

Shady Notes

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy Spring, Fellow Gardeners:

For me, this year's return of Spring warmth and some rain without devastating hail has been triumphant. My personal garden usually looks lush green and glorious this time of year. And so, it is now, only the hostas appear larger and more vigorous as we wish.



Ending a MoBot work day right—Dave digging into a sweet reward with fellow volunteers

The Thursday morning maintenance foray by several SLHS volunteers has been ongoing this month in the Hosta area at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Those hostas and surrounding flower beds are also a delightful sight in Spring. Combine that with fortunately mild weather and the quiet solitude MoBot offers during our work - I mean fun - from about 7:30 to 10:00 a.m. weekly is a joy. Please Note: Starting in June, our work day will change to Tuesday. Contact me or any Board member should you desire to volunteer some time with us. Please.

Saturday morning April 18 was the Society's annual work day tending to beds in the MoBot hosta garden and dividing hostas for our annual sale. We split dozens of hostas chosen by Ash, the horticulturist assigned to the hosta garden, which resulted in about 170 potted plants.

Then on Saturday before Mother's Day, May 9, the potted hostas with additional donated potted plants brought to MoBot by Society members go on sale to the public in the Jack C. Taylor building. The sale starts at 9:00 and concludes at 5:00, or earlier if all the plants are sold beforehand if history repeats itself. Be aware that this sale is by far our largest source of funding, which in turn allows the

Society to purchase all the new hostas for Missouri Botanical Garden and meet the goals of our club.

I look forward to seeing our members at the sale May 9 and other scheduled activities noted herein!!

Dave Birenbaum



The Fruits of our Labor

PIP'S TIPS



Over time, deer will get accustomed to even the most effective repellents. Fight back by rotating products every 2-3 weeks during periods of heavy growth and then every 3-4 weeks thereafter. Alternate smelly repellents (like Liquid Fence) with ones that taste bad (like Deer Out).

HELP WANTED: PLANT SALE

Our annual plant sale will be held Saturday, May 9 at the Missouri Botanical Garden in a classroom in the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center. We are requesting help in the following areas:

- Donation of plants (tagged if you know the name)
- Help loading plants and setting up the room **Friday, May 8 from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm**
- Help loading plants and setting up the room **Saturday, May 9 starting at 7:00 am**
- Working a 2-hour shift at the sale

If you can help, please contact any board member or send an email to stlhosta@gmail.com. Thank you!



ON A RELATED NOTE:

PLEASE SAVE YOUR POTS

Every year, we need about 200 containers for the plant sale, primarily for the splits from MoBot. If you have unneeded 2, 3, or 5-gallon pots, please save them for next year's sale. You can bring them to a meeting or garden walk or contact a board member to arrange for pickup. Thank you.



COMPANION SPOTLIGHT: HEUCHERA (CORAL BELLS)

As much as we love hostas, even the most die-hard collector has to admit that a garden needs other types of plants for balance. *Heuchera*, commonly known as coral bells, is one such companion that can easily add interest to your landscape. Here are a few reasons why you should consider adding them to your garden.

Color Palette

Heuchera leaves come in a variety of colors including:

- Deep burgundy to nearly black
- Caramel and amber
- Lime green and chartreuse
- Silver-veined and marbled patterns

Planted alongside blue or green hostas, these colors create a striking contrast and keep shade gardens from looking one-dimensional.

Delicate Blooms

In late spring to early summer, coral bells produce slender flower stalks topped with tiny bell-shaped blooms. Some gardeners find these flowers messy and choose to cut them off. However, if you keep them, they will:

- Attract pollinators
- Add vertical interest to otherwise low-growing plantings without competing for attention

Similar Growing Requirements

Coral bells will thrive under the same conditions that make for happy hostas:

- Light: Partial shade (morning sun is ideal)
- Soil: Well-drained, rich in organic matter
- Water: Moderate—slightly less thirsty than hostas



Heuchera 'Spellbound'



Heuchera 'Marmalade'

Four-Season Interest

Unlike hostas, many coral bells will survive freezing temperatures. Their foliage provides:

- Winter color
- Early spring interest before hostas emerge
- Life in otherwise bare beds

Deer and Rabbit Resistant

While no plant is completely deer and rabbit resistant, coral bells aren't a preferred food group:

- Leaves are slightly astringent and bitter
- Some varieties have thick, leathery leaves
- Some varieties have a somewhat unpleasant scent

Contrasting Shapes and Textures

Planted next to hostas, coral bells can add visual interest:

- Leaves can be ruffled, wavy or smooth
- Texture can be velvety or glossy

Container Friendly

Like hostas, coral bells can grow well in containers:

- Shallow root system doesn't require much space
- Serve as a great "filler" paired with other perennials like hostas or ferns
- Ensure proper drainage to prevent waterlogged soil which can lead to root rot

Easy Care and Maintenance

Caring for coral bells is relatively easy:

- Remove old or tattered leaves in early spring
- Divide every 3-4 years to prevent plants from becoming leggy, woody, and less vigorous
- Ensure crowns don't get buried too deeply



Heuchera 'Forever Purple'



So many choices...

