which starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church, 67th and Roe, Prairie Village, KS.

Hope to see you Saturday March 13h at 9:30 a.m.

Penny

Hosta Meeting Saturday March 13, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
at Faith Lutheran Church,
67th & Roe, Prairie Village, Kansas



2010 Events

March 13

Heartland Hosta Spring
Meeting
(Faith Lutheran Church)

May 8

Heartland Hosta Annual
Plant Sale
(Faith Lutheran Church)

June 23-26

AHS National Convention
Bloomington, MN

July 8-10

Midwest Regional
Convention
Des Moines, IA

September 11

Heartland Hosta Fall
Meeting
(Faith Lutheran Church)



Don Dean, Alex J Summers Distinguished Merit Award

2008, Volume 39, Number 3 of the HOSTA Journal

Those who know me know I am rarely short on words. This was not the case one evening while I was on the phone with Chuck Zdeb, finishing some business surrounding this year's awards. At the end of the conversation, Chuck informed me that I was this year's recipient of the Alex J. Summers Award. I was taken aback. Chuck must have thought the phone had been disconnected until my excuses and "yeah, buts" emerged after a pause, assuring him I was still on the line. Somehow it was great to see others receive this award, but it was difficult to accept it for myself.

Chuck had other ideas. He told me I now had the responsibility of an acceptance speech. I wondered, what could I say? Then he added the second half of his assignment, which seemed even more difficult: I also had to select an Alex J. Summers Hosta of Distinction—and I had to do it within the next couple of days.

The first half of the assignment became clear and simple, once I got over myself. This award is not about me nor any of its other recipients. It is about an attitude. All the winners, whether an AHS president or other organizational leader, hybridizer, scientist, editor or one of the ultimate ambassadors of hostas, have had an attitude that led them to give back something to the society in return for the many things they have received through their involvement with it. It is an attitude of stepping up when a need arises, or often before it arises.

It is willingness to apply one's expertise where it can do some good or develop a new expertise that can be of use. It is not about awards.

I know that as much as I may give, there is so much more I have taken away from my involvement with the AHS. I encourage all of you to step up and try to give a bit back. We have a rather diverse group. The array of skills and talents within each individual sitting at the tables in this room is incredible. The future of this society relies on tapping into those skills and talents.

I have been inspired by many of the Alex J. Summers Award recipients, but, truth be known, I also have been inspired continually by a multitude of the unsung heroes of this society. I have been inspired by the person who volunteers to carry plants to the auction floor or be a clerk at the auction. I have been inspired by the member who gets a local newsletter assembled, the member who stamps the newsletters so the information can be mailed out and shared among us and by the person who has two divisions of a prized seedling and offers one of them up for auction.

I have been inspired by Connie Linder lugging a suitcase bigger than she is in order to raise funds for the society. And by the way she can take a man twice her size aside to convince him he needs to do a job he did not want to do, resulting in his walking away believing it was his idea! I have been inspired by Marvelous Marlys (Anderson), who each year digs into her collection with an enthusiasm so contagious that her friends are encouraged to donate for the first time. My list is endless.

The second part of Chuck's assignment, selecting a plant was far more difficult than creating this speech. Do I select a classic I would grow in lieu of one of the most exciting new intros? A friend's plant? One of mine? During the 2000 convention, I had refused to place tags signifying award winners in my garden, since I believe attendees know what they like when they see it. What could my selection tell them now? I sought help from prior recipients by reading a few of their explanations on how they selected a plant.

Having criteria is the key, so I quickly developed a list. My selection must be an important one to me. It must be easily recognized. It must be easily recognized. It must be an important breeder, since I am committed to making crosses to further our choices in plants. Finally, the plant must be available to gardeners, not only collectors.

My mind jumped to one of the most important plants to me. Two years after a misguided time in my life, when I could have used all the help possible to get my life on track, my grand-

mother had caught me alone. She gave me a long deep hug, accompanied by the message that she had been praying for me. She said she was grateful her prayers had been answered, for she could see a change in my eyes. I decided that the first good yellow plant I hybridized and introduced following her death would be named in her honor.



Faith

Somehow Gladys did not seem like a great name for a hosta, but the alternatives was a no-brainer; *Hosta* 'Faith' became that plant's name. *H.*

'Faith' certainly is of great importance to me and is a distinctive yellow once it reaches maturity, but it fell short on my other criteria.

I moved on to 'Urajiro Hachijo'. The list of its seedlings is impressive: *H.* 'Candy Dish' 'Marilyn Monroe', 'Pewterware', 'Titanium' and 'Ebony Towers', along with several more, both registered and not. It lends attributes to its progeny such as interesting leaf textures and form, colorful scapes and an unexpected ability to intensify blues. But distinctiveness, both in the eyes of general gardeners and skilled hosta collectors, is an issue. It was set aside.

My search continued. I have a long--time passion for blue hostas, and few have struck me as strongly as Herb Benedict's 'Purple Verticulated Elf'. The color is a deep rich, purplish blue that holds up to heat into the late season. It is fertile both ways and yields great blue seedlings, often with flowers arranged 360 degrees around the scape. Alas, it was only available for a brief period in small numbers and quickly sold out.

The next two plants I considered stopped my in my tracks when I initially saw them in 1992. The first was Steve Moldovan's 'Olive Branch', which is distinctive and readily available but not a particularly good breeder for me. The second was Steve's 'Silver Frost', which is a spectacular breeder for hybrids showing *H. sieboldiana* characteristics with improved color: blues that last well into the

season. It is beautiful in its own right and stands apart from plants with similar leaf texture, form and color, especially when viewed in the late August garden. The problem was that Steve's plants are not registered and are rarely produced in quantity. He did not believe in tissue-culturing hostas, which means they are not readily available.

I still liked the idea of selecting a plant connected to Steve Moldovan. He was a hybridizer, period. He was quick to give back to those who shared his passion for hybridizing. He produced premium tall bearded irises for many years before switching to daylilies, making his largest breakthrough with the color pink in tetraploids. He also dabbled for years with hostas. I frequently would find a box at my door containing his latest daylily introductions, and he frequently found a box of hostas



Steve Moldovan

at his door. He is sorely missed by the plant world. I was running out of time to make a decision. I looked for registered plants with a Moldovan plant as a parent. Rachel Soucek's 'Steve Moldovan' stood out as a double winner, both in color and name. *H.* 'Silver Frost' is one of its parents. But, again, its distribution and availability have been very limited to date.

I finally arrived at a blue that met all my criteria. It is a controlled cross. It is available and promises to have wider distribution, which will help expand recognition. One of its parents is Steve Moldovan's 'Silver Frost'. It is dear to me because it was one of my first seedlings to be released. I have selected *Hosta* 'Silver Bay' as this year's (2008) Alex J. Summers Hosta of Distinction.



Silver Bay



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:
Pete Postlewaite
MRHS Treasurer
21172 Andover Rd.
Kildeer, IL 60047



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Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society Membership and Renewal Form

Your dues are currently paid up through the year noted next to your name on the mailing address label. We ask that all members prepay at least 2 years at a time to minimize the paperwork and bookkeeping. Dues are \$10.00 per year.

Check one... NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

Name	Street Address
City, State, Zip	Home Phone
Business Phone	E-Mail Address
Fax	Member of American Hosta Society?
Is Your Garden Open to Visitors?	Would You Like To Volunteer?

Please return this form with your e-mail address even if your dues are paid up. Return this form and your dues to:

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