



Volume 24, Issue 7

August, 2023



President
Phyllis Weidman

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

What a wonderful auction! We must thank Gene and Janelle for being auctioneers and David, Jane and Mike for taking care of all the payments. It was a great event and the Society made more money than it had budgeted. Thanks to all.

Now it is August and the hostas are starting to get all those bad looking things. I have nematodes, bacterial streaking, slug holes and bacterial or fungus spots. Most of the help for these problems you must do next spring.

If you have nematodes now, write down which plants have them so you can treat the plant in the spring with NemaKill or NemaStop. If you have slug holes, it means you must be more diligent about controlling the number of slugs in your garden. Start slug prevention in February and do monthly. If it is bacterial and fungus spots, you can control this by spraying a fungicide like Daconil. This will help with bacterial streaking as well. Most of these problems need preventative measures done in the spring and some you must continue the whole growing season.

I have celery sticks right now because the deer have had lunch and dinner in my garden. No need to worry about most of these problems this year. It has been hot and very humid; hostas don't like these growing conditions. But we are gardeners and maybe this year the hostas don't look so good but wait until next year.

The next gathering will be at *Hostas on the Bluff* in Fairview Height, Illinois. The owners have been extremely kind to our society. We hope you will mark your calendar to visit their nursery. It is the only hosta nursery in the area. A place to behold, find someone to ride with and get to the meeting. Details and directions are in this newsletter. You will truly enjoy the afternoon no matter what the weather brings.

Phyllis

2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 20	Garden Walk 2:00 PM, Hostas on the Bluff 1601 Pleasantview Dr., Fairview Heights, IL 62208
September 17	Meeting with Speaker Dean Gunderson 2:00 PM, Des Peres Lodge 1050 Des Peres Rd., Des Peres, MO 63130
October 15	Meeting with Speaker TBD
November	Board Meeting Time and location TBD
December	Holiday Party Home of Melinda Ligon - Time and location TBD
June 18-22, 2024	AHS National Convention Marlborough, MA
July 11-13, 2024	Midwest Regional Hosta Convention Fond du Lac, WI

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Dave and Marigold Colvin of Kirkwood, MO
Sue Erb of St. Louis, MO
Dee Gentile of Webster Groves, MO

It is exciting to have you as new members in our society. Hope you enjoyed the auction and were able to take home a plant or two. Please consider joining your fellow members at the one purely hosta nursery in the St. Louis area: *Hostas on the Bluff*.

Be Vigilant!

It's St. Louis! The temperatures are in the 90s and above, the humidity has risen significantly and those cooling breezes have disappeared. Perfect conditions for Southern Blight, a fungus disease that attacks hostas, to appear. At this time of year, the fungus resembles round mustard seed looking objects that germinate into spreading webs of white mycelia. They look like spider webs around the base of the petioles. The petiole starts to rot. The hosta's leaves turn yellow, collapse on the ground and are easily pulled off.

The hosta can be saved. Some people drench the plant and surrounding soil with a 10% bleach solution. However, I have had excellent results with a fungicide: Bayer Advanced Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs or Bayer Advanced All-In-One Rose and Flower Care. This is a systemic product that controls insects and diseases, while fertilizing the plant. Read the label to make sure one of the active ingredients is **Tebuconazole**.

August 20 - Garden Walk **2:00 PM, Hostas on the Bluff** **1601 Pleasantview Dr, Fairview Heights IL 62208**

On Sunday afternoon, August 20, our society will visit Hostas on the Bluff hosta farm and display gardens in Fairview Heights Illinois. Situated high on the bluffs, the beautifully landscaped gardens afford a fine view of the Arch and skyline of downtown St. Louis.

This small family-owned business is the brain child of Brian and Erica Kniffin. This is more than a retail nursery. It is a stunning hosta garden. An expanse of lawn is surrounded by beds populated with hundreds of well grown hostas and their companions. Tall trees provide that high canopy that hostas so love. Each hosta is identified by a tall wooden stake sporting the hosta's name driven into the ground next to the plant. One is able to see how a mature plant might look. A large pergola provides shade for visitors who wish to sit and take in the hill top views while another structure shades the large retail space.

The garden is so beautifully landscaped that the site is also used as a venue for weddings and other large parties. Imagine attending such a gala, standing on the veranda sipping a drink while watching the sun set behind St. Louis.

A member of the staff will be on hand to explain how the nursery came to be, where it obtains its plants, where and how the plants are grown and what their future plans might be. Hostas on the Bluff nursery has been a participant at our April Vendor Day event for the past several years. *H. 'Best Friend'*, a plant named in memory of Phyllis' late husband Jim, was originated by Don Dean, tissue-cultured by Rob Mortko and passed on by him last fall to the Kniffins to grow out to retail size. Erica reports that 'Best Friend' is now available for purchase.

Parking is limited to approximately 15 spaces. Car-pooling is strongly recommended.

Directions:

Using the Popular Street Bridge, cross into Illinois on I-55 N/I-64 E toward I-70 E Illinois. Continue on I-55 N/I-64 E for 2.3 miles.

Use the right 2 lanes to take **EXIT 3** for **I-64 E** toward Louisville.

Travel on I-64 E for 5.3 miles, then take **EXIT 9** for **IL-157** toward Caseyville.

Travel on IL-157 for 0.7 miles, then turn **LEFT** onto **California Drive**.

Turn **RIGHT** onto **N 89th St/Pleasantview Drive**.

After 0.3 miles, turn **LEFT** onto **Magdalena Ave**.

After 135 feet, turn **LEFT** onto **Pleasantview Drive**. The nursery is on the left near the top of the hill.



Photos from Hostas on the Bluff Facebook page.

