



Shady Notes

Volume 22, Issue 8

September, 2021



President
Phyllis Weidman

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

September, the month of cooler temperature and lower humidity, I hope. I have been waiting to get out into the garden to do all the things I have put off - putting up new deer fencing and moving things around so it is easier for me to handle.

I have many hostas that need to be smaller or moved. Remember if you are moving or dividing hostas you always want to have 5-6 weeks of growing time so the roots can be established. That means for me mid-September to October at the latest.

I have a notebook that I write down what needs to be done. Dividing and moving hostas is so much easier in the spring, but if I don't write things down, how soon I forget. I will also forget how terrible they look now due to disease, insects, temperature, sun and animals. Next year!

We still have a couple of meetings yet this year. The September meeting will be at the Missouri Botanical Garden. It is important that we all know the part the St. Louis Hosta Society has played in the creation and care of the hosta beds.

The October meeting is yet to be planned, but we are hoping to meet at the Creve Coeur Recreation Complex. Maybe we should do something with food. Got any ideas?

Hoping for lower temperatures and less humidity so we can get out and garden.

Phyllis

2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 19

Meeting at the Missouri Botanical Garden
1:30 PM, meet outside the visitor's center

October 24

Note change of date

Meeting with Speaker TBA
1:30 PM, TBA

November

Board Meeting
Time and location TBA

September 19, 1:30 p.m.

Tour of the AHS Hosta Display Garden Missouri Botanical Garden

In 2009 under the leadership of member and long-time MOBOT volunteer Phyllis Weidman, our society offered to help the Garden enhance their hosta beds. A lot has happened in the intervening years.

From a disorganized and poorly maintained set of beds, the area is now an AHS designated Display Garden. Informational signage is abundant. Beds are organized -one is dedicated to species hostas which show visitors where it all began.

Our society has contributed greatly to this effort. We have given shade in the form of two crabapple trees and a Japanese maple. We have given water in the form of an automatic irrigation system. We have given plants to upgrade their collection. Most importantly we have given of ourselves in the form of an annual work day.

Join Phyllis Weidman and your fellow members for a tour of this beautiful area and learn the history of our involvement. See what has transpired in the past and what plans are in its future.

We will meet in front of the temporary Visitor Center at 1:30 PM on September 19. Our Society will pay the admission fee for non-Garden members. If you arrive late please join us in the hosta beds on the East side of the Garden. You will be reimbursed for any entrance fees.



Designation as an American Hosta Society Display Garden - 2011



Informational signage added



Work Day crew - 2018

GARDEN WALK – A visit with MARTHA and Paul LAFATA August 22

Was it really August? Impossible to tell in the beautiful garden of Martha and Paul LaFata. The day was typical St. Louis – hot and humid. But not so in this secluded garden.

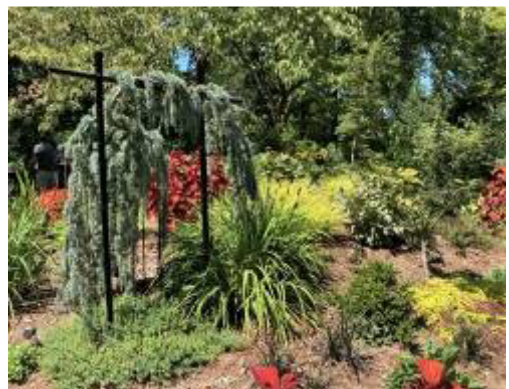
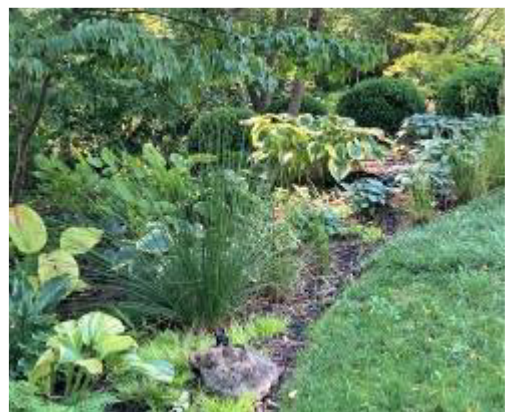
Wide heavily wooded beds filled with lush vegetation surround the LaFata's yard. By the middle of August most hostas are suffering the effects of a hot summer – crispy leaf edges, sun scorch, small slug holes and the appearance of nematode damage. Not so much here. Martha's hostas were holding up quite well. A large *H. 'Prima Donna'*, at left in the first picture, showed little such wear and tear.

