



Show Me Hostas Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 7

November, 2009

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Jeff Hall President

Photo by Kelly Hall

It is truly a deal too great to pass up. Well, that's what I thought. We have a total of 190 members and at the writing of this letter, only 42 people have signed up for the one year American Hosta Society membership and the two year Midwest Regional Hosta Society membership for only \$5.00! If you were to purchase these memberships, you would normally pay \$55.00. But with the St. Louis Hosta Society co-sponsoring memberships (for current SLHS members), it will only cost you \$5.00. What a bargain! I can only assume that many of you are afraid that once you start receiving the American Hosta Journal and the Regional newsletter, you just won't be able to stop with the hostas.

Even if your hosta addiction gets worse, don't fret because we have a great support system in the St. Louis Hosta Society. Seriously, when Arlie Tempel presented the idea, I was sure we would have had nearly 100% participation. I hate to keep preaching to you non-believers, but trust me, it's well worth the \$5.00. There are no strings attached and no future obligations but don't wait because this offer is only good until December 15. Contact Dave Poos to sign up before the deal is gone.

Well, I guess this is my last president's message. The last two years have been full of fun meetings, garden walks, field trips, a convention, and other events. I have truly enjoyed working with the current officers, board members, and the membership at large. As I talk with people who are members of other societies, I feel truly grateful for the working relationship and camaraderie we all have together. They say that the Hosta is the friendship plant, so thank you to all my hosta friends. I also want to send a very big thank you to the current board for making me look good and to my wife, Kelly, for making you all believe that I am organized and able to write well.

Please feel confident that the coming slate of officers will do an excellent job of bringing you more speakers, sales, fun events, and useful information. I am very excited already with the ideas they have for the coming years.

See you all at the Christmas party and future meetings.

Jeff Hall

2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Last event of the year!

December 6

Holiday Party – Catered luncheon

1 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center

Last newsletter of 2009 – next issue end of January 2010

LAST CALL

One year American Hosta Society membership
Two year Midwest Regional Hosta Society membership

As indicated by Jeff in his President's Message, this is a real deal! But time is running out. You must notify Treasurer Dave Poos by **December 15** if you wish to participate in this club program. See the next page for additional information, costs and mailing address.

St. Louis Hosta Society Christmas Party
December 6, 2009, 1:00 PM.

You certainly don't want to miss out on this event, one of the hi-lights of the Hosta Society's meeting schedule. Pam Wolkowitz and her committee have designed an afternoon of delicious food, lively conversation and fun and games. The event will again be catered by '*At Your Fingertips Catering*' which did such an outstanding job last year. This year, Italian food will be featured. Each person who wishes to participate in a gift exchange game planned by Pam is asked to bring a wrapped garden related item of about \$10. Participation is optional.

Cost for the luncheon is \$5 for members and significant other, \$10 for non-members.

It's almost too late! Pam must know by **November 15** whether you are coming. Please mail your luncheon payment to Society Treasurer Dave Poos who will then notify Pam of your attendance.

Dave Poos
9904 Crestwood Drive
Crestwood, MO 63126

AHS/MRHS Memberships Available

During the September meeting, St. Louis Hosta Society members agreed with the recommendation of the SLHS Board to offer American Hosta Society Memberships and Midwest Regional Hosta Memberships to its members at a vastly reduced price.

Benefits of joining the American Hosta Society include:

- Subscription to the exceptional magazine *The Hosta Journal*.
- An opportunity to attend national meetings and conventions which offer educational and scientific presentations, garden tours, judge's clinics, and a chance to see the latest and best Hostas in the Hosta show.
- A Biennial AHS Membership Directory.
- The privilege of visiting display gardens throughout the country, many of which are only open to AHS members.
- An invitation to exhibit your favorite Hostas and compete for recognition in various AHS national and regional cut-leaf shows.
- Developing friendships with people who share an interest in growing Hostas.
- Access to Members Only section of the AHS website.

Benefits of joining the Midwest Regional Hosta Society include:

- Subscription to the information filled newsletter, *Hosta Leaves*.
- Support of the summer three-day convention conveniently located in a Midwest state and visiting the best Hosta gardens in the sponsoring community.
- Support of the Winter Scientific Meeting featuring a solid day of topics interesting to all gardeners.
- Developing relationships and friendships with Hosta gardeners living in the Midwest.