Understanding Tetraploid Hostas

Adapted from “Understanding Tetraploid Hostas: Benefits, Varieties, and Cultivation Tips,”
siennahosta.co.uk

OVERVIEW

Tetraploid hostas have four sets of chromosomes instead of the usual two. This happens when chromosomes duplicate during cell division, but the cell fails to divide properly.

Under normal conditions, a hosta cell copies its chromosomes and then splits into two new cells, each with two sets. In a tetraploid, that final separation step is disrupted, so the cell retains all the duplicated chromosomes—resulting in four complete sets.

This process can happen naturally, when a mutation in a growing point (meristem) produces a tetraploid sport that can be propagated. Or it can also be induced by growers, using chemicals such as colchicine or oryzalin that interfere with chromosome separation during cell division.



Photo Credit: hostaheaven.shop

Tetraploid H. 'Touch of Class' is a sport of H. 'June'

BENEFITS

- Thicker, almost rubbery leaves
- More intense or saturated color, especially in blues and golds
- Wider margins
- Larger size
- Improved flowering
- Better substance, meaning leaves hold up well against environmental stress such as sun exposure, heavy rain, and minor pest damage
- Stronger overall presence in the landscape

DOWNSIDES

- Slower growth
- Shorter roots
- Can be more expensive due to the breeding or selection processes
- Usually less fertile than parent

EXAMPLES

TETRAPLOID	PARENT PLANT
<i>H. 'Touch of Class'</i>	<i>H. 'June'</i>
<i>H. 'Forbidden Fruit'</i>	<i>H. 'Orange Marmalade'</i>
<i>H. 'Cathedral Windows'</i>	<i>H. 'Stained Glass'</i>
<i>H. 'Hands Up'</i>	<i>H. 'Praying Hands'</i>
<i>H. 'Patriot'</i>	<i>H. 'Francee'</i>
<i>H. 'Minuteman'</i>	<i>H. 'Francee'</i>
<i>H. 'Liberty'</i>	<i>H. 'Sagae'</i>

is a sport of

NON-HOSTA-RELATED NEWS

Pond-o-Rama Volunteer Opportunity

June 27-28, 2026

This is a new program that St Louis Water Garden Society (SLWGS) is initiating this year. We are seeking volunteer Greeters to assist our POR Tour Hosts on tour day. This would consist of the volunteer being positioned at the entrance of a home, offering a friendly welcome, and checking-in tour visitors as they arrive.

In appreciation for sitting for a *four-hour shift*, the volunteer will be given a free pass for the TWO-DAY event (one and a half days of free touring.) A Greeter orientation session and online information will be provided prior to the event.

Work one 4-hour shift and receive a free pass for the 2-day event

This is a fantastic opportunity to visit some of the most interesting gardens in our area. For more information or to volunteer please contact Lori Stringer at loristringbean@gmail.com

ANNUAL WORK DAY AT THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN



On April 18, 2026, a group of hosta lovers worked in the hosta garden at MoBot. They weeded, pruned, dug, divided, and potted up hostas in brutal 60-degree conditions. The potted hostas will go to the plant sale on May 9, 2026. They ended the morning with about 150 divisions, 6 calluses, 8 sore backs, and 20 muddy pairs of shoes. Thank you to all who participated!

Carmen Christopher gives a little love to H. 'Night Before Christmas.'

Has anyone seen Grant Evans?