A hillside that once was home to vast tangles of honeysuckle, invasive vines and over-grown shrubs now features green and golden grasses, sun-loving peonies, prostrate conifers and a blue cedar draped artistically over a black wrought iron trellis. Other plants dish up a splash of orange which will last well into fall.

At the top of the hillside is a sun-filled glade anchored by two large raised beds. Inside are vegetables and colorful annuals which can be cut for use in bouquets inside the house. An unusual columnar sweet gum in the upper garden border caught everyone's attention.

Members relaxed on the LaFata's newly expanded patio. Cold lemonade, tasty snacks and lively chatter ended the afternoon.

Thank you Martha and Paul for a lovely afternoon!



August Meeting

Phyllis Weidman's Hosta 101 talk at the August meeting in Martha LaFata's garden revolved around the bloom stalks of hostas. The flowers, hanging down from the stalk called a scape, are funnel or bell shaped and open to look like small lilies. Some are white, others shades of purple and lavender. Some are striped, others speckled. Hybridizers are now trying to introduce red and yellow.

The scape flowers from the bottom up with each bloom lasting but a day. A scape may bloom for three weeks depending upon the number of buds present. Some cultivars bloom at the start of summer while others don't begin their show until August.

The female part of the flower is the pistil. There is only one and usually the longest strand present in the inside of the flower. It curves upward and on the end is a moist pad, called the stigma. The male flower part is the stamen. Hostas usually have six which are shorter than the pistil. When the flower opens a tiny sac on the stamen splits open to reveal fluffy, yellow pollen grains. A pollinator such as a bee, butterfly, insect or human hybridizer transfers the pollen to the stigma.

Within three to four days after pollination, the base of the flower will begin to swell if fertilization was successful. The flowers wither and fall away exposing seed pods that look like green sausages hung out to cure. Most pods are shades of green but some are red, dark purple or even striped.

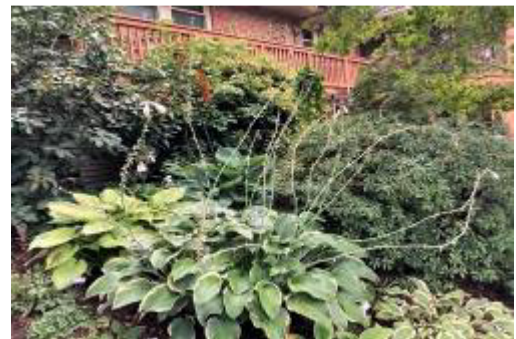
The pods must mature before the seeds inside will be viable, usually about 30 days. When the pods are dry and start to crack open the seeds are ready. They will be black, flat, dry and papery.

Viable seeds will have a noticeable "bump" on one end. The seeds can be planted right away or stored in a cool, dry place and planted later. The seeds will sprout within two to three weeks.

When you plant hosta seeds, you never know what you are going to get. Except for *H. ventricosa*, hostas do not come true from seed. The seedling likely will not look like its parent. Each flower on the scape could have been fertilized with pollen from many different hostas. The resulting seedling is called "open pollinated" or OP, if the cross was the work of an insect. Although it takes three to five years before a hosta takes on its mature form it might be fun to try your hand. Play hybridizer and create your very own plant. Just know that it will most likely be green.



