



Shades of Heartland

SUMMER 2004
HEARTLAND HOSTA & SHADE PLANT SOCIETY

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President's Message

Why do we love hostas? Is it for the variable size, vigor, and colors available today? I am not sure why but they have center stage in my gardens. The green hostas of old have been replaced with the soft hues of blue, brilliant chartreuse, golden yellow, florid lemon and ghostly white. The variegated hosta's special gift to us is their contrasting leaf colors, including yellow-gold centers, streaking, mottling, misting, splashing and speckled leaf patterns. If that is not enough excitement to grab our attention lets put corrugation, substance, wavy and cupped leaves into what makes up a hosta. The choices given us from this wide range allow us to choose each hosta in our garden to perform a specific task. For my garden there is no need for companion plants because the leaf shapes of hostas are lance, strap,

elliptic and round, providing extreme contrast from plant to plant. The variegation of hostas has become extremely wide ranged over the years and the sizes start from mini-dwarf to extra large. It is possible to fill every inch of a garden using only hostas and have the best looking garden in the neighborhood.

Landscaping with hostas is more than placing the giant ones on the back row of the wide border. Use your artist eye for color and texture when planting your hosta beds. The large H. 'Blue Angel' is an excellent background for the variegation of medium sized H. 'June' which has a clear gold center and a wide blue edge. Both share a similar blue color at certain times of the year. Imagine placing H. 'Midas Touch' with its soft yellow leaves and metallic

(Continued on page 2)

Summer Meeting - June 26th

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

Saturday, June 26th, 10:00-1:00

The Pforr Home and Garden

5729 N.W. North Pointe Terr.

Parkville, MO

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

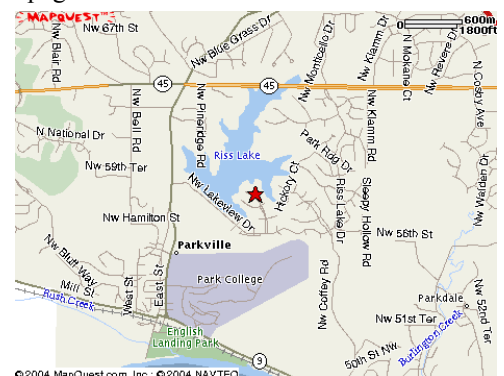
Our summer garden party will be a truly unique event. Join us for a Campaign Brunch at the home and gardens of Greg and Eileen Pforr. This event is being co-hosted by Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society and the Conifer Society.

All members should have previously received either an e-mail or snail mail announcing this event along with an RSVP due date of June 14th. Friends of club members are also welcome.

The only thing you need to bring is a pair of comfortable shoes as the garden

setting is on a steep (and sometimes rocky) hillside overlooking Riss Lake. High heels and sandals are definitely not recommended. Rubber soles are good for traction and climbing.

Driving directions can be found on page 5.



2004 Heartland Hosta Sale a Success

This year's Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society plant sale at Rolling Hills Church included nearly 1100 hostas and 85 different cultivars. An exceptionally large turnout helped provide a new home to over 800 of these hostas. In addition, thirty new members were added to our club roster during the sale. We also added membership renewals for another fifteen members.

This year members were offered a complimentary hosta ('Delta Dawn' or 'Illicit Affair') simply for attending the plant sale.



President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

sheen, near these two hostas. The hostas 'June' and 'Midas Touch' share the same soft yellow in their leaves. Moving along the border plan let's add a little more color with a set of two more hostas. Next to H. 'Blue Angel' on the back of the border place a large variegated variety such as H. 'Sagae'. The hosta placed in front of H. 'Sagae' must also compliment H. 'June' so it will be a non-variegated variety that will make H. 'Sagae' and H. 'June' both flush with pride.

I feel we are now getting into the spirit of complimentary variegations and how they mix together and that is only the beginning. It gets more interesting when we think of the overall picture. The catch phrase of the day is "Form and Function". Is the form of the hosta a mound, erect or vase-shaped, cubed mound or a flat mound? The hosta H. 'Sagae' is classified as erect so it's legs will be visible from the garden walk. I find this trait very desirable in many areas of the garden. I like to place a shorter variety in front such as H. 'Goblin' or possibly a sprawling hosta ground cover. Those hostas that are graced with corrugation and substance fulfill their function by stopping us in our tracks while forcing us to look closer. Corrugation adds another dimension to solid green and blue hostas and the choices are almost limitless. The list grows longer each year with newly released varieties. These corrugated hostas come in all sizes. H. 'Rosedale Spoons', comes to mind with it's small size, intensely blue-green cupped leaves. An older variety, H. 'Abiqua Drink-

ing Gourd', corrugated with good substance and cupped leaves makes a good addition to any garden. The brilliant shiny colors of H. 'Twilight' will not look attractive next to a similar hosta such as H. 'Yellow River', both of these would look best separated by a dark green hosta such as H. 'Black Hills' or a yellow-gold hosta such as H. 'Zounds'.

