



Shady Notes

Volume 24, Issue 8

September, 2023



President
Phyllis Weidman

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

.Are your August Lilys blooming? Even with the heat and humidity of late, they look great and smell even better.

One of the first hostas introduced from Europe was *H. plantaginea*. With its bright green foliage and large, fragrant white flowers, it is a common sight in many older shade gardens. It has been used in breeding and is in the background of hundreds of hosta cultivars.

One of these seedlings is *H. 'Honeybells'*, a cross between *H. plantaginea* and *H. lanceolata*, done in the 1940s. It is the first hosta hybrid developed and introduced for sale in the United States. Another seedling is *H. 'Royal Standard'*.

It is a cross between *H. plantaginea* x *H. sieboldiana*, developed in the 1960s. They bloom in mid-August to early September as does *H. plantaginea*. These are the hostas that are sometime referred to as plantain lily or August Lily. It is August so enjoy these hostas while they continue to bloom into September.

The September meeting is a very important one. We have three items of business to vote on - new Bylaws, new Standing Rules, and the report of the nominating committee. As a member you should be prepared to vote on these important items.

You should have all received an electronic copy of the proposed Bylaws and Standing Rules. If you did not receive one, please let me know. Please read them over! Be ready to ask questions and vote. We should thank the committee. This is a lot of work but it was felt the society needed to do this. The Bylaws being used were last amended in 2007. We have had no Standing Rules approved by the society. We do a lot of things differently than we did in 2007. The Bylaws gives us the basic rules to run the organization with the details given in the Standing Rules.

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2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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 Mike Wagner 2:00 PM, Des Peres Lodge 1050 Des Peres Rd., Des Peres, MO 63130
November	Board Meeting Time and location TBD
December	Holiday Party Home of Melinda Ligon - Time and location TBD
February 23-24, 2024	Midwest Regional Society Winter Symposium Milwaukee, WI
June 18-22, 2024	AHS National Convention Marlborough, MA
July 11-13, 2024	Midwest Regional Hosta Convention Fond du Lac, WI

The nominating committee has a very important job. The committee finds members who are willing to serve as officers of the society. A majority of members present is necessary for members to be elected. Nominations are always accepted from the floor. This committee must be thanked as well.

Lots of business but it can be done, especially in an air-conditioned room. See you there!

Phyllis



H. plantaginea



H. 'Honeybells'



H. 'Royal Standard'

Photos from the Missouri Botanical Garden web-site

September 17 Meeting

**2:00 pm, Des Peres Lodge
1050 Des Peres Rd., Des Peres, MO 63130**

Dean Gunderson Director of Education at Seed St. Louis

Are you the adventuresome type? Is your mind open to new tastes, especially in the food department? Would you consider a helping of hostas spears next to your T-bone steak? Would you stir-fry a petiole or two with teriyaki sauce? How about a tender leaf mixed in your lettuce and spinach salad?

Our guest speaker is Dean Gunderson, the Director of Education at Seed St. Louis (formerly known as Gateway Greening). Dean works with over 250 community groups around the St. Louis area who grow their own food at Seed St. Louis. Their mission is to help educate people on growing their own fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Dean started and is currently in charge of an orchard program which is part of a national coalition of 10 cities called the Giving Grove. This group works to promote community orchards across the country. He is always on the lookout for more useful plants to place in the shade casted by orchard trees. He had heard that hostas are edible, but are they really? Being an inquisitive sort, Dean decided to do a bit of research into the concept.

Join your fellow members in September to hear about the great work that Seed St. Louis does in our community. Dean will also describe his adventure in the hosta culinary arts and tell us whether he thinks hosta shoots could become the next hot new food craze.



Dean Gunderson
photo from Seed Facebook page



Southampton Community Garden
photo by Matt Alvino



The Orchard on Virginia
photo by Karen Johnson



H. 'Victory' - tasty or yuck?



H. 'Sagae' - tasty or yuck?

August – Hostas on the Bluff nursery

It was August in St. Louis so of course it was hot. But there was plenty of shade under the towering oaks and numerous pergolas. A gentle breeze stirred the air in this hilltop nursery. Melinda Ligon kept us cool with popsicles and fudge bars. Brian Kniffen's love of hostas came from his grandmother Honey. In 2009, Brian and Erica settled on a hilltop in Fairview Heights and began growing Honey's hostas. In 2016 the nursery opened with 250 varieties of hostas. Now there are more than 700. The business continues to expand. Greenhouses hold 30,000 plugs being grown for sale, a pergola shades the sales area, the display garden doubles as an event space and workshops became part of this summer's offerings. Stay tuned, there's more to come - better parking, air-conditioned meeting rooms, more merchandise, new sales area.



Border of *H. 'Grandiflora'*



One of the beds in the Hostas on the Bluff landscaped display area



Large trees provided lots of shade



Mary Meisenheimer and Roger McFarland chat



Members listen to a talk given by a Hostas on the Bluff staff member.