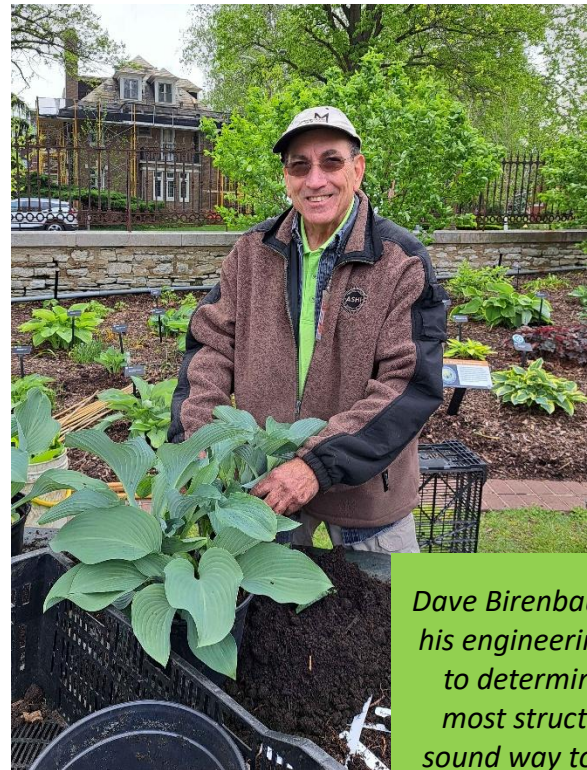


Phyllis Weidman and Kathy Belleville remove a division from H. 'Humpback Whale' with surgical precision.





Tim O'Connor carefully pots up a split into MoBot's fantastic compost.



Dave Birenbaum uses his engineering skills to determine the most structurally sound way to divide this clump.



Hosta Friends! BACK ROW (L-R): Emily Shelton and Ash Sander (MoBot employees), Valerie Rudy-Valli, Phyllis Weidman, Dave Birenbaum, and Mike Teller FRONT ROW (L-R) Carmen Christopher, Grant Evans, Tim O'Connor, and Lynn Teller

VOLUNTEERING AT THE GARDEN!



Every Thursday morning, a group of dedicated volunteers work in the hosta area of the Missouri Botanical Garden under the guidance of horticulturist Ash Sander. They perform basic maintenance tasks including weeding and deadheading from about 7:30 am to 10:00 am (and have fun doing it). If you would like to help, please contact Dave at (314) 650-5200.

Please note: starting in June, the work day will change to Tuesday.

BUS TRIP TO BE RESCHEDULED

Due to a small number of positive responses, we have canceled the bus trip to Kansas City. We will try again next year.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<p>May 8, 2026 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm</p> <p>Friday</p>	<p>Plant Sale Setup</p>	<p>Preparation for sale including loading, pricing, and organizing tasks.</p> <p>MoBot Main Building 4344 Shaw Blvd, St Louis MO 63110</p>
<p>May 9, 2026 7:00 am</p> <p>Saturday</p>	<p>Plant Sale Setup</p>	<p>Preparation for sale including loading, pricing, and organizing tasks.</p> <p>MoBot Main Building 4344 Shaw Blvd, St Louis MO 63110</p>
<p>May 9, 2026 9:00 am – 5:00 pm (or sold out)</p> <p>Saturday</p>	<p>Plant Sale</p>	<p>Public plant sale of mostly hostas from member gardens, splits from the Missouri Botanical Garden, and year-end purchases from local nurseries.</p> <p>MoBot Main Building 4344 Shaw Blvd, St Louis MO 63110</p>
<p>May 13, 2026 6:30pm – 7:30pm</p> <p>Wednesday</p>	<p>Garden Walk</p>	<p>Home of Philip Mueller</p> <p>Garden is a mix of native and ornamental perennials, shrubs and trees. With a wide range of gardens like an Iris meadow, daylily garden, rock garden, stumpery, and miniature tree garden. Has a wide range of perennials for sun and shade.</p> <p>253 Ballwin Ave, Ballwin, MO 63021</p>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



The Stumpery




31-year-old Japanese Maple

Photos courtesy of Philip Mueller

<p>May 16-17 2026 Saturday and Sunday</p>	<p>Trip to Kansas City</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.5em;">CANCELED</p>	<p>Details still in progress</p>
<p>May 31, 2026 TIME TBD Sunday</p>	<p>Garden Walk</p>	<p>Home of Bruce and Chick Buehrig</p> <p>If you can only go on one Garden Walk this year, this is the one to attend!</p> <p>St Louis Homes writeup Garden Lou Winter Visit Video</p> <p>31 Bellerive Acres, St Louis MO 63121</p>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<p>June 10 – 13, 2026 (Wed – Saturday)</p>	<p>National Convention</p>	<p>American Hosta Society Convention in Dublin, OH Embassy Suites by Hilton • Dublin, OH</p>  <p>2026 AHS Convention - Dublin, OH</p>
<p>June 17, 2026 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm Wednesday</p>	<p>Garden Walk</p>	<p>Home of Diana DeWolf</p> <p>Diana is the owner of DeWolf Designs, a mosaic stepping stone company. She has been working on her garden since 1994. More Information will appear in the next newsletter.</p> <p>342 Rose Ln Kirkwood, MO 63122</p>
<p>June 20, 2026 Saturday</p>	<p>Garden Walk</p>	<p>TBD</p>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<p>July 2, 2026 6:30 pm</p> <p>Thursday</p>	<p>Garden Walk Happy Hour</p>	<p>Home of Phyllis Weidman</p> <p>Multi-level garden filled with hundreds of hostas accented by perennials and mature trees. A tall deer fence and regular repellent spraying keep the deer away. Phyllis has famously said she's at capacity and will only add a hosta if it's really special.</p> <p>St Louis Home & Lifestyles Article</p> <p>508 Pointe Essex Court, Kirkwood MO 63122</p>
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Photo Credit St Louis Home & Lifestyles

