



Shady Notes

Volume 25, Issue 1

March, 2024



President
Gene Pulliam

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As I sit down to write my first message as your new President and thinking about the Spring that's upon us, I felt it more important to pause and give tribute to our outgoing President; Phyllis Weidman.

About 3 years ago when I joined the St. Louis Hosta Society, little did I know that working alongside Phyllis would I gain such a large amount of knowledge about this hosta passion we all have, but also the education she provides every time I am around her. Phyllis has led this organization for a number of years and has done so with tireless energy and compassion for not only "the plant", but the friendships we have developed because of her caring leadership.

Like others, I have had the honor of following her lead through volunteerism at Missouri Botanical Garden and our own events which include our annual auction, plant sale, work days and vendor days to name a few. She has always been available to anyone who has questions about Hosta, presented programs for garden clubs and represented us in leadership roles with the American Hosta Society. I had the opportunity to join Phyllis at the National Convention last year and learn even more. That's when I got the bug that I might be interested in taking on a leadership role with our local society so I could take a fraction of what I have learned from her and carry on what she has worked so hard to build and maintain as an organization.

Phyllis Weidman; I could go on and on about her because we all know what value she brings to the St. Louis Hosta Society. Only because she is still a critical part of our organization, could I even think about taking on the role as your President. Her knowledge, expertise and passion for our Hosta addiction will continue to be a part of who we are because without her encouraging me along the way, I would not have taken on this responsibility to have fun growing Hosta and continue to grow our St. Louis Hosta Society.

Thank you, Phyllis, for all you have done to lead and care for this amazing organization!

Gene

2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 17	Potluck Meeting with Speaker Kathie Soehngen 2:00 PM, CBEC Building 4651 Shaw, St. Louis, MO 63110
April 21	Vendor Day at Hostas on the Bluff Nursery 2:00 PM, Hostas on the Bluff Nursery 1601 Pleasantview Dr., Fairview Heights, IL 62208
April 27	Work Day at the Missouri Botanical Garden 8:00 AM, Missouri Botanical Garden Hosta Beds
May 11	Plant Sale 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Missouri Botanical Garden Set up May 10, time TBD
May 19	Garden Walk with Speaker Martha LaFata Home of Martha LaFata 433 Edgar Road, Webster Groves, MO 63119
June 16	Garden Walk with Speaker Bruce Buehrig 2:00 PM, Home of Bruce and Chick Buehrig 31 Bellerive Acres, St. Louis, MO 63121
June 18-22	AHS National Convention Marlborough, MA
June 29-30	Bus trip to Hornbaker Nursery
July 11-13	Midwest Regional Hosta Convention Fond de Lac, WI
July 21	Members Plant Auction 2:00 PM, CBEC Building 4651 Shaw, St. Louis, MO 63110
August 11	Meeting with Speaker Ginny Johnson 2:00 PM, CBEC Building 4651 Shaw, St. Louis, MO 63110
September 15	Meeting with Speaker 2:00 PM, CBEC Building
October 20	Meeting with Speaker 2:00 PM, CBEC Building
November	Board Meeting Time and location TBD

**March 17
Potluck Luncheon
and
Talk by Kathie Soehngen**

2:00 PM

**CBEC Building
4651 Shaw Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63110**



2023 Potluck

Our first meeting of 2024 will be a potluck luncheon and an interesting talk by fellow member Kathie Soehngen on one of St. Louis's beauty spots, The Jewel Box in Forest Park. Hospitality chairwoman, Melinda Ligon, will provide scrumptious Fried Chicken along with tea, water, soda and the required compostable plates, eating utensils and napkins.

Melinda is asking members to bring a complimentary side dish. What do you enjoy with a plate of fried chicken? This could be your favorite potato salad, a tossed salad, coleslaw, beans, vegetable casserole, chips, relishes and of course dessert. Please remember that whatever you bring, the containers (even if empty) will need to return home with you if not compostable. Just bring a trash bag or something to make it easy for yourself. The meeting location does not have a stove. However, there are places to plug in a crock pot or casserole if your item needs to be kept hot. Don't forget to bring a serving utensil if needed.

