



Volume 23, Issue 10

December, 2022



President
Phyllis Weidman

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It is the time of year we all take time to thank all those people who have made our lives better. I have my list and I hope they all know how much they mean to me. You are on that list - all the members of the St. Louis Hosta Society who love hostas in their own special way.

I think sometimes I overdue my fondness for hostas, but how could that be. Hostas have been a part of my life for 40 plus years. It all began in Columbus, Ohio then moving to St. Louis in 1995. Having met Arlie Temple, somehow Jim and I were sucked into the St. Louis Hosta Society. It has been a source of great joy.

As we all get our gardens ready for winter we can only dream of April when those pips come out of the ground. However, now we have time to dream of what we are going to move and to where. Time to make wish lists of what to buy or give away. Time to read and learn. Mostly time to remember our friends that mean so very much. Happy holidays to all of you. Thanks for everything.

Phyllis

This is the last newsletter for 2022. It is hard for me to believe that another gardening year has come and gone. The Board met in November, established a budget, batted around ideas for programs for the coming year and finished the afternoon with a cup or two of Phyllis' delicious soup. During this winter break, plans will be finalized with meetings tentatively scheduled to resume in February. The first newsletter of 2023 will tell all. Look for it around the first of February.

2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 11	Holiday Party 1:30 – 5:00 PM, Home of Gene Pulliam 822 Brownell Ave., Glendale, MO 63122
February 25 2023	Midwest Regional Hosta Winter Symposium 8:30 – 4:30 PM Milwaukee, Wisconsin
June 7-10, 2023	AHS National Convention Ames, Iowa
July 13-15, 2023	Midwest Regional Hosta Convention Rochester, MN
July 11-13, 2024	Midwest Regional Hosta Convention Fond du Lac, WI

December 11 - Holiday Party
1:30 – 5:00 pm.
Home of Gene Pulliam
822 Brownell Ave, Glendale, MO 63122

The temperatures have plummeted, the winds are howling, the leaves are falling and our hostas have turned to mush. Turkey and dressing, cranberries and pumpkin pie are delicious memories. It is finally time to bid adieu to 2022.



Gene's Garden Casa

But we can't say good-bye to our hosta friends without one last hoorah. Gene Pulliam has graciously offered to host our society members at a Sunday afternoon party in his Glendale home. Members are asked to bring a favorite hors d'oeuvres or dessert to share with other party goers. Gene will provide water, coffee, soda, wine and beer. The festivities begin at 1:30 PM and continue until 5:00 PM.

No business meeting. No speakers. No cost. Come and mingle. Laugh and smile. Reminisce about the blistering hot summer, the lack of rain (or too much rain), all your gardening successes and hopes for next year. Share the joys of the coming holidays with your hosta friends. We hope that our numerous new members will consider coming. This is a really fun time to get to know one another.

For more information call or email Gene:

Genesgardencasa1@outlook.com or 816-213-6619

Directions:

- From the intersection of highway 270 and Manchester Road in Des Peres MO, travel east on MO-100/Manchester Road for approximately 3.2 miles.
- Turn right onto N. Sappington Road. Travel about 0.6 miles
- Turn right on Brownell Avenue. Gene's home is 822 Brownell on the left.

Congratulations!

Jolly Ann Whitener
Mike and Sharon Schmitt

AHS President's Wall of Honor

In 2012 the American Hosta Association created the President's Wall of Honor to recognize and thank those members of local societies who have worked tirelessly for many years to ensure the smooth running of their societies. Members nominated by their local societies receive a certificate of appreciation and have their names listed on the AHS web-site's Wall of Honor.

This year the St. Louis Hosta Society nominated three members who have spent countless hours enriching our society with their knowledge, humor, passion and boundless energy. Whatever the event, be it a meeting, a garden party, a sale or wallowing in the mud at a MOBot work day, these members can be sighted.

Jolly Ann has been our Secretary since 2018 keeping the minutes all meetings. She was the Registrar of the AHS National Convention held in St. Louis in 2016. For the past several years Jolly Ann has organized our Vendors Day event – she finds the space, the vendors, the volunteers, the advertising, the everything. But it is that great smile and friendly conversation that make her stand out.

The Schmitt team, Mike and Sharon, have contributed countless hours for the betterment of our Society. They served as Hospitality chairs for several years, been members of the nominating committee and currently keep track of member name tags. Mike also functions as our Facebook Administrator. They're always ready to lend a helping hand at our annual plant sales, auction and MOBot Work Day. Before down-sizing, Mike and Sharon maintained a beautiful garden in O'Fallon which they graciously opened for our enjoyment.

We couldn't do it without people like you!



President Phyllis Weidman presents certificate of appreciation to Jolly Ann.



Sharon and Mike Schmitt with Phyllis



October Rob Mortko – 'Hot Hostas'

Before giving our members a sneak peek at some of the up-and-coming hostas, Rob Mortko gave us a tour of **Made in the Shade Tissue Culture's** lab. He explained each step in the labor intensive process of creating many from one.

Tissue culture (TC) is one method of propagating plants. It is not limited to hostas. There are several reasons why to use TC – speed of propagation, disease control, expense and sport discovery.

Buds form around the edge of the hosta's crown. One of these buds along with a piece of the crown is surgically removed. This bud must be meticulously cleaned. Multiple layers of undeveloped leaves are peeled back. The bud is cleaned with a detergent wash and eventually soaked in a bleach solution. The idea is to remove all traces of soil, bacteria, fungi, nematodes and contaminants without killing the bud or damaging the meristem which is at the center of the bud. Tricky and time consuming.

The cleaned bud is placed in a vial containing the culture media. This media is a mixture of vitamins, hormones, sugar and a gel called agar. A hormone called cytokinens is used to stimulate multiplication, while another called auxin triggers root development.

