



Volume 14, Issue 8

October, 2013



Phyllis Weidman President

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Over the years I have been part of many organizations. I have found that if you arrive at the meeting just as it starts and then immediately go home you are missing a lot. It is by working for and with the organization that you make new friends, learn about the subject of interest, and just plain have a lot more fun.

I think all who were there early for the September meeting and found we were locked out of the room and then helped unload hostas for the speaker, set up name tags, and put out the treats understand what I am saying.

It is the story of Chiefs and Indians. A Chief does not do anything without lots of Indians. We have elected new officers for our society, they have said "yes" to being our Chiefs. Now is the time to find all the Indians. There are many appointed jobs in the society, some are a lot of work and others take a few minutes. All of these, when done, make our society a stand out.

There are the tasks of organizing the Club Plant Sale, Vendors Day, Pot Luck Lunch, MoBot Work Day, MoBot Plant Sale, Member Auction, and the Holiday Party. There are also many others smaller but equally important.

Hospitality – where would we be without a cookie and a sip of water

Programs – help the VP find interesting programs

Name tags – create new name tags for new members, lay out tags at the meeting and collect them at the end of the meeting.

Nominating committee– find those chiefs in the society for the next two-year term

Many members say "yes" to more than one of these tasks and we hope you will say "yes" this year. Don't wait to be called to volunteer— just call me at 314-965-7027.

Thanks to all who said "yes" in the past two years and to those who are thinking about saying "yes" in the future. I look forward to working with all of you.

Phyllis

2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 20

**Meeting with Speaker member Ted Piekutowski
Bonsai Basics**

1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center

November 3

Board Meeting

12:00 lunch, 1:00 meeting

Phyllis Weidman home

508 Essex Court

Kirkwood, MO 63122

December 8

NOTE DATE CHANGE

Holiday Party

1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center



photograph copied from
evergreengardenworks.com

October 20, 1:00 PM

Ted Piekutowski

“Bonsai Basics”

Is this a miniature container-grown tree or an exquisite work of art? How is this done? Can normal backyard gardeners do this? Does it involve selecting a special type of tree? How do these trees stay so small? How long can such a creation live? How does one achieve and then maintain such an artistic shape?

Our speaker for October, member Ted Piekutowski, will answer all these questions and more. Ted has been involved with Bonsai for

19 years and is a former President of the Bonsai Society of Greater St. Louis. Caring for his bonsai trees and hosta garden fills most of Ted's spare time during the summer months. His collections include more than 40 various bonsai trees and over 100 different varieties of hostas and ferns. I noticed at our member auction that Ted bid on several of the smaller hostas. I wonder if they are destined for inclusion in a bonsai container.

Besides plant related activities, Ted has numerous other interests. As a child he enjoyed circus model building. One of his miniatures is an 8' x 14' scale replica of the 1956 Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus. For a number of years, the model was on display at the City Museum.

October must be one of Ted's favorite months. Each year he creates an extravagant Halloween display, converting his front yard and garage into a graveyard. New ghoulish props are added each year. In addition to these hobbies, Ted has an avid interest in photography.

Come to the October meeting to learn more about an ancient art form called Bonsai.



Phyllis Weidman

Meet your 2014-2015 officers!

President – Phyllis Weidman



Dave Poos

Vice-president – Dave Poos

Secretary – Kelly Hall



Kelly Hall



Cindy Michniok

Treasurer – Cindy Michniok

Nominating chairman Pam Wolkowitz presented the 2014-2015 slate of officers. There being no additional nominations from the floor, members approved the slate as presented.