Melinda asks that members "Please RSVP to my email, meligon@sbcglobal.net, with your attendance and the item you will bring to share. I need to know if you are coming to have enough chicken and dinnerware. Knowing what you will bring makes it easier for me to put out something later to let you know what we need and what will be there in abundance. Remember RSVP is easy and polite way to join in. No one wants to give a party and have no idea how many will be there, and what food can be expected! Also, I encourage everyone to participate with the sharing...don't rely on your friends' generosity! Looking forward to seeing everyone!"

RSVP: email - meligon@sbcglobal.net or call 314-749-7307

The meeting location is Room #125 in the Commerce Bank Center for Science Education (commonly referred to by the acronym CBEC). This building is located a few blocks west of the Missouri Botanical Gardens main campus. The address is 4651 Shaw Blvd. There is ample parking in front of the building.

Directions: Traveling on either I-44 or I-64/40 take the Kingshighway exit. Travel South on Kingshighway to Shaw Blvd. Turn left onto Shaw. Note that at this location Shaw is split into a section heading East and another section heading West. O'Connell's Pub sits in between the two sections of Shaw. The entrance to the parking lot for CBEC is on the West heading section. After turning East onto Shaw, travel to the end of O'Connell's Pub parking lot and then turn left onto the West heading section. The gated entrance to CBEC is on the right.

Membership perk!

Purchase a first-time introduction at a discount price



H. 'Blueberry Parfait'

Hosta 'Blueberry Parfait' is a new, first-time introduction from the hybridizing program of Rod Kuenster. There is something about the icy stare of a really blue hosta with a creamy white margin. This large seedling has the look of fancy dessert plates with its cupped and ruffled rounded leaves that are nicely displayed so that their white backs are clearly visible.

Rod Kuenster says that "hosta seed growing is a hobby close to his heart." He has been at it for more than 20 years. He will be organizing a Hosta Seed Growing competition at the 2024 MRHS convention in Fond du Lac this summer.

Retailing for \$35, this beauty can be yours for the membership price of \$20. Only 30 plants were ordered so it is on a first come, first serve basis. Place your order now, with pick up being at the May meeting. Phyllis Weidman is chairing this special event. If interested in a plant:

call Phyllis at (34-630-9036)
email her at (pow1031@gmail.com)
or text at (314-630-9036)

2024 Coming Attraction

Work day at MO Bot – April 27

Written by Phyllis Weidman

When was the last time you were able to dig in the dirt at the Missouri Botanical Garden? Well, you can if you join members of the Society for our annual Work Day at the Garden. Be at the Hosta area at 8 am rain or shine. It has only rained once in the last 10 years. Bring your pruners and gloves and anything else you would use gardening at your own house.

We will be removing mulch from the crowns, fertilizing, digging and moving hostas. It is great fun! If you think you cannot do those things, there is always labels to make and hosta to pot that are going to our plant sale on May 11th. We are usually done by noon or earlier. Mark your calendar now!

Contact Phyllis Weidman (pow1031@gmail.com) for more information and to let her know you will be there.

This is February? It's 78 degrees!

I feel like I'm traveling through an automated car wash. I've passed the battering brushes, survived the strong blasts of rinsing water and rolled beyond the gusting drying winds. At last, a bright light flashes 'Relax'. In a few seconds, it will blink 'Go'. We've made it through the harshest parts of winter. We're in the 'Relax' moment, not yet to 'Go'. Spring is upon us, but keep your foot off the accelerator. What can be done now when the weather is warming but our plants are not yet ready to emerge from their long snooze.