July - MEMBER PLANT AUCTION



Sue Erb checks out the 70 plants that were up for auction. Most of the plants were donated by members from their own gardens, a few were divisions from MOBot plants and a few more were purchased at the AHS Convention.



Members get settled for a fun afternoon of friendly bidding. There were numerous large, ask the winner of the gigantic *H. 'Abba Dabba Do'*, a few minis and everything in between. Thanks to everyone who came and bid. The funds from a successful auction allow the society to function and give back to MOBot by buying more hostas and needed chemicals and contributing to capital improvements.



Auctioneers Janelle Criscione and Gene Pulliam kept the action going.



Keepers of the records and money – Jane Hogg, Dave Birenbaum and Mike Teller.



**A special
thanks to all
members
who took
the time to
dig, divide
and donate.**



Dee Gentile is all smiles – instant garden
photo by Janelle Criscione

July Auction – HVX testing

One of the hostas offered for sale at the auction was a nice pot of *H. 'Timothy'*. This was a division from a much larger clump grown in the Missouri Botanical Garden's hosta beds. Because a hosta growing near this clump tested positive for Hosta Virus X (HVX) earlier this year, Phyllis decided to test this plant to make sure it was virus free.

The most common symptoms of this virus, first discovered in the mid-1990's, are a bleeding of color out from the veins of the leaves and blue or dark green mottling on the leaves. HVX can also cause distortion in the leaves such as puckering, twisting or a lumpy appearance. Symptoms may take years to show after an infection.

The virus spreads through the transfer of plant sap. This can occur during normal gardening when sap gets on tools that are then used on uninfected plants. It is important to dip your tools in a 10% bleach solution or spray with a disinfectant such as Lysol before moving on to another plant. If you discover you have such a plant, dig it up and throw it in the trash, not the compost pile. Do not plant another hosta in the same location as you may not have removed every little root.

Phyllis used a *Hosta virus X* (HVX) ImmunoStrip® test kit to detect the presence of HVX in 'Timothy's' leaves. Put on gloves as you are working with chemicals. First, she cut a small sample, about the size of a quarter, from a leaf. This was placed in a plastic bag with a chemical solution. The piece of leaf was put between a mesh which was attached to the inside of the bag. She rubbed her hands back and forth over the mesh until the leaf was thoroughly broken up. You could also roll a blunt object such as a pen or marker over the mesh. The solution will turn green or light brown. Wait three minutes for the solution to settle.

Remove the ImmunoStrip from its container and insert into the channel portion of the bag until the strip is submerged in the solution. See the instructions in the box. Place the sealed bag in an upright position in a letter holder or against a pot. Now comes the hard part – wait 15 to 30 minutes.

When time is up, remove the strip and look for lines. One line is a control line and should always be present for a valid test. If a second line appears that is pinkish in color, the sample is positive for HVX. If no second line appears, the test is negative. The plant is virus free. Thankfully, 'Timothy' showed negative and soon found a new home with a successful bidder.

This all sounds complicated, but it wasn't. In the test kit were explicit instructions for how to do the test and what the results should look like.



Phyllis explains the process



Place hosta sample in the solution



Smash the hosta to break it apart



Place upright and wait for results

By-laws and Standing Rules

Bylaws are required by the Missouri Nonprofit Corporation Act for regulating and managing the affairs of a Society. The St. Louis Hosta Society's existing Bylaws, which were last amended in 2007, are available on the website at stlhosta.org. Much has changed in the last 16 years. The Bylaws should reflect the rules needed to run our organization most effectively.

Standing Rules have also been created. Standing Rules relate to the details of the administration of the Society, while the Bylaws contain the basic rules for governance. Standing Rules are adopted to supplement and interpret the Bylaws as needed.

Earlier this year, President Phyllis Weidman appointed a committee to tackle the task of revising the Bylaws and creating Standing Rules. Some time before the September meeting, these two documents will be sent to each member for their consideration. Please read them carefully and formulate any questions that you might have. A discussion will be held and a vote to accept the documents as presented or send them back to the committee for revision will take place at the September meeting.

Did You See!

Featured in the August 2023 issue of St. Louis Homes and Lifestyles is the beautiful hill-side garden of Phyllis Weidman. This was one of the gardens featured during the 2008 and 2016 AHS Conventions.

Phyllis' yard is the best of two worlds. The high canopy of mature trees and the dappled shade of understory trees is perfect for hostas. The rocky soil and steep gradient give wonderful drainage. That's the plus. The rocky soil and steep gradient make gardening difficult. That's the con. Phyllis and her late husband Jim, dug out the rocks and used them as elements within the beds. Years of work and lots of compost have made the soil plant friendly. Retaining walls, concrete steps and level sitting areas make the yard visitor friendly.

Phyllis is in love with hostas. Who else would wheelbarrow loads of mulch up such a steep hillside? Who else would, when moving from Ohio to St. Louis, include a small hosta collection in the back of their U-Haul trailer along with the furniture?

Congratulations!



Steep hill in the side yard is studded with beautiful hosta specimens.



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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

Contact: David Birenbaum
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d.birenbaum@sbcglobal.net

Dues: \$7 per year, \$18 for three years
Family or Individual

Meetings held at **The Des Peres Lodge, 1050 Des Peres Road, Des Peres, MO 63130** (near I270 and Manchester Rd) unless otherwise noted.

Visit our Web site: www.stlhosta.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 MRHS is \$20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of *The Hosta Leaves* newsletter.

Please mail a check payable to MRHS to:

Mona Keehn, Treasurer
1635 Chippewa Drive NW
Rochester MN 55901

Please include your Name, Address, Phone, and Email (most correspondence is by email), for questions please 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:

Barry Ankney, AHS Membership Secretary
1104 Oxford Ct
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

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/>