Fall Board Meeting



**November 3, 2013
12:00 noon lunch; 1:00 PM meeting**



**Home of President Phyllis Weidman
508 Pointe Essex Court, Kirkwood, MO 63122
RSVP - 314-965-7027 or Pow1031@gmail.com.**

All members are invited to join our Board members for a delicious lunch, a fabulous dessert and a spirited meeting. The agenda includes such items as setting 2014 meeting dates, establishing the 2014 budget, brain-storming about possible speakers and scheduling other interesting events. Let the Board know what you want for your Society in 2014. What did you like or not like in 2013? Get to know your Board members - they're really a lot of fun to be around, are enthusiastic about gardening, hostas and your Society, and are quite generous with their time and expertise. Don't worry; they won't assign you a task if you come.

Call or email Phyllis to reserve your place at the table.



Rob makes a point during his presentation.

September meeting

Rob Mortko

“Growing Better Hostas - Lessons Learned in the Greenhouse”



Rob brought beautifully grown hostas.

Since retirement from his profession as a chemical engineer, Rob is free to devote all his time to his passion – hybridizing and growing hostas. Now a full time nurseryman, Rob passed on to us lessons he has learned through working in his greenhouses.

Hostas are really “sun-loving”. Most of us grow our plants in too much shade. For maximum vigor, grow the plant in the brightest light it can tolerate. Morning sun is preferred by most hostas, but even hot afternoon sun is tolerated if the plants are given enough water. Water is key. Rob has found that those white-centered, hard-to-grow hostas do well in a greenhouse setting. The lighting supercharges what chloroplasts these plant possess. So don’t baby them so much; give them lots of bright light.

Do your hostas wilt during the heat of a St. Louis July or August? The temperature isn’t really the problem. The temperature in Rob’s greenhouse can get to 120 degrees without damage to his plants. The culprit is lack of moisture – the combination of heat, drying winds and lack of rain. The old rule of thumb of an inch to an inch and one half per week of water may not be enough in the Midwest.

What kind of soil do hostas like? Rob stated that while hostas like moisture, they don’t want their feet wet. In our clay soils, organic matter is usually the answer. It helps to create porosity and balances the water holding capacity of the soil. Fertilizer will push plant growth, but it must be followed through with water. The optimum time to apply is four to six weeks before first frost.

What keeps a grower awake at night? – weather, slugs, virus or nematodes. Can’t control the weather, so don’t waste time worrying. Slugs are not a problem in a greenhouse since plants are grown on elevated tables. In the home garden, they can be controlled. Virus cannot be cured but is not so easily spread if tools, containers, and any other items that come in contact with a diseased plant are properly cleansed. With the generous donations from societies such as ours, AHS has started a study to determine ways to control Nematodes. These are a pest in warmer climates with their longer growing season. So far the research is promising. AHS will keep local societies abreast of future research findings.

Rob ended his talk by asking what we might stock in our greenhouse. What’s the next hot hosta! Rob whetted our appetites with pictures of new cultivars on the horizon. Twisty, variegated H. ‘Mouse Capades’ is the newest member of the mouse family. H. ‘Carry On’ is named for Rob’s late brother – 100% of the sale cost is donated to a Kansas City hospice. H. ‘Rising Star’ is a better H. ‘Dawn’s Early Light’. H. ‘Celtic Bouquet’ has dark purple scapes and cherry red petioles. H. ‘Amos’ is a big blue, while H. ‘Whimsey’ is bright gold.

Rob’s words made sense. Excuse me while I go move H. ‘White Christmas’ to a sunnier location.

What Works!

During his presentation, Rob Mortko and members in the audience mentioned several products that they have used with great success for various problems in their gardens.

Osmocote Pro - a slow release coated fertilizer sold by various companies one of which is Scotts. This is the fertilizer Rob uses in his greenhouses.

Deadline - a very hard little turquoise pellet which contains yeast (to attract the slugs) and Metaldehyde which causes them to stop feeding and kills them. Deadline contains 4% Metaldehyde. The exclusive DB27 attractant system lures slugs and snails toward the bait.