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<p>July 9 – 11, 2026 (Thurs – Saturday)</p>	<p>Regional Convention</p>	<p>Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Madison, WI</p> 
<p>July 18, 2026 1:00 pm</p> <p>Saturday</p>	<p>Member Hosta Auction</p>	<p>The favorite event of many members! This is a great opportunity to obtain varieties contributed by members from their own gardens.</p> <p>MoBot CBEC Building 4651 Shaw Blvd, St Louis MO 63110</p>
<p>September 26, 2026 TIME TBD</p> <p>Saturday</p>	<p>Garden Walk</p>	<p>TBD</p>

OFFICIALS

DAVID BIRENBAUM, PRESIDENT

(314) 650-5200

d.birenbaum@sbcglobal.net

MARTHA LAFATA, SECRETARY

(314) 753-5551

mvelafata@gmail.com

CARMEN CHRISTOPHER, VICE-PRESIDENT

(314) 324-4380

carmendotcarmen@gmail.com

KATHIE SOEHNGEN, HOSPITALITY

(314) 435-7471

kasoehng@sbcglobal.net

PHYLLIS WEIDMAN, PAST PRESIDENT

(314) 630-9036

pow1031@gmail.com

KRIS ASH, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

(314) 371-5569

krisashwork@gmail.com

**LYNN TELLER, TREASURER,
NEWSLETTER EDITOR, AND
WEBMASTER**

(314) 306-1478

lynn.teller@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership application is available on our [website](#) or contact [Lynn](#)

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

Membership term: January - December

CONNECT WITH US

Website: stlhosta.org

Facebook: [St Louis Hosta Society](#)

THE AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY



Join the American Hosta Society and get to know America's most popular perennials and those who love them. Memberships range from \$30 - \$40/year with multi-year discounts.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Full-color print issue of The Hosta Journal mailed twice each year
- Unique digital edition of The Hosta Journal emailed once each year
- Access to "Members Only" section of the website
- Access to display gardens throughout the country, many of which are only open to AHS members
- Eligibility to purchase a member-only hosta
- Exclusive invitation to exhibit hostas and compete for recognition in AHS-sanctioned Hosta Shows
- Updates on speaker programs, events, awards, plant auctions, news, and more!

FIRST-TIME MEMBERS ALSO RECEIVE

- \$15 voucher for use at participating nurseries
- Option to receive an exclusive gift hosta (additional \$10 to cover shipping)
- Hosta Adventure—A Grower's Guide, a primer on hostas outlining what every gardener should know
- Hosta of the Year Booklet, a full-color publication featuring the American Hosta Growers Association Hostas of the Year

Join Today at americanhostasociety.org

THE MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY



Membership in the society is \$20.00 for two years for both an individual or family membership. A family membership includes the primary member and his/her significant other. Members receive two issues per year of the society's newsletter, *The Hosta Leaves*. **First time members receive a voucher for \$10.00, good for purchases at our participating Hosta Vendors.**

In addition there are two meetings held annually. The Winter Symposium is held in the Milwaukee area in early February. It is a one-day event with an assortment of speakers that present the latest information pertaining to Hostas and gardening with them. All of this is offered in an enjoyable and down-to-earth format with something for everyone interested in gardening and learning more about Hostas.

In the summer, an annual convention, hosted by a local society, is held in different locations throughout the region. This three-day extravaganza features garden tours, a show of Hosta leaves, vendors selling the newest in Hosta plants, an auction of plants, a banquet, and informational speakers.

Send your completed membership application and check to:

Mona Keehn, Treasurer
1635 Chippewa Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901

[Printable MRHS Membership Form](#)