Extra large hostas can become beautiful specimens if planted as a "first impression" spot in a shady area close to the gate leading into the garden. This hosta becomes the tantalizing teaser for the rest of the beds beyond. The hostas 'Guardian Angel' or 'Millennium' are only two out of many that I would choose for that purpose. I would avoid the "string of pearl" look in the hosta garden where one or two varieties are used to line a long walk or border. Choose mini sizes for rock gardens or a small clump to view from your garden bench. Who needs to purchase perennial ground cover when hostas can be used? I recently dug out my Pachysandra ground cover and replaced it with small, extremely ruffled, lance-shaped yellow leaved hosta seedlings that were crossed for their small size.

Our fortune is having a wide range of hosta choices for each specific area of our shady garden. Hostas have something for everyone and for any area of our garden. One can never have too many hostas; it's the small area we have to plant them in that gives us problems!

Written by a true hostaholic,
Pat Mora



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

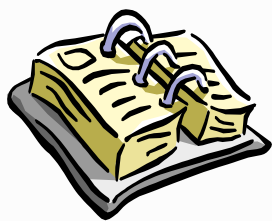
The publications alone are worth the annual dues. Visit the AHS website (www.hosta.org) for the latest membership options.

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



2004 Events

June 15-19
American Hosta Society
National Convention
(Des Moines, IA)

June 26
Heartland Hosta Garden
Party at Greg and Eileen
Pfarr's Home & Garden

July 8-10
Midwest Regional Hosta
Society Convention
(Dubuque, IA)

July 17-18
First Look
(Schenectady, NY)

October 9
Heartland Hosta
Fall Meeting
(Rolling Hills Church)

Growing Hostas in Containers

by Rob Mortko

Many of us have tried our luck at growing hostas in containers. Maybe it's because we're slowly running out of space in the garden or maybe we're just looking for some attractive foliage on a shady patio or deck. The concept of planting hostas in containers seems simple enough. Unfortunately there is very little written information on the subject.

What I've learned (the hard way I might add) from growing hostas commercially in one gallon containers and then overwintering those same containers can be applied by any shade gardener attempting to do the same on their own patio or deck. Getting hostas to thrive during the growing season in a container is actually the easy part. The hard part is successfully overwintering them.

Hostas love water during the growing season and basically hate it during the winter dormancy period. That makes a huge difference in the choice of potting mix we use. Most potting mixes contain a large percentage of peat which holds moisture really well and re-

duces the amount of watering during the growing season. But that same moist peat will easily cause rot during the winter months. So we need to compromise a bit by using a pine bark based mixture that will keep us more on the dry side during the winter which then requires more frequent watering during the summer months.

The other key to overwintering hostas is to make sure that once they freeze, they stay frozen. What we don't want is a repeated string of freeze-thaw cycles. That means we need to get those containers out of any direct sunlight during dormancy. Unheated detached garages will work fine as long as they provide the 700 hours of temperatures below 40 degrees. Outside we can take advantage of the earth's insulating capacity by getting the containers on the ground and covered with an insulating layer and then covered with plastic.

You can see that growing hostas in containers during the summer is a breeze. The challenge is managing the winter months. But with proper care it can be done successfully.

Late Spring and Summer Hosta Tips

from Bob Solberg

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.

Summer

Period of bloom, seed setting and dormancy
 June-July-early August

Fertilization: Apply 10-10-10 July 1, or weekly applications of liquid fertilizer until bloom. Also, fertilize once after dividing and replanting.

Irrigation: Maintain soil moisture. Also, sprinkle leaves during heat of day to cool.

Protection: Thin layer of coarse mulch to conserve moisture and keep crown cool.

Division: August is the best time to divide and replant. Fertilize after replanting.

Pests: July and August, begin watching for foliar nematodes on leaf blades, and isolate or destroy affected plants. Fungal diseases begin during summer. (Use Daconil every 10 days as needed)

TC (Tissue Culture) vs. OS (Originator's Stock)

by Ray Rodgers

(Editor's Note: Ray Rodgers is a member of the Central Illinois Hosta Society. This article originally appeared in their March 2004 newsletter and is reprinted with Ray's permission.)

Have you ever looked at a hosta price list and wondered what the "TC" and/or "OS" meant in some of the hosta descriptions? Occasionally one would even see two prices for the same plant, the lower price being for TC (Tissue Culture) and the more expensive price for OS (Originator's Stock).

