



# Show Me Hostas Newsletter

Volume 12, Issue 8

October, 2011

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



**Pam Wolkowitz President**

*Photo by Kelly Hall*

Happy Fall Y'all,

Well we are getting to the end of another growing year. The leaves are starting to fall and the air has taken on a special scent. Soon we will be putting our hostas 'to bed for the winter'. It's a sad time in a way, but a good thing in that we can reflect and make changes in the coming year when we start afresh.

I want to send a special thanks to Jim Weidman for creating a fine new Board which is listed in this newsletter. Thanks to our new Board also for stepping up and helping to create a great club for our members in 2012. Remember one of the best ways to learn more about hostas and get to know our members is to ask for a job. There is something for everyone.

Your President,

*Pam*

"Spring flowers are long since gone. Summer's bloom hangs limp on every terrace. The gardener's feet drag a bit on the dusty path and the hinge in his back is full of creaks."

- Louise Seymour Jones

## 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**October 16**

**(Note location change)**

**Meeting with Speaker Mike Curran**

1:00 PM, Summer Winds Garden Center

**December 4**

**Holiday Party**

1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center

**June 13-16, 2012**

**American Hosta Society National Convention**

Nashville, TN

**July 12-14, 2012**

**Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention**

Rochester, MN



### Conifers are more than Christmas Trees!

Ever wonder which varieties are suitable for life in St. Louis?

Do you know which is more threatening to a conifer's health – heat or cold?

Is a dwarf conifer really dwarf or is it all relative?

How do I tell a fir from a spruce from a cedar...?

Learn the answers to these questions, get tips about growing conifers in St. Louis, see what's hardy here and what can exist only in our dreams.

**Mike Curran**

Conifer specialist at Summer Winds

October 16, 1:00 PM

Summer Winds Garden Center

54 Clarkson Road (near Manchester)

Ellisville, MO 63011

**Note change of location!**

## We've come a long way!

It all started as the brain child of our Vice-President Phyllis Weidman. A regular volunteer at the Missouri Botanical Garden, she noticed that their hosta beds sorely needed a little resuscitation and a lot of tender loving care.

Both the Garden and our Society were receptive to the idea of our members taking on the tasks of upgrading and then maintaining the Garden's hosta beds.

First, to provide more shade, a donation of crab trees replaced ones destroyed in an ice storm. In 2010, Phyllis created plans to redevelop a vacant bed and rejuvenate existing beds. Our society purchased the hostas and planted the areas with the help of Garden staff member Darmon Williams.

This spring members attended the first annual work day, weeding beds, planting more hostas, pruning shrubs and general clean-up.

After numerous meetings with Garden staff and our own Board, Phyllis applied to the American Hosta Society to establish the Missouri Botanical Garden as an official AHS Display Garden. There are currently only 16 other such areas in the nation. Her proposal was accepted.

This past week, Phyllis presented the AHS plaque to the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Garden will mount the plaque on a rock and place it in a prominent position within the hosta area. It is now the responsibility of our society to continue the work so ably started by Phyllis.

She has lots of ideas and enthusiasm. When work days roll around, volunteer! Get to know Phyllis and her hardy band of weeders and planters. Let's make this area truly special!



Getting started the morning of June 5, 2010! First step - check the plant layout chart created by Phyllis Weidman.



The digging crew quickly planted, fertilized, watered and sprayed 'rabbit-be-gone'. Two hours later the empty bed was transformed.



New bed at the end of day one



Same bed one year later - May 2011.  
Wait until next year!



Phyllis Weidman holds AHS Display Garden plaque.

**It's not too early to mark your calendar and reserve a seat.  
Reservation deadline is Nov. 20th**



**St. Louis Hosta Society  
Holiday Party  
Sunday December 4th, 1:00 pm  
Creve Coeur Government Center**

Please join us for a Catered Lunch with Cash Bar  
\$10.00 per person, Reservations required.  
Please mail your check to David Poos, 9904 Crestwood Dr., Crestwood, MO 63126  
Bring a wrapped Gift for the Gift Exchange (\$10.00 value)

**Welcome our newest member!**

**Mary Treadway - St. Louis**

**Next meeting, stick out your hand and welcome Mary**



**Meet your 2012 officers!**

**President – Phyllis Weidman**

**Vice-president – Dave Poos**

**Secretary – Kelly Hall**

**Treasurer – Cindy Michniok**



Nominating chairman Jim Weidman presented the 2012 slate of officers. There being no additional nominations from the floor, members approved the slate as presented.

## Hybridizers are just normal people Anyone can do this!

Don Dean's interest in gardening started at an early age. His mother and grandmother would not let him go anywhere until the garden was weeded. Most youngsters would swear off gardening after a start like that. But Don's only vow was to create a garden that didn't have to be weeded. His solution – grow plants close together.

Don's first hosta was the same as most of our first hostas, the ubiquitous undulata, given to him by his grandmother. He planted it in his vegetable garden and quickly forgot all about it. He soon found out how hardy hostas really are. Don tilled that garden, hosta and all. The next year there were small undulatas everywhere. This led to one of his hybridizing requirements: the plant has to perform well in average conditions – the strong will survive.

