



Volume 17, Issue 9

November, 2016



President Diana Plahn

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hi Fellow Hostaholics,

If you haven't noticed yet, winter has been slowly creeping into our lives on soft little at feet. However, that could change to big noisy feet at any time. So, if you haven't already, start winterizing your garden.

It's time to plant all those flower bulbs you ordered to go under your hosta leaves per Jason Delaney's presentation at our convention.

If you have a water feature, time to get that ready for cold weather too. Put your netting up and your heater in if your pond is deep enough to run all winter. Since most netting won't keep out mink, I wish you good fortune if you have fish. May the mink never find your pond if they haven't yet! And yes, we have suburban mink populations.

Move the tropical plants in that you want to overwinter. However, remember they pick up pests easier in a household setting. Keep a close eye on them when they are stressed like this and keep abreast of any changes.

If you have hostas planted in containers, make sure that they drain well, or move them somewhere that you have more control over what water they get over the winter. You don't want to let them rot out with too much water and poor drainage.

If you have planted any trees and shrubs make sure to continue to water them occasionally to help them get through the winter. And of course, once it freezes, pick up all your old hosta leaves and clean your beds up to help control nematodes and slugs the following season.

Our next event is the board meeting at my home. Everyone is welcome. The time is 2-5 pm on November 19th. My address is 1911 Westview Avenue, Kirkwood, MO, 63122. Please park on Westview Avenue and walk down the long concrete driveway to the left house at the bottom of the drive. This is a "bring your own favorite drink and appetizer" event. We will be going over the budget for next year and other planning.

Our December Christmas party was changed to a reception at Karen Frimel's home on December 4th from 4-9pm. Again this is a "bring your own favorite drink and appetizer" event.

I hope to see you soon.

Diana

P. S. Weren't the Gourd Sisters entertaining?

2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 19	Board Meeting 2:00 – 5:00 PM at home of Diana and Craig Plahn 1911 Westview Avenue, Kirkwood MO 63122
December 4	Holiday Party 4:00 PM at home of Karen and Greg Frimel 19 Dunleith Drive, St. Louis MO 63124
January 21, 2017	Winter Conference Meeting Naperville, IL
June 7-10, 2017	AHS National Convention Indianapolis, IN
June 22-24, 2017	MRHS Regional Convention Lenexa, Kansas



Fall Board Meeting
November 19, 2016
2:00 – 5:00 PM

Home of President Diana Plahn
1911 Westview Ave, Kirkwood, MO 63122
RSVP - 314-346-3007 or dplahn@me.com

All members are invited to join our Board members for our annual planning meeting. The agenda includes such items as setting the 2017 meeting dates, establishing the 2017 operating budget, brain-storming about possible speakers and scheduling other interesting events.

Let the Board know what you want for your Society in 2017. What did you like or not like in 2016? 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.

Diana asks that you park on Westview Avenue and walk down the long concrete drive. Her home is at the bottom on the left. Just look for hostas, daylilies and lots of conifers.

Everything goes smoother with good food. Just bring a favorite appetizer to share with others and a drink of your choice. Call or email Diana to let her know you are coming and she'll have a chair waiting just for you.



IT'S RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER
THE LAST EVENT OF THE YEAR

THE ST. LOUIS HOSTA SOCIETY HOLIDAY PARTY
Sunday, December 4 at 4:00 PM

Due to increasing costs, the amount of work involved, and difficulty in booking a good caterer, the Board has looked at other options than a catered luncheon for this year's annual Holiday Party.

Karen and Greg Frimel have graciously offered to host our society members at a Sunday afternoon "happy hour" at their Ladue home. Members are asked to bring an appetizer and drink of their choice to share with other party goers. Coffee and dessert will be provided by the Frimels. The festivities begin at 4:00 PM and continue until we all go home.