Sluggo - a blend of an iron phosphate based ingredient and bait additives. Pellets, that are not ingested by snails or slugs, will biodegrade and become part of the soil in your garden. The bait additives are attractive to snails and slugs and lure them from their hiding places. Once snails or slugs ingest **Sluggo**, they stop eating plants and die within 3-6 days. **Sluggo** is approved for organic gardening.

Bayer Advanced All-In-One Rose and Flower Care or **Bayer Advanced Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs** – 3 systemic products in one that control insects, diseases and fertilizes. This is an excellent product to use to control Southern Blight on hostas. Read the label to make sure one of the active ingredients is Tebuconazole. According to Rob, Tebuconazole is the key chemical needed to treat this fungus.



The Benedict Garden Performance Medal - 2013

First Frost

P. Scolnik (O), R. Solberg (NIR) - 2002

This beautiful hosta was chosen from the 2012 Award of Merit winners by Garden Performance Judges across the country. It represents the best-of-the-best, the ultimate hosta, a hosta that performs well in gardens in all regions of the country.

St. Louis Hosta Society Holiday Party

December 8th, 2013

It's not too early to mark your calendar and reserve a seat. **October 20th** is the last meeting before the luncheon. **Reservation deadline is Nov. 23rd**. See the flyer on the following page for more information.



Holiday Celebration

**December 8, 1 o'clock
Creve Coeur Government Center**

**New Caterer
New Game
Same Great Price \$12**



Name_____

Number Attending_____

Amount_____

Sign up at the October 20th meeting

or

Send reservation to:

Cindy Michniok
14300 Quiet Meadow Ct.
Chesterfield, MO 63017

All reservations and money must be to Cindy by November 23, 2013

Hard to believe, but it's October! The days are growing shorter, the nights cooler. Hostas that received too much or too little light have been moved. Over-grown clumps have been divided and given to friends. Ratty daylily foliage has been cut and the plants' new growth has matured. It's time for fall chores to start in earnest. This is the perfect time to reprint an article written by member Kelly Hall explaining how she and husband Jeff protect their numerous containers during the frigid winters.

Over-wintering Containers

By Kelly Hall

We have many containers placed throughout our garden in the growing season. Very few are planted with annuals. Most are planted with hostas, conifers, Japanese maples, and combinations of these plants.

The problem with containers in our climate is that they must be "put to bed" each winter in an effort to save the containers and keep the plants alive from one year to the next. Our biggest enemy is heaving from the alternating cold and warm temperatures that we experience in our area. When the soil in containers has some moisture in it and then freezes and thaws, it causes expansion which can crack the container. We have cracked many a pot. Most of them were ceramic type pots that had a thin color glaze. The glaze absolutely disintegrates over the winter. You'll find this out

when you go to move the container in early spring and end up with what look like confetti all over the ground. We don't buy that type of pot anymore.

We have, however, had excellent results over-wintering containers made of the following materials: decorative foam, plastic, heavy clay, high quality pottery, wood, hypertufa troughs (homemade by us), and even antique crocks. We have been asked this question dozens of times: "How do you over winter your pots?" Based on our years of experience, this is what we do each fall. So far, these methods have worked for us.

We have some very large decorative foam pots and plastic pots containing large hostas. We wait until frost has zapped the hostas in the fall. We cut off the foliage and store the pots in our unheated shed. (At our previous home, we stored them in our unheated, but insulated, garage.) The results are the same. We do not water them AT ALL while they're in storage. We stack (yes, *stack*) the pots on top of each other (our shed is very small) (see image, upper right). We bring them out in the spring usually in late March or early April. Sometimes the hostas are already popping up. Sometimes they are popping up underneath the pot on top of them. Sometimes they are pale, albino hosta pups for a while until they're allowed to see the light of day again. They all recover nicely with watering and spring air. We have been using this method with the same hostas in pots for 10 years.