TC references plants which have been propagated via tissue culture. In very simple terms, these are chemically energized test tube babies started from small shavings of the parent plant's meristem (the central growth point of a hosta crown).

Compared to increasing the number of plants through manually dividing garden plants, tissue culturing results in rapid reproduction. Tissue culturing must be performed in a sterile lab type environment. This is a tedious, exacting, repetitious process that must be monitored very closely. Except for a few serious hobbyists, tissue culturing is better left up to the professionals. The resulting plants are typically wholesaled in multiple quantities to retail outlets.

The OS designation basically means the plant being offered is a division of the original named hosta. This hosta could have been derived through hybridization (seedling) or sporting*, which is not uncommon with hostas. If an OS plant was purchased and a division was given to another person, who in turn eventually gave a division of their plant to yet another person, all these plants would still be considered originator's stock. On price lists, the OS designation is most often used for newer or rare plants. Originator's stock plants can help to validate exactly what was originally registered and ensure the direct lineage of the original plants are not lost.

Are originator's stock hostas better and should they demand a premium price? The newer the plant and the more unique it is, the more likely an OS division is worth the extra money. Some of the truly unique hostas are not replicated easily via tissue culturing. With these plants, a TC lab may develop a high percentage of babies not possessing the same characteristics of the parent. This inability unquestionably drives the price of these varieties up. Luckily for us consumers, most hostas can be TCed with a high degree of success.

Responsible wholesalers and retailers will typically guarantee their plants to be true to name. This starts with the TC labs' commitment to cull (throw away) or give a new name to hostas not meeting specific criteria. Since it is not always possible to know for sure if small tissue cultured plants will look like their parents in subsequent years, a small

percentage of untrue hostas do reach nurseries and other retailers. Since responsible retailers typically grow TC plants on for at least one full season prior to selling them, some additional variants may be caught.

It is the untrue forms that slip through the cracks that generate some of the unfavorable comments about tissue cultured hostas. Usually such comments are used to justify the price of OS plants. Certainly people should expect to receive what they pay for. Some variants are not as attractive or as good of a grower as the named variety. But, some variants are actually better than the original plant. As an example, in a batch of tissue cultured H. 'Great Expectations', some wider-margined plants were discovered. These plants were given the name H. 'Dream Weaver'. The additional green leaf surface allows this hosta to produce more chlorophyll than H. 'Great Expectations', making it a better grower.

Tissue culturing has also accelerated the popularity of "Sport Hunting". This is the act of hosta enthusiasts searching through nurseries for hostas that are different from their published descriptions. These plants may vary in a variety of ways, including variegation pattern (including Instability**), coloration, plant size and leaf shape. For those interested in hybridizing or just growing open pollinated seed, finding an otherwise desirable plant with some degree of splashing could be a significant find. Except for somewhat rare occasions, it requires an unstable pod parent (mother plant) to produce variegated seedlings. Whether the found plants turn out to be better than the named variety or not, it is occasionally worth the purchase price to the hunter to have something a little different to display in their garden.

Make no mistake; tissue culture plants have fueled the popularity of hostas by rapidly increasing the availability of many newer varieties of hostas at affordable prices. The elevation of hosta to the rank of most popular perennial from almost obscurity can directly be linked to the early 1980s when plant tissue culture was in its infancy.

Tissue culture and originator's stock plants both have their place in the hosta world. Whether purchasing OS plants is a good value depends largely on the specific hosta variety, but the ultimate decision rests with each individual buyer.

* A Sport is a hosta arising from another hosta, possessing different characteristics.

** In hosta, Instability is a plant that does not maintain its solid or variegated pattern, resulting in a Splashed pattern (formerly referred to as Streaked, also known as Striated). Splashed hostas have many non-connected light and dark variegated sections. Splashed hostas typically stabilize into a solid colored or variegated plant over time.

Featuring . . . Marvin Snyder

Marvin Snyder's professional education is in Architecture and Architectural Engineering with degrees from Kansas State University in the late 40's. From there he worked for 37 years with Butler Manufacturing Company in their Research & Development, Buildings Division. He was also Research Manager for 20 years before retiring in 1986.

For over 50 years Marvin has been an avid gardener. About 20 years ago he began collecting and landscaping with dwarf and miniature conifers and currently has around 200 varieties. Marvin has been active in the American Conifer Society for many years, serving 4 years as Secretary, 3 years as National President and is currently on the board as Past President.

He also collects and designs with hostas, epimediums, ornamental grasses, veronicas, campanulas, hardy geraniums, heucheras and other unusual perennials. He is a member of the American Hosta Society, North American Rock Garden Society, several local garden clubs, and is an Advisor on the board of the Garden Center Association of Greater Kansas City. Marvin has been a member of Heartland Hosta since the early 90's and has served on our board.