Why does he love hostas so? Don loves the shade and everything that grows there (except those weeds). In the spring before the hostas start peeping out, his garden erupts with the color of snow trillium, double bloodroot, bleeding hearts and trout lilies.

In late spring, the hostas begin to unfurl their leaves. In Don's yard, this stage compliments the blooming of Rodgersia, early blooming toad lilies, Celedine poppies, wild geraniums, goatsbeard, ligularias and the graceful lady slippers. If only we could reliably grow lady slippers in St. Louis.

In summer, the hostas are in full growth. Their form, color, texture and height are now well established. Don over-plants so that he doesn't have to deal with those pesky weeds and he wants to hold onto his seedlings until he can tell if they are distinctive enough. He grows his seedlings in the ground rather than in pots – remember, the strong will survive.

In fall, the late blooming ligularias, the lobelias, black snake root and the clumping anemone (anemonopsis macrophyia) fill the shade garden.

To start hybridizing, Don recommends setting goals, and then selects the parents. For instance h.'Little Wonder' has thin substance but is a good grower. You might cross that plant with h.'Love Pat', which has heavy substance but is a slow grower. In deciding to register or not, look for distinctiveness, an improvement of some sort over its parents or an added trait or new combination of characteristics. Start your seeds under lights, throw away 90-95%, and then plant out the remainder and evaluate.

I'm not sure that what Don says is true – 'anyone can do this'. I look at 'Silver Bay', 'Faith', 'Peterware', 'Ebony Towers', his new 'Raucous Ruffles' and marvel. Thank you Don for coming to St. Louis and sharing your love with us.



Don and Arlie Tempel discuss the age of an old garden fork after the September meeting.



## Save the Date

June 13 - 16, 2012  
AHS Convention - Nashville!!!

From convention co-chairs  
Cornelia Holland and Virginia Gregory-Kocaj

“**Hostas, Friends and Music**” will be a time for visiting with old friends, making new ones, experiencing Nashville and of course, seeing Middle Tennessee gardens. The Scientific program will include: a panel on ***Hosta Tips to Grow By***; Don Dean will share his hybridizing experience ***Where Did That Trait Come From***; Jerry Weeks with ***From Yon to Here*** will discuss how hostas made their way from Asia to the New World; and, George Schmid, the Key Note speaker, will present his work on ***Hosta Species***.

Mike Shadrack will address hostas in Europe with ***Eric Smith, Master Hybridizer***, Bob Solberg will talk on ***The Future of Hostas*** and Warren Pollack will lead a breakout session on recent hosta DNA work by Dr. Ben Zonnerveld of the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. Flo Chaffin of Specialty Ornamentals will discuss ***Shady Characters*** - Japanese maples, hydrangea and conifers for the various growing zones.

There will also be two non-scientific sessions: ***The Rise of the Southern Biscuit*** and ***Adelicia Acklen, Mistress of Belmont (Plantation)***.

A musical revue is planned for Wednesday evening after the Optional Tours. One tour is ***Gardens of Nashville***, including the Parthenon, and the other is a historic tour of three ***Civil War sites in Franklin, TN***, including Carnton Plantation and its 1860 period garden.

The Hat Contest will return on Saturday evening and a Photography Contest will be held. Categories and rules will be posted on the convention website.

With so many attendees driving to Nashville, we are looking forward to a great Hosta Show. You bring the leaves... We'll have the bottles.

If Country Music is on your agenda, we suggest attending the Grand Ole Opry on Tuesday evening to avoid missing any of the convention activities. Gray Line of Nashville has given the group a special rate which will include tickets, and transportation to and from the hotel. A special email address for this will be posted on the convention website. For further information, see [www.hosta2012.com](http://www.hosta2012.com) which will be activated in mid-October.

Ya'll come. We'll be serving up Southern Hospitality and are Expecting You.



**Candy Kisses MRHS  
convention plant for 2012**

## **Plan on attending the 2012 Midwest Convention in Rochester, MN**

**July 12, 13 and 14**

The theme for the 2012 convention is “Operation Hosta”. Planning is underway for an exciting convention with many interesting events. Visit our web site:

[http://www.soghs.org/2012\\_Midwest\\_Convention/](http://www.soghs.org/2012_Midwest_Convention/)

to see our promotional video, convention hosta, tentative schedule, tour gardens, and much more.

Registration will be available on the website starting next year. See you in Rochester for the best MRHS convention ever.

*Shades of Green Hosta Society (SOGHS) of Southeastern MN*

## **From September to Fall Cleanup**

Written by Bob Solberg

Reprinted from CIHS August 2011 newsletter

Although October is the time to start cutting back on watering, hostas do not want to be dry when they go into dormancy. Each gardener will have to decide for themselves whether their gardens need supplemental watering during October; considering soil type, temperatures, and amount of rainfall. We have very little control during the winter, but keep in mind that hostas prefer to remain on the dry side during dormancy. Excessive moisture and cold temperatures lead to rotting.