No business meeting. No speakers. No cost. Come and mingle. Laugh and smile. Share the joys of the coming holidays with your hosta friends.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED BY DEC 1

Karen Frimel

19 Dunleith Dr, St. Louis MO 63124

314-680-4222 or cckmf@aol.com

Want to try something new
Want a distraction from the snow, ice and cold of winter
Need a gardening fix in the middle of January

AHS On-line Auction

The AHS On-Line Auction raises funds for the society's publication *The Hosta Journal*. Held each winter in mid to late January, the auction offers that winter respite we all so need. Home gardeners offer pieces of their prized hostas, businesses display their new offerings, and hybridizers introduce their newest creations, all to help raise funds and draw attention to the plants we all love. Items, posted with descriptions and photos, include plants, seeds and garden related treasures. Donors and bidders from all over the country and overseas are represented.

This is strictly an on-line auction, similar to the Lily Auction (for daylilies). However, it runs for only 7 to 10 days. A live link is typically placed on the AHS Home Page near the middle of the month prior to the auction beginning (December). News is distributed via email notices and on the AHS website.

Enter the AHS website, www.americanhostasociety.org, click on the Activities tab on the top. Then click on the Auction tab in the drop down window. There is an explanation of how the auction works and how to register. Click on "How It Works (pdf)". To see items offered for auction last January, click on "2016 Summary".

Welcome our new Treasurer



Melissa Byrd

Kim Piekutowski, our current treasurer, has resigned. Kim is recovering from two knee replacements (ouch) and needs to concentrate on her health. Our Society thanks her for her help during the past year, wishes her a speedy recovery and hopes to see her back with her hosta friends next year.

Melissa Byrd has graciously volunteered to step in and complete Kim's term of office. She has been a member for several years and often helps with all our activities from digging hostas at our MoBot Work Day to selling those plants at our annual sale. Melissa is also currently our Webmaster.

When not caring for her hostas or helping mother Jolly Ann Whitener with her RVing activities, Melissa is a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. Next time you hear a severe weather warning, think of Melissa. She might be the one telling you to take cover.

Welcome our new Hospitality Chairwoman



Karen Frey

Sharon and Mike Schmitt are retiring as Hospitality Chairs. They have held this position for a number of years and agreed to continue until our President was able to find a replacement. The Society appreciates all their hard work and their delicious pot luck entrees.

At the October meeting, **Karen Frey** answered the call and volunteered to take on this responsibility. Like Melissa, Karen has helped with a number of our activities in the past few years. She even, good naturally, became a decorated human Christmas tree at our 2014 Christmas Party.

Karen has graciously opened her garden for our enjoyment on several occasions. Many of you have visited her St. Peter's yard which teems with hostas, of course, but also a vast number of unusual plants. Besides hostas, Karen loves daylilies and is quite active in the Greater St. Louis Daylily Society.

When not in her garden or spending time with her son and mother, member Frieda Wiese, Karen works as a computer programmer.

**Last newsletter of 2016 – Enjoy all the upcoming holidays!
First newsletter of 2017 will be sent at the end of January
Our first meeting will occur in February**

October – The Gourd Sisters



The raw material, ready for an artist's hand. Note the different types – bottle, dipper, snake and basket



Basket gourd fashioned into a drum.



Bottle and basket gourds decorated for the holidays.



Lindy Hoffman and Ann Beninato, the Gourd Sisters, met 14 years ago when their children were attending the same elementary school. They soon discovered shared interests which culminated in a business after attending the Show Me Gourds Art Festival. They are members of the Show Me Gourd Society and the American Gourd Society and often give talks and classes on the decorative uses of gourds.

Dating back at least to 13,000 BC, gourds spread from Africa to all parts of the world. Related to the cucumber and pumpkin, they are used in a myriad of ways. Besides food and medicine, they have been made into eating and drinking utensils, pipes, musical instruments, containers, birdhouses, candle holders, even cradles and bathtubs.

Gourds fall into three broad categories: ornamental, hard shell and luffa. The luffa have a fibrous interior which when dried are sold as scrubbers. These plants require 160 days to grow, have leaves the size of dinner plates and vines as long as 30 feet. Have a strong trellis ready.

Hard shell gourds are further categorized as Basket, Bottle, Dipper and Snake. Basket gourds are round and used to make canteens, tobacco boxes and containers of various sorts. Bottle gourds have a neck and are often made into birdhouses and whimsical creatures. The little ghosts in the bottom picture are destined to my grandsons' Trick or Treat baskets. Dippers become ladles and Snakes are exactly what one would envision – long cylinders which are sometimes shaped into coils and knots.