Wendy DeCarlo and Karen Frimel in sales area



Mangava plants are also sold at the nursery.



One of several 'lawn mowers' helps keep the weeds in check.



H. 'Paradigm'

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.

You should have received an email copy earlier this month. Please read them carefully and formulate any questions that you might have. You can make a motion to change or delete any item in the documents. The membership present will then vote to approve or disapprove the amendment. After discussion a vote to accept the documents as presented or as amended will be taken. This is your society. Make your wishes known.

Election Time

Want to be part of the action, work with a fun group of people, set the direction of your hosta society? Now's the time. There are four elected officers who serve two-year terms: President, Vice-president, Treasurer and Secretary. The nominating committee is now accepting names of members interested in serving. A slate will be presented to the membership for voting at our September meeting. There are lots of members willing to help with projects. We just need a bit of leadership.

If you are interested in submitting your name or would like more information about the duties of each position, contact the nominating committee:

Melinda Ligon – 314-749-7307 or meligon@sbcglobal.net

Kathy Soehngen – 314-894-0981 or kasoehng@sbcglobal.net

Barb Moreland – 314-961-4191 or bmore433@aol.com

Names can also be submitted from the floor provided the person nominated has agreed to serve.

Fun Facts about Hostas

(Courtesy of Don Rawson - Michigan Hosta Happenings, Vol 30 No. 1)

The 1933 Wayside Gardens catalog offered Funkia lancifolia (old name). Three for 75 cents, a dozen for \$2.00, or 100 for \$15.00.

Hostas have been grown in gardens for centuries. Chinese documents mention hostas as early as the Han Dynasty in 206 BC-220 AD. In Japan, hostas are mentioned in scripts preceding the Nara period beginning in 710 AD.

Hosta 'Empress Wu' is the largest hosta currently available. Leaves can measure over 22" long by 15" wide! The name is in recognition of the only female to serve as emperor in the history of China, Wu Zetian (624 to 705 AD).

Hostas are named after Dr. Nicholas Host, a physician to the emperor of Austria.

August and September Hosta Tips

These are excerpts taken from articles **written by Rob Mortko**, which appeared in the Central Illinois Hosta Society newsletters of August and September 2015. These tips are apropos at this time of year.

August is traditionally the hottest month of the year. With all that heat our hostas will really benefit from regular watering. Our goal at this point in the season is to grow the rhizome so that we can reap the benefits next spring.

During the growing season the hosta rhizome (or crown) is building reserves that will be used the following spring. Large amounts of water are also required to replace the natural transpiration of the plant while supporting all the foliage. When we encounter a prolonged spell of hot dry weather, the rhizome will spend its own reserves to support the plant. It's rare that a hosta will wilt, even when the soil is very dry - so we don't get any early warning sign like we do with many plants

Ever wonder why a hosta appears OK at the end of the year, but reappears much smaller and/or less vigorous the following spring, or (even worse) fails to reappear altogether the following spring? This is often the result of a decline in the crown mass the previous summer due to lack of adequate water.

So what to do when we encounter a summer with day upon day of hot temperatures and extended dry spells? Help your hostas manage the stress by watering deeply at least once a week if we don't receive any help from Mother Nature. Optimum moisture for hostas is between one and one and a half inches of water per week during the growing season. This is especially important if your hostas receive significant levels of direct sun exposure. Watering time is also important.

Watering in the morning will help discourage both slugs and fungal activity. When watering blue leafed hostas avoid overhead watering of the leaves which can slowly wear away the glaucous bloom (i.e. the waxy covering that makes a green hosta appear blue). Residual water droplets on any leaf which is followed by sun exposure can also result in leaf burn. Use of soaker hoses and drip irrigation work well in this regard.

Many folks might conclude that hostas can only be planted in the spring because they seem to "disappear" in local nurseries and garden centers by the first of June. Fact is, container grown hostas can be planted any time during the growing season. What's more, by planting now you can gain nearly a full growing season as compared to waiting until next spring. This will be readily apparent next spring as you will most likely have multiple eyes or pips emerge as a result of planting now

Fall is considered the "optimum" time for hosta division as roots can continue to grow and establish themselves until our first killing frost (around the middle of October). Remember hostas never need to be divided as opposed to most perennials that will become less vigorous after 3-5 years if not divided. With hostas it's a choice you make.

To divide hostas it is usually easiest to dig and lift the entire clump. Then use a spade or knife to divide into smaller sections. The key is to retain an adequate root structure for each division. If needed, use a hose to wash away the soil to get a closer look at where you should be making your divisions. When replanting, use a root starter/stimulator solution, but avoid any high nitrogen fertilizer this late in the season. Don't forget the value of good soil prep. Since hostas never need to be divided, you really only get one chance to do a good job of preparing the soil with plenty of organic matter. Never plant that \$5 hosta in a 50 cent hole. Even worse is planting a \$20 hosta in that same 50 cent hole!!!

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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

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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/>