It is vital that all this work be done in a clean, sterile environment. All work surfaces and tools must be sterilized. Contaminates are everywhere, even the dust that circulates in the air. Many a batch of plants can be lost if a fungus or mold seeps into the vials.

The vials are placed on growing racks. In a short amount of time, maybe only a few days, the outer leaves of the bud will start to unfurl. Sometime In the first 10 weeks, some multiplication of the original bud will occur.

Every four to eight weeks, the plant will be removed from the vial and divided. Each division is then placed in its own clean vial with fresh media. At this point the plants have no roots and rely on the sugars in the media to survive and grow. Again this division must be done in a sterile environment.



Hosta bud cleaned and placed in vial



Vials stacked on growing racks



Fast growing plant divided



Each division placed in its own vial

It doesn't take long for the number of plants produced to reach into the hundreds. When the desired number of plants has been achieved, the hormones in the agar mixture are tweaked so that the plants develop roots instead of multiplying.

Once roots have developed, the plants are potted in 96 cell packs and placed in a greenhouse for further growth. Once they have attained liner size and are suitable for potting up and growing on, the clones are ready to be shipped to a grower.

The flats are placed in a plastic mesh before being packed in boxes. This is to prevent the plants from falling out of the trays if the boxes are not shipped "this side up". Typically the grower will then tend the plants for another one or two years depending upon the growth rate of the particular hosta. Only then will we the buying public see these plants at our local nurseries.

The plants resulting from this process are clones, exact replicas of the mother plant. This is vitally important when reproducing named cultivars. My *H.* 'Blue Mouse Ears' must be the same as yours.

Because of the various hormones used and the large numbers of plants produced, mutations, called sports, often occur. This sport is a new variety which could itself be named and marketed. However, most of these sports are not distinctive enough to be worth the expense of further development and are relegated to the compost pile.

The hardest and most stressful part of this process seems to be creating and maintaining a highly sterile work area. Contamination can occur at any stage right up to the time the new plants are shipped to a grower. Talk about time and labor intensive! Constant vigilance is essential. A fungal infection can spell doom and waste months and months of work.

Thanks Rob for introducing us to your world. We will now think twice before complaining about the price of that special hosta.



Finally, the plantlet has roots



Flat of hostas ready for shipment



Boxed, wrapped and ready to go



Rob Mortko with Phyllis Weidman. Rob is holding a tray of *H.* 'Best Friend' named for Phyllis' late husband Jim. 'Best Friend' has just emerged from tissue culture and will be grown to salable size by **Hostas on the Bluff Nursery**. It will be available in 2023 or 2024 depending on growing speed.

*Photos from **Made in the Shade Tissue Culture** Facebook page.*

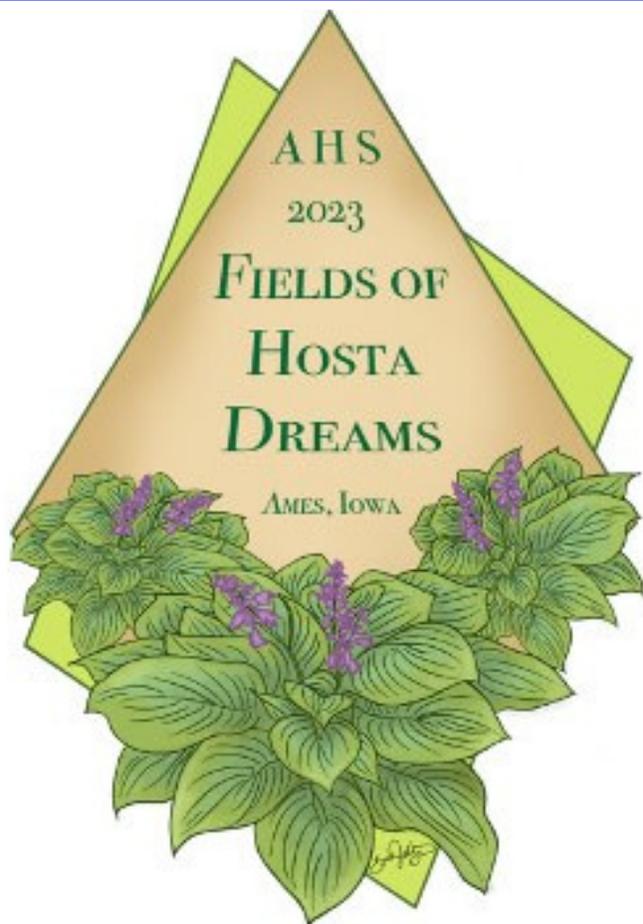
**Want to try something new
Want a distraction from the snow, ice and cold of winter
Need a gardening fix in the middle of January**

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 two weeks. 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 "2022 Summary".



The Nation's Largest Hosta Event

**AMERICAN HOSTA
SOCIETY**

2023 National Convention

JUNE 7 – 10

AMES, IA



Hosta dreamin'

2023 MRHS Convention

You're Invited

to the Convention of Your Dreams!

Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention

July 13-15 • Rochester, MN

Best Western Rochester Hotel

Information: <http://www.midwesthostasociety.org>

Preview video: <https://tinyurl.com/hostadreamin>

"I grow plants for many reasons: to please my eye or to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow."

— David Hobson

St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

Phyllis Weidman – President
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Jolly Ann Whitener – Secretary
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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

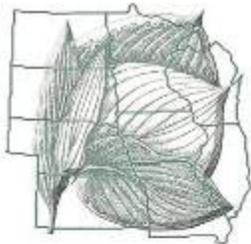
Contact: David Birenbaum
209 Brook Lane
O'Fallon, MO 63368
d.birenbaum@sbcglobal.net

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 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:

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/>