Continue to watch for foliar nematodes (brown streaks between the veins of the leaves). If you have infected plants, get rid of them, or have more infected plants next season. Mole activity usually picks up in the fall. Moles won't directly cause damage to hostas, other than occasionally uprooting young plants, but eliminating moles will reduce the likelihood of voles which use the mole runs to reach and eat hosta roots and crowns.

It is a good idea to drop poison bait into vole holes throughout the winter. Look for nickel size holes, often right next to hosta crowns. Not being able to easily see the results, I suggest alternating the use of a variety of baits to increase the chances of success. Place a brick or other heavy object over the hole to prevent poisoning of birds and other animals. Several gardeners have also had success with mouse traps baited with a mixture of peanut butter and oatmeal placed next to vole holes. Again, cover the hole and trap in a manner to protect birds and pets. A clay pot turned upside down with a brick on top works well.

## From September to Fall Cleanup continued.

Depending on how early, cutting your hostas back before they go dormant may reduce the amount of energy that they are able to store, resulting in smaller plants the following season. If you prefer this method, it is advisable to sanitize your garden tools between each plant. One commonly used sanitizer is a bleach/water solution (10-50% bleach). Most people use a mix closer to 10%. If your confidence level goes up proportionately as the percent of bleach increases, it may be worth the extra expense. It is your decision, but do use some form of sanitizer. Remember that viruses spread when the sap from an infected plant comes in contact with the sap of another plant.

Mother Nature can make the removal of hosta foliage much easier than cutting petioles at ground level. After one or more hard freezes, it becomes very easy to pull hosta foliage off without any tools. If you try pulling the foliage off too early, you may end up completely pulling some divisions and/or smaller hosta out of the ground.

Some of the reasons for cleaning your gardens in the fall include:

- Removal of all hosta leaves and other debris from the garden helps reduce slug populations the following year, as slugs often lay their eggs on these surfaces.
- Eliminates cover for rodents (mice, moles and voles).
- Reduces a variety of fungal diseases the following year.
- May reduce the spread of foliar nematodes. Some people believe that if infected leaves are not removed in the fall, they can be blown around infecting other areas. If unsure, why risk it.

For many of the above reasons, it is not advisable to put hosta leaves on the compost pile. Burning the garden clutter can be a bit of a challenge, as hosta leaves are typically very moisture retentive, but doing so eliminates any possible problems associated with discarding the waste elsewhere.

One of the arguments against cleaning gardens in the fall is that the old foliage helps to maintain soil temperatures and protects hostas from extreme cold. This is not without merit, but generally speaking, if your gardens are already mulched, and any exposed buds are covered with a little surrounding soil, there is no need for additional protection of established plants.

If additional protection is desired, a thin layer of low moisture retentive coarse mulch, such as various types of wood chips or pine bark nuggets, can be added. A thin layer of mulch will also help prevent heaving of young plants. An additional benefit of a coarse layer of mulch added anytime from fall through winter is by helping to maintain soil temperatures; emergence of new plant growth in the spring will be slightly delayed, making plant tissue less susceptible to freezing temperatures. On the negative side, adding an additional layer of compost before the ground is frozen increases the likelihood of rodent damage.

For trough gardens, putting them on the east or north side of a building and covering and surrounding them with a coarse mulch will provide winter protection. For additional protection, some gardeners prefer to first bury the bottom one-third of the trough in the ground.

For additional detail, I recommend the following articles:

- How late is too late to plant hostas in the fall? <http://www.hostahosta.com/tips.html#late>
- Preparing the Garden for Winter <http://www.hostahosta.com/tips.html#winter>



## St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

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## Membership Information

### The American Hosta Society

Contact: Sandie Markland  
8702 Pinnacle Rock Ct.  
Lorton, VA 22079-3029  
[AHSMembershipSecretary@earthlink.net](mailto:AHSMembershipSecretary@earthlink.net)  
Dues: Individual \$30 per year, Family \$34 per year

### Midwest Regional Hosta Society

Contact: Barb Schroeder  
1819 Coventry Drive  
Champaign, IL 61822  
[mrhs.treasurer@midwesthostasociety.org](mailto:mrhs.treasurer@midwesthostasociety.org)  
Dues: Individual \$20 for two years

### St. Louis Hosta Society

Contact: Dave Poos  
9904 Crestwood Drive  
Crestwood, MO 63126  
[david.poos@att.net](mailto:david.poos@att.net)  
Dues: \$7 per year, \$18 for three years  
Family or Individual

Meetings held at 1:00 PM at the **Creve Coeur Government Center, 300 N. New Ballas, 63141** (between Ladue Road and Olive), unless otherwise noted.

## Visit our Web site

[www.stlouishosta.org](http://www.stlouishosta.org)

## Other Hosta and Garden Web Sites

American Hosta Society – <http://www.hosta.org/>

Midwest Hosta Society – <http://www.midwesthostasociety.org>

Hosta Library – <http://www.hostalibrary.org>

Hosta Forum – questions/answers – <http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/hosta/>

Mini Hosta forum – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/minihosta>

Hosta Registry – <http://www.hostaregistrar.org/>