The cost of the two memberships is typically \$30 for the AHS membership (\$34 for a family) and \$20 for the MRHS membership. **Until December 15, 2009**, current SLHS members can upgrade their local membership to include the AHS or MRHS or both memberships for the price of **\$3 for AHS** and **\$2 for MRHS**. If you are currently a member of either society, your membership will be extended (Please note in your payment if you're a current member of either AHS or MRHS). To enroll in this program, send your check to

Dave Poos, Treasurer – SLHS
9904 Crestwood Drive
St. Louis, MO. 63126

Article written by Dave Poos.

It was a beautiful fall day – just what the weather man ordered.

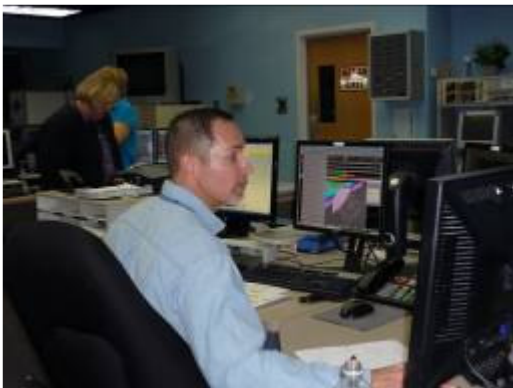
October meeting – Tour of the National Weather Service Forecast Office



Melissa Byrd describing the functions of the various desks in the Forecast Office.

Society member Melissa Byrd, a forecaster with the National Weather Service, introduced her fellow members to her world. Melissa has been with the Service since about 1985 and currently works at the St. Charles location. Ever notice the large ball that looms in the sky to the left of I-64. That sphere houses the Doppler radar used by the Service in their forecasting.

Two main activities of this Federal agency are providing twice daily weather forecasts and contributing local data to a national information database which is used by public, private, government and global agencies.



One of Melissa's coworkers collecting and analyzing current weather data.

Under the grouping of forecasts are the daily public forecasts that people hear on TV and radio, read in papers or view on various Web sites. Aviation forecasts are made for the Columbia, Quincy, Spirit of St. Louis and Lambert airports. Hydrologic forecasts list river conditions needed by barge lines. Fire forecasts list factors affecting the Mark Twain National Forest and individuals that wish to do small area burns.

The Service also issues Warnings. These cover events such as tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, flooding, high winds, frost/freeze conditions and winter storm alerts. Due to its size and latitude, the United States is number one in the number of serious weather related events per year.



Just a few of the many computer screens displaying climate and weather related information.

Another important function is the collection of local weather information in a national database. Millions of observations ranging from snowfall depths to temperature ranges are recorded. Super computers, housed at the National Weather Service headquarters in Silver Springs MD use this data to create atmospheric models. Charts, digital pictures and raw data obtained from this database are used by meteorologists and forecasters in their local analysis. The resulting analyses are available to farmers, shippers, airline pilots, barge operators, etc. – anyone who has a need for weather related information.

Thank you Melissa, for an informative and enjoyable Sunday afternoon.

Visit www.weather.gov and www.weather.gov/stlouis for local, region and national weather related information.



Bob Solberg explains

HOW TO GROW THE BEST HOSTAS YOU CAN

Bob's theory is that hostas are perennials that act more like annuals. The plant runs through its entire life cycle in one year. In winter hostas are in a deep sleep, no root development occurs. In spring the plant wakes. New shoots emerge and make about three leaves. New roots do not develop until this first set of leaves has hardened off, about three weeks. The new roots come out above

the old roots. The plant then makes another set of leaves. When the hosta has made enough food, an internal switch turns on and the plant begins to bloom and set seed. In the fall, moisture is pulled out of its leaves and into the crown. At this time the leaves start to droop and the plant returns to its deep sleep.

Bob explains that to grow the best hostas, it's important to maximize this life cycle. We must tailor the environment around the hosta to make it the best for each of the plant's life stages. We can control four of the items needed for good growth: light, water, nutrients and air.