Gourds need fertile soil, lots of water and 160 sunny days plus at least 50 days of temperatures above 80 degrees. All possible in St. Louis. It is best to start seeds indoors. Soak overnight, plant and keep moist until leaves appear. Around Mother's Day plant in hills. Their first two months are spent establishing roots. Then look out! A vine can grow up to 100 feet. At maturity, gourds are 90 % water so don't forget to augment rains with plenty of water.

Beautiful lacy white flowers open from dusk to dawn. Male and female flowers appear on the same vine. Fertilization is done by insects or by hand. To maximize fruit, snip off the vine after ten feet of growth. This promotes lateral growth which have the female flowers. The vines can be left to crawl on the ground but the gourds will be misshapen. The Gourd Sisters grow theirs in tomato cages.

Harvest your gourds after the first hard freeze. Store them in a well ventilated area off the ground. Expect the gourds to mold. This is nature's way of drawing out water during the drying process. Drying times vary from six weeks to over a year for large basket gourds. Clean them by soaking in water with a little dish detergent. A bit of bleach can be added. Use a dust mask and rubber gloves when cleaning as the mold can cause allergic reactions in some people.

Gourds are hybrids so their seeds might produce surprises. Each gourd has a unique personality and shape that inspires creativity. This is what draws artists such as the Gourd Sisters to this medium - possibilities unlimited



Bottle gourds as attractive birdhouses.

**Don't spend gloomy January cooped up in your house!
Take a break! Experience a wintry weekend in suburban Chicago!**

**Midwest Regional Hosta Society Winter Conference
January 21, 2017**

You think I jest or maybe have lost my senses. You think that's a typo and I really meant suburban Miami. True hostaholics adhere to the mailman's creed of old – "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." The Midwest Regional Hosta Society's Winter Conference is an event we hate to miss despite the threat of foul weather. This is a fun and entertaining opportunity to meet with hosta friends, new and old, and hear the latest news about hostas or related topics that might give us new ideas to incorporate in our gardens.

In the past, this one-day event has featured speakers well-known in our hosta community. There are usually three or four main speakers with three break-out sessions from which attendees may choose two. Included is a continental breakfast and a deli buffet lunch.

Three of the speakers are confirmed: Bob Solberg – 'My Love Affair with Gold Hostas', Glenn Herold – 'What is New and Exciting in Heucheras', and Mark Zilis – 'A Look Back at the Contributions of Hosta Pioneer Peter Ruh'. More information on other speakers and their topics will become available soon. Check <http://midwesthostasociety.org/events.shtml> for updates.

The event is held at the NIU Conference Center/Hampton Inn Naperville. Most attendees will stay at the nearby Hampton Inn. Conference cost is \$60 for MRHS members, \$70 for non-members. Room rates at the Hampton Inn are \$78 per night.

For your convenience, the **registration form** for **The Winter Conference Meeting** is included at the end of this newsletter. Several members of the St. Louis Hosta Society regularly attend, namely, Jim and Phyllis Weidman and Dave and Joan Poos. Ask any of these members **about this welcome break from the doldrums of winter.**

Companion Corner



Marian Murphy's
Callicarpa in September

Callicarpa Beautyberry Bush

Family: Lamiaceae
Species: *Callicarpa japonica*
Callicarpa americana
Callicarpa dihotoma

Zone: 5-8
Full sun to part shade



Callicarpa berry clusters

Gone are the flowers of summer. Hostas are headed toward dormancy. Tinges of red, yellow and orange edge the tree leaves. Fall has arrived with winter fast on her heels.

What is there now in the garden to pique our interest? Berries! Most of us are familiar with the red berries of the holly, the orange of the bittersweet and pyracanthus and maybe even the blue of the viburnum. But bright violet!

While a 'so-so' shrub in spring and summer, the *Callicarpa* comes into its own in the fall. In summer this small bush displays blemish-free green foliage with a vase like shape. Very small white to pink flowers grow close to the stems in the leaf axils and are mostly covered by the leaves. Starting in August and September, the striking lilac-violet fruit starts to form. Hence its common name, the Beautyberry. Under the weight of the berries, its long, arching, slender branches dip downward often touching the ground. Because of this droopy habit, the *Callicarpa* is well suited for planting in raised beds, above a retaining wall or in containers.