First and foremost be on the vole alert. Look for fresh holes about the size of a nickel. If you find one, you probably have voles. Bait a small mousetrap with peanut butter and place next to the hole, then cover the trap and the hole with a clay pot. Supposedly voles can't resist. It takes a lot of mousetraps if you have an infestation. In my yard, the voles seem to prefer hosta roots to peanut butter. Somehow the traps disappear but not the voles. When all else fails, drop poison peanuts down the hole and cover with a brick or large rock to keep other critters from eating the pellets. The more you can reduce the vole population now, the fewer hungry pests will be devouring hosta roots later in the growing season.

Cleaning up your yard, removing last year's dead foliage and fallen leaves not only makes your garden more aesthetically appealing, it also thwarts voles and slugs by removing their hiding places. Trim off the dead foliage of perennials such as the various grasses, heuchera, hellebores and Shasta daisies. It is much easier to tidy them up now before the new growth starts pushing up through the old. If you haven't done so in the last three to five years, take a soil sample to our MU Extension Service (there's one in Overland) for analysis. Learn what nutrients or organic materials your beds need. You might find you are using too much or the wrong kind of fertilizer. Once beds are cleared, add a layer of mulch to hold moisture in the soil during the long hot St. Louis summer. Edging your flower beds is a bit of work, but it adds so much to the beauty of your yard. It is like putting icing on a cake.

This is a good time to repair retaining walls and stepping stones damaged by winter heave. Clean out your gutters in anticipation of those heavy rains forecasted for late March and April. Check out the hard scape around your yard. Repair, re-stain or repaint fences, benches, decks, trellises and window boxes. Using a one part bleach to five parts water solution, scrub and sanitize birdbaths and water features.

Despite the deceptive warm February temperatures, it is still winter. This is a great time to redo those pesty plant labels. Like socks in the laundry, they just seem to vanish. I've found that a Brother P-touch Label Maker produces labels that do not fade or peel off metal or plastic stakes even after years of use. If you don't like the looks of metal markers sticking up throughout your garden like miniature tombstones, bury them underground beside the plant. Place the tag which came with the ppppppplant, or create one with penciled writing on a piece of metal or plastic, by each plant in the same place, perhaps at the lower right. Markers will last a long time if kept underground away from the fading effects of the sun.

Now is a good time to take stock of your birdhouses. Squirrels have a habit of nibbling holes in the roofs or sides of the houses. If not too serious, repair with scrape wood. These pesky critters also like to chew around the birdhouse's opening, enlarging it so they can have a cozy winter dwelling. Repair this by glueing a large holed washer over the opening. Slap on a coat of fresh paint and the house is ready for its next guest.

(continued)

Take stock of your garden tools. Sharpen your shovels, trimmers, edgers and pruners now instead of waiting until you really need one only to find it is too dull to do the job. Remove rust, oil their metal parts and then disinfect. If you have the right tools, sharpen your lawn mower blades yourself or take it to Gregg Wesche at Overland Hardware where they will do it for you. Gregg is a fellow member and Overland Hardware has participated in our annual Vendor Day event for many years.

My husband's father, his father and his father lived by the Old Farmer's Almanac and planted potatoes on St. Patrick's Day. My husband will be out on March 17, or there about, sticking 'seed' potato pieces in the ground. Cool season vegetables tolerate a light frost and grow best in the mild temperatures of spring and fall in East Central Missouri. Most can be planted in early to mid-March and again in July and August for a fall harvest. Cool season vegetables include: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, kohlrabi, kale, lettuce, onions, spinach, beets, Swiss chard, carrots, radish, peas and potatoes.

Whew, I'm tired already. So much to do and so little time. It is 78 degrees today but the Channel 2 weatherman just said we might have snow tomorrow night. Maybe I have time to read one more book or do one more jigsaw puzzle before I tackle that list.

Other 2024 Coming Attractions

Plant Sale at MO Bot – May 11

Right now as winter still holds on, it may seem that it will never happen, but those hostas are just waiting for a few more warm days before poking their pips above ground. When they do, note which ones might be divided, potted and donated to the upcoming May 11 hosta sale or saved for the member auction held in July. Look for side shoots that can easily be removed. If each of us would take a moment to donate a couple of our babies both the sale and auction would be outstanding events filled with a wide variety of plants.