Bob encourages us to go out into our garden about the third week in June and see where the sun hits our beds. This is the maximum sun time. Then watch again in August. Plants that were in the shade in June might cook in August sun. In our latitude, we want to have about 50% shade. We can control light by planting, cutting or trimming trees.

Hostas need lots of water during the leaf development stage. So we should consider watering in the spring, then back off our watering when the hostas start to bloom. At this point they need just enough to maintain the plant. There's no need to water in September or October because the plant is asleep. Just make sure the ground is moist before the first hard freeze. We sure don't have to worry about that this year in St. Louis. Bob suggests watering your entire garden instead of individual plants to discourage tree roots from growing toward the moist soil and your prized hostas.

Nitrogen is essential for good leaf growth. Fertilize in April and again in the middle of May. Supplement with a liquid feeding right after the first set of leaves harden, then two or three more times two weeks apart. Stop the supplemental feeding once flowers start to develop.

The fourth element needed for good growth is air. Over time, just due to the break down of organic matter and the action of rain, soil compacts. When compacted, water runs off. When you notice your hostas getting smaller (are you moving those label markers closer to the plant each year), it's time to rework your beds. To make the task less onerous, do small areas at a time instead of the entire bed.

Bob finished his presentation with slides and discussion on 'what's coming down the road' in his hybridizing efforts. The 2010 hosta of the year will be *h.First Frost*. He's breeding for blues with more heat tolerance such as *h.Baby Blue Eyes* and *h.Blueberry Tart*, white centered hostas that don't melt out such as *h.White Elephant*, hostas that have a longer growing season such as *h.Tongue Twister* and ones that have good substance and greater slug resistance. Of course, he continues his hunt for the 'red hosta' with his latest contribution *h.Beet Salad*.

To hear more about Bob and the way he grows hostas, visit his web site www.hostahosta.com

Upcoming event: **Winter Scientific Meeting** of the Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society is once again sponsoring the popular Winter Scientific Meeting.

Date: **Saturday, January 23, 2010**

Location: Marriott Hotel, 50 North Martingale Rd, Schaumburg, IL (800-228-9290)
If you plan to stay overnight, please make your own hotel reservations, and mention the "Winter Scientific Meeting" to guarantee the special room rate of \$79.00.

Time: Registration at the hotel will begin on Friday, January 22, from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm, and Saturday, January 23 from 7:00 am - 8:00 am. The program will run from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm on Saturday. Dinner Friday and Saturday nights will be on your own at one of the many fine area restaurants.

Featured Speakers: Bob Solberg - Evolution of the Mini Hosta
Mark Zilis - Hostas of Distinction
Dave Wanninger - The Best Hosta Companion Plants & Shrubs
Roy Klehm - When Hostas Needed Help - A Historical Perspective

The program includes a series of three concurrent breakout sessions. Each breakout session is presented twice, so attendees can attend two of the three sessions. Presenters and their topics are:

Session A: What You Need to Know about Nematodes and Hosta Virus X (by Mark Zilis)
Session B: Botanical Classification and Nomenclature - Part II (by Glenn Herold)
Session C: Hybridizer's Perspective (by Don Dean)

In addition: A hosta seed silent auction, the proceeds of which are used to underwrite a portion of the cost of the meeting.

Cost: The cost of this winter extravaganza is only \$50 per person for MRHS members and \$60 for non-members. This includes a continental breakfast and a deli buffet lunch. Please make checks payable to MRHS, and mail before January 11, 2010, with the registration form which appears on the next page in this newsletter.

Questions? Contact Lou Horton (630-293-7735) or email: lehorton85@ameritech.net

The above information was taken from the Midwest Host Society web site: www.midwesthostasociety.org. The registration form can also be found on this website



The attractive, fall-themed refreshment table set by Hospitality Chair Barb Moreland for the Society's October meeting. Pictured here with member La'j Bonstead, Barb brightens up our meeting room with creative centerpieces and plates of cookies and other goodies.

Thanks for satisfying our 'sweet tooth' throughout this year.

2010 Winter Scientific Meeting Registration Form

Make a copy of this registration form for your records. If you would like confirmation of your registration, list a valid email address or enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Please **PRINT CLEARLY**. Fill out registration form completely.