There are three varieties readily available: *Callicarpa japonica*, *Callicarpa americana* and *Callicarpa dichotoma*. They exhibit the same characteristics but vary in size and hardiness. The St. Louis area is on the northern edge of its range. Thus the foliage will die back to the ground in most winters. Not to worry – the flowers grow on new wood which emerges in the spring. The shrub grows from 3 – 6 feet in height and the same in width. It can be pruned in late winter or early spring to promote compactness and good blooming. It can be grown in light shade, but may become a bit leggy and not bear as much fruit. Sun is best.

The berries are not poisonous, but are mealy and almost flavorless. Some people make them into wine or jelly. Native Indians used them as medicine. The leaves contain a substance that is a natural mosquito repellent. The fruit is an important survival food for birds and squirrels although they will not eat them until other sources are depleted.

The Beautyberry may not have four season interest, but its autumn fruit display makes it a worthy addition to the garden. The beautiful specimen shown in the pictures above resides in the lovely garden of member Marian Murphy.

**MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY
2017 WINTER CONFERENCE MEETING REGISTRATION FORM**

Sat., January 21, 2017 Northern Illinois University Conference Center and Hampton Inn, Naperville, IL

Hospitality will be on Friday and Saturday Night at the Hampton. Hampton Room rate is \$78.00 per night (Friday and Saturday night), see at bottom for details. Deadline for reservations is 12/23/2016.

Check in Fri. afternoon at the Hampton, from 3 to 5 PM and Sat. morning at the NIU Conference Center from 7 to 8 AM.

The Winter Conference meeting will be held at the NIU Conference Center, just across the street from the Hampton. Continental breakfast will be at NIU from 7:30 to 10:30 AM. The Meeting will be from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM-no food in meeting rooms.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. Fill out registration form completely.

Make a copy of this registration form for your records. Confirmations will be done by email.

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

ATTENDEE 1:

NAME _____ MRHS member Non-MRHS member
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE/ZIP _____ If a non-MRHS member, would you like
PHONE _____ your \$10 surcharge applied to a
EMAIL _____ 1 year FAMILY membership in the MRHS?
 YES NO

ATTENDEE 2: Address same as Attendee 1

NAME _____ MRHS member Non-MRHS member
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE/ZIP _____ If a non-MRHS member, would you like
PHONE _____ your \$10 surcharge applied to a
EMAIL _____ 1 year FAMILY membership in the MRHS?
 YES NO

Registrations postmarked after January 9, 2017 require a \$10 late registration fee per person. Cancellations before January 3, 2017 will be sent a full refund. We will be unable to issue refunds after January 3, 2017.

Number of members _____ X \$60= _____
Number of non-members _____ X \$70= _____
Number of late registrations _____ X \$10= _____
TOTAL _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO MRHS

Mail your registration and check to:
Barbara Schroeder, MRHS Treasurer 1819 Coventry Dr. Champaign, IL 61822

Questions about registration? Contact Barbara at MRHS.HOSTA@gmail.com or phone: 217-369-0927
NIU Naperville Conference Center, 1120 East Diehl Rd, Naperville, IL 60563
Hampton Inn, 1087 East Diehl Road, Naperville, Illinois, 60563, TEL: 1- 630-505-1400
(when calling mention MRHS or code HOS to get the discounted rate).

St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

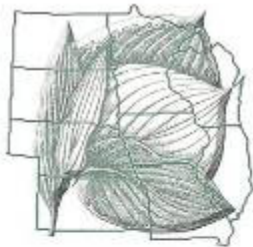
Contact: Melissa Byrd
117 Gunston Hall Drive
St. Charles, MO 63304
mabyrd68@gmail.com

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

Visit us on Facebook, St. Louis Hosta Society



Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society represents Region 5 of the American Hosta Society that includes 9 states.

Membership in the society is \$20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of the newsletter.

Please mail a check made payable to **MRHS** to:

Barbara Schroeder,
Treasurer
1819 Coventry Dr.
Champaign, IL 61822

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/>