Mark this event on your calendars. Think about not just donating but volunteering to help setup and work the sales table. Join the fun. More information will appear in the May newsletter.

August 11 Guest Speaker Ginny Johnson

Something a bit different. Ginny Johnson, a member of the St. Louis Herb Society, will present a program on native plants. The title of her talk is: Making the Connection: How Native Americans used Native Plants for their Health and Well-being. She will discuss about 40 plants out of the nearly 500 that Native Americans used. Ginny will focus on the Osage tribe – where they live in the United States, some of their inventions and where in Missouri you might go to learn more about them.

Slug Time! Be Pro-active!

In the next month and a half, we avid gardeners will be taking frequent strolls through our gardens looking for those first hosta pips to poke through the soil. These first signs of spring are what makes winter bearable. But don't sit back and just marvel how nature continuously renews itself. Sometimes Mother Nature needs a helping hand. Remember all those holes that appeared in your hosta leaves during the growing season. They can be eliminated. But now is the time for action.

Garden slugs are brown or gray in color, slimy, soft-bodied, without any legs. In St. Louis they are generally small – one-fourth to one inch in length, not as intimidating as those four-inch pests common in the Northwest. Each slug is capable of laying hundreds of eggs in its lifetime. The eggs are laid in moist soil, under mulch, rocks or garden detritus. Now, as winter weather starts to abate, all those overwintering slug eggs begin to hatch and any slugs that have survived the winter begin to feed regularly.



photo: Missouri Botanical Garden



Major slug damage to hosta leaves

There are some non-chemical controls that can be tried and may work if you are tenacious and persistent. Slugs crawl everywhere. Their soft bodies do not like to pass over anything that irritates their skin. Things like coffee grounds, wood ashes, sand, crushed eggshells, wool pellets and diatomaceous earth can be used as barriers around a plant. Cups of beer sunk into the ground attract slugs with their yeasty smell. The slugs then drown in alcoholic bliss. Copper strips react with slug slime delivering a shock to the pest. Of course, you can always walk through your garden at night when these pests like to feed and pick them off by hand. Ugh!

Slugs like to live and lay eggs in garden debris. Destroy their homes by removing old decayed foliage and leaf litter from your beds. Pull mulch away from the crowns of your hostas. Slugs are a favorite food of snakes, toads, frogs, beetles and other beneficial insects. Encourage these predators to stay in your garden.

In the past there were two primary types of chemical slug baits, those with metaldehyde as the primary ingredient and those with iron phosphate. As of April 1, 2023, metaldehyde has been banned from sale in the United States and Europe. Some studies have found that metaldehyde as formulated for use in slug baits is poisonous to other forms of wildlife. Iron phosphate has been declared safe for pets, wildlife and for use in organic gardening. Brand names such as Sluggo, Slug Magic, and Garden Safe Slug and Snail Bait no longer contain metaldehyde. Most types of chemical baits also contain additives such as yeast to lure the slugs and snails to the bait.

All that is necessary is to evenly apply the bait over the infested area at the rate recommended on the product label. More is not better. In about two or three weeks, apply the bait again. This will take out many of the slugs hatched from eggs after the first application. Applied properly, more treatments will probably not be necessary. Each year you will notice a substantial decrease in the slug population and the holes in your hostas.

Whether you use slug baits or non-chemical controls, **the key is to get started early**, just as the pips are emerging from the soil. Waiting until holes appear is much too late – many generations of slugs are already thriving in your garden.

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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

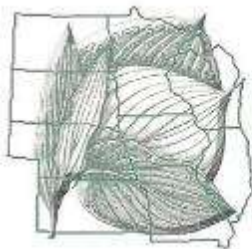
Contact: Lynn Teller
185 Chatwood Terrace
Crestwood, MO 63126
Lynn.teller@gmail.com

Dues: \$10 per year, \$20 for three years
Individual or Household

Meetings held at Commerce Bank Center for Science Education (CBEC), 4651 Shaw Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63110 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/>