We have two antique crocks in our front yard that contain hostas. At our previous house, we used a dolly to bring them into our garage for the winter (after cutting off the post-frost foliage). Now, because our yard is steeper and we're getting lazier, we have a different method. We cut off the foliage, cover the tops of the crocks with several layers of burlap, and tie some twine around the circumference of the pot to hold it securely. We then tip the crocks over on their sides (burlap side pointing uphill) and leave them for the winter. This has worked for us for three winters now.



As for my many container-grown Japanese maples and troughs, we huddle them together against the retaining wall by our back patio. We figure this is a reasonably protected area because it's up against a wall where it should be warmed somewhat from the earth and protected from wind. Cold, dry winter wind is very hard on Japanese maples and conifers. At our previous home, we huddled containers against a privacy fence (any place that blocks the harshest winds is good). They still need to receive rain and snowfall for moisture so they shouldn't be stored under a deck or in a garage or shed. Once the containers are carefully huddled together (avoiding snapping off any delicate maple branches or smashing weeping conifers), I wad up leaves (of which we have plenty) and stuff them (densely) between the pots. The idea is to provide insulation for the pots so that the roots are not allowed to freeze hard. This year I used frost cloth folded lengthwise and held in place by nursery pots (containing bricks for extra weight) to push against the insulating leaves (see image below).



There are some leaves on top of the containers too. We hesitate to **cover** trees with frost cloth because if it snows, the weight will push the cloth down and possibly break off branches. In general, we find it easier to put everything in one area for over-wintering. But there are always a couple of big, **HEAVY** pots that we don't want to move (again, the steepness and the laziness comes into play). This year we're trying a new method to keep these pots and roots from freezing. I think this is going to work really well. Our idea was to spread out an old tarp and put a pile of leaves down the middle lengthwise, roll up the tarp like a log and wrap it around the pots and secure it in place. Super easy! We'll let you know how it works (see image above right).

Be sure to use "pot feet" under containers when over-wintering. The containers need to be well-drained and if the pots are not raised up a little with some sort of pot feet or bricks, they may freeze to the ground and not drain properly. If the water doesn't drain, the roots will sit in water and will rot for sure, killing the plant. Our huddled arrangement (in the images above and right) contains hypertufa troughs, as well as wood, plastic, clay, and decorative foam pots.

Lastly, my Rex Begonias get to come inside the basement and live by the windows for the winter. No way around it. Although I am not a fan of house plants in our house, I have quite a few Rex Begonias and I'm too cheap to buy new ones each year. They are watered sparingly and look pretty scrawny by spring but they always bounce back once outside again in the warm weather.



Like every gardener, we have used the trial and error method of learning but these have been the most successful methods in our experience. If you have any ideas to share, let me know. I hope these ideas help in your garden.

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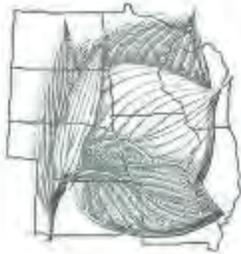
St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

Contact: Cindy Michniok
14300 Quiet Meadow Ct.
Chesterfield, MO 63017
Cmichniok@gmail.com

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



Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society represents Region 5 of the American Hosta Society that includes 9 states. Our mission is to promote education, research, development and enjoyment of Hosta.

Membership in the society is \$20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of the newsletter. This publication reports on events and information on Hostas in general.

Please mail a check made payable to MRHS to:

Kristine James
523 E Calhoun St.
Woodstock, IL 60098

along with Name, Address, phone, and email (Most correspondence is by email). For questions email MRHS.Hosta@gmail.com.



AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY

Members receive three issues per year of The Hosta Journal, which includes color photographs of hostas, reports on national conventions, scientific information concerning current research pertaining to hostas, and advertisements of interest to hosta families.

Membership checks should be made out to "AHS," and mailed to:

Sandie Markland, AHS Membership Secretary
P O Box 7539
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

Dues for one year are \$30 for an individual and \$34 for a family. For more information, visit the AHS website: <http://www.americanhostasociety.org/>