Marvin considers himself both a landscape designer and an avid plant collector. "I like the unusual plant, and I like to design", Marvin shared. His lot has a rather unusual shape, and when he designed the house in 1959, he turned it from a normal orientation in relation to the street, and ended up with garden space on all four sides. These gardens have evolved as his interests and knowledge of various types and families of plants has grown and changed over the years.

In the mid 1980's Marvin decided to concentrate on providing more year round interest in the garden. These endeavors lead to his "discovery" of dwarf conifers. Marvin admits "Of course I already knew what conifers were -- pines, firs, spruce, etc. I had seen them in the forests and arboreta, but I had no idea how many miniature and dwarf varieties existed, which were usable in the average garden." All of Marvin's studies led him to the American Conifer



Society where he joined, became involved, and the rest is history.

While Marvin is an admitted plant collector and his collection of over 250 hostas is extensive, he has never wanted his garden to resemble a collection or a botanical display. Early on it became obvious that his many hostas and dwarf conifers needed companions. He began to experiment with companion plants in order to pick up the color or texture of the conifer or hosta to give it greater impact. Then, as an alternative, he tried placing rocks so they wouldn't look so naked and alone. He wanted to stay with our native limestone, but didn't like the flat limestone left over from excavating his own basement so he settled on limestone 'holey boulders', found at a local "rock supply house".

The Snyder garden has been featured on many local and regional garden tours. Marvin's wife, Emelie, is a strong supporter and puts together the labels for the plants. Emelie is also quite knowledgeable in the garden and an excellent tour guide. Their favorite hostas include 'Sagae', 'Striptease', 'June', 'Pandora's Box' and 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd'.

Directions to the Pforr's

From I-635

About 2 miles North of where I-635 crosses the Missouri River, there is a Parkville exit on the left (west) side of the highway. It is highway 9. This will take you to old town Parkville. At the Fire Station / Post Office, turn right to go uphill still on highway 9. The stop light near the top of the hill is the Riss Lake entrance. Go across the dam to the top of the far hill. At the stop sign, turn left onto Woodhaven. The third right turn off Woodhaven is North Point Terr.

From I-435

From I-435, take the Parkville exit right after crossing the Missouri River. Turn right (east) onto highway 45. Continue on highway 45 past the Tom Watkins / National Golf Course. At the top of the following hill, watch for highway 9. There will be a Grade School on the left and a Phillips 66 Service Station on the right. Turn right and go south to the first stoplight. That is the entrance to Riss Lake. Go across the dam to the top of the far hill. At the stop sign, turn left onto Woodhaven. The third right turn off Woodhaven is North Point Terr.

From I-29 and N. 64th Street

Go west on 64th (also labeled Tom Watkins's Parkway) and is 45 highway. You should pass a Riss Lake entrance on the left, but do not turn there. Continue past the lake on the left and proceed to the top of the far hill. Turn left at the stoplight onto highway 9. Go south to the first stoplight. That is the entrance to Riss Lake that you should use. Go across the dam to the top of the far hill. At the stop sign, turn left onto Woodhaven. The third right turn off Woodhaven is North Point Terr.

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

SHADES OF HEARTLAND

Fall Meeting to Feature Hans Hansen

Every year or two we strive to bring in a speaker of national prominence to address our local group. (Our financial success with our annual hosta sale helps fund this event.) In recent years these speakers have included Mark Zilis, Bob Solberg and Barry Yinger. For this fall's meeting we are quite pleased to announce that we have booked Mr. Hans Hansen to speak on the subject of (what else?) hostas. Hans is basically the "mover and shaker" behind all hosta activities at Shady Oaks Nursery in Waseca, MN.

Hans was born and raised on a dairy farm in Southwestern Minnesota. He received his BS Degree in Horticulture from the University of Minnesota. He has been with Shady Oaks Nursery as Director of Research & Development since 1993. He runs the tissue culture lab and has a breeding program for hostas, martagon lilies, and baptisias. He is also quite interested in rock garden plants, conifers and peonies. Hans



gardens on a five acre property that is primarily woods near Waseca, MN.

Hans has introduced a number of very popular hosta cultivars including:

- 'Cherish'
- 'Earth Angel'
- 'Eternal Flame'
- 'Fire and Ice'
- 'Hope'
- 'Last Dance'
- 'Miss Saigon'
- 'Old Glory'
- 'Pandora's Box'
- 'Risky Business'
- 'Stained Glass'
- 'Titanic'
- 'Touch of Class'

You won't want to miss this meeting. Go ahead and put Saturday, October 9th on your calander now!