Note that MRHS memberships are family memberships, so individuals in the member's household are also MRHS members.

ATTENDEE 1:

Name: _____ Member of MRHS Non-member
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____
Zip : _____
Phone: _____
e-mail: _____

If a non-member, do you want your \$10 surcharge applied to a one-year FAMILY membership in the Midwest Regional Hosta Society?
 YES NO

Please confirm my reservation by email

ATTENDEE 2: Address same as Attendee 1

Name: _____ Member of MRHS Non-member
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____
Zip : _____
Phone: _____
e-mail: _____

If a non-member, do you want your \$10 surcharge applied to a one-year FAMILY membership in the Midwest Regional Hosta Society?
 YES NO

Please confirm my reservation by email

Registrations postmarked after January 11 require a \$10 late registration fee per person.

Cancellations before January 11 will be sent a full refund.

We will be unable to issue refunds after Jan. 11, 2010.

Number of Members _____ x \$50 _____
Number of Non-Members _____ x \$60 _____
Number of Late Registrations _____ x \$10 _____
Total _____

Please make checks payable to MRHS.

Questions about registration? Contact Kristine: email dankrisj@mc.net or phone 815-337-4621

Mail your registration to:

**Kristine James
523 E Calhoun Street
Woodstock IL 60098**

COMPANION CORNER



photo from
www.missouriplants.com

Christmas Fern

Polystichum acrostichoides

St. Louis Missouri Botanical Garden
'Plant of Merit'



Close-up photo of Christmas
fern from Poos garden

What better companion plant to spotlight at this time of year than the Christmas Fern. It is native; not only to Missouri, but to most of the eastern United States encompassing zones 4 through 9. This fern is thought to have acquired its common name because it is one of the few woodland plants that remain green throughout the winter months. In the 1800s it was often gathered in great quantities and sold for making Christmas wreaths or for inclusion in floral arrangements. Some people think the shape of the fronds which are long and narrow with a short section near the stem which juts out at an angle resemble Santa's boot or a winter mitten.

The Christmas Fern grows from a crown with two foot, deep green, leathery, lance-shaped leaves known as fronds, rising upward and outward forming a fountain. New growths, known as fiddleheads, arise from the middle of the crown surrounded by last year's slowly dying fronds. The fiddleheads are silvery and scaled in spring. In fact, the scaly stalks are one way to identify this fern.

Each frond has 20-40 leaflets, called pinnae, which are luscious green in appearance, oblong in shape, edged with narrow fine teeth and arranged alternately along the stem. Like most ferns, the Christmas Fern reproduces by spores which are dropped in late summer and fall. The seeds appear on the undersides of the leaflets, but only on those leaflets which are produced on the last 1/3 of the frond. These leaflets are much smaller than those on the rest of the frond.

In early spring, gardeners can propagate the ferns by dividing the clump of roots into smaller plants. This can be done by inserting two garden forks into the clump and pulling apart, much the way daylilies and other such plants are divided. The mass of roots should be planted just below the surface of the soil. Some of the native soil should be moved with the mass of roots and worked into the soil of the transplanted area.

The Christmas fern grows well in both dry and moist wooded areas. While they prefer shade or partial shade, they will tolerate some sun if the soil is kept moist. Crown rot can occur if planted in heavy clay soil with poor drainage. This is a disease and insect free plant that isn't bothered by deer. (Yes there are such plants.) Because they thrive under trees and in rocky spots, preferring lower woodland hillsides and creek banks, the Christmas Fern is ideal for erosion control.

During the winter months, when your hostas are gone or are just a pile of dry leaves, the Christmas Fern remains green and attractive, providing visual interest in your shady garden. Harken back to the days of your ancestors and cut a few fronds to grace a bowl of colorful ornaments on your holiday table. Or simply tie a handful of fronds with a bright red ribbon and hang on your door as the photo depicts. Enjoy this hardy, carefree perennial all year long.



photo from
www.davesgarden.com

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

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

Dues: Individual \$20 for two years

St. Louis Hosta Society

Contact: Dave Poos
9904 Crestwood Drive
Crestwood, MO 63126
dpoos@juno.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

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>