Phyllis explaining the anatomy of a hosta flower.



Crazy tall scapes of *H. 'Regal Splendor'*



Pods containing fertilized seeds hang down looking like fat sausages on *H. 'Millennium'*

Pat Payton – 1939-2021

With great sadness, I announce the passing on August 22 of long time St. Louis Hosta Society member Pat Payton.

Since she was a child Pat loved flowers and gardening, but became quite serious about this hobby after purchasing her Webster Groves tutor-style home in the 1990s. After a visit to the 1993 AHS National Convention in Atlanta, she became addicted to hostas.



Pat and longtime partner Jean Hudson, created a garden that was the high-light of many garden tours. Hostas border both sides of their long driveway and encase the shady front lawn. The back yard is a riot of color. Sun-loving perennials fill every crevice attracting pollinators of all sorts.

In the early 2000s, Pat and Jean actively supported our society's activities. In the last few years, illness slowed their participation. Pat served as Treasurer from 2004-2007. Sales tables at both our annual MOBot plant sale and our annual Member Auction teemed with donations from their beautiful garden. They shared more than plants; they shared their time and vast knowledge.

The St. Louis Hosta Society extends its deepest sympathy to Jean Hudson, adopted daughters Jamie and Marissa and to all Pat's family. We shall miss you. Family and friends are invited to pay respects at Kutis Funeral Home, 10151 Gravois Road, Afton MO on Saturday, September 11 beginning at 11 a.m., until services at 12 p.m.

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:

David Birenbaum – 314-650-5200 or d.birenbaum@sbcglobal.net
Pam Wolkowitz - 636-285-3114 or lovehostas@msn.com

Welcome New Members

Kate Malesevich of Glendale, MO
Kerry Reeves of Cape Girardeau, MO

Thank you for joining our society. We hope you are able to join us at the upcoming meeting and garden walk scheduled for September 19 at the Missouri Botanical Garden. This is the perfect time to meet some of your fellow members and for us to meet you.

One of the questions asked at the August meeting was whether hostas could be divided and planted in the fall. The answer is yes, but how long can we procrastinate? With the warmer winters St. Louis has been experiencing the last few years, perhaps we can extend our gardening year. The following article, written by one of hostadom's gurus, gives some insight. (This is reprinted from the Central Illinois Hosta Society August 2013 newsletter courtesy of the AHS newsletter exchange.)

How late is too late to Plant Hostas in the Fall?

By Bob Solberg of Green Hill Farm

August is a great time to plant hostas almost anywhere in the country. You can safely plant them all month in the Midwest and North and the latter half of the month in the South. My standard rule is you want to get them in the ground 4-6 weeks before the first frost. This allows them to make some new roots while the soil is still warm and then have some time to prepare for winter.

Most of us, though, have planted hostas in the ground later than that with good success. I have planted them as late as the first week of November without any noticeable ill effects. You do run a risk with late planting however. Hostas are completely dormant during the winter, and they will not produce new roots until after they have made new foliage in the spring. They literally sleep through the winter.

Late planted hostas may rot over the winter if 1) the ground is frozen and stays frozen shortly after they are planted, 2) they are very dry when the ground freezes, 3) the soil stays too wet because of poor winter drainage or 4) heaving occurs during cycles of the soil freezing and thawing. Snow cover or a covering of mulch will help with all these situations. Remember, blue hostas, as well as many gold hostas, with *H. sieboldiana* and *H. 'Tokudama'* parents as well as some *H. longipes* types are the most susceptible to winter kill. Miniature hostas may also completely heave out of the ground, resulting in cold damage to the crown.

So, with late hosta planting, first make sure the plants are full of water when the first hard frost hits. Then try a little mulch to protect the hosta crowns and moderate soil temperatures. (Beware! Deep mulches may entice mice and voles to make their winter homes in your hosta garden.) With a little luck from the winter weather you can probably extend your planting season another month or so, even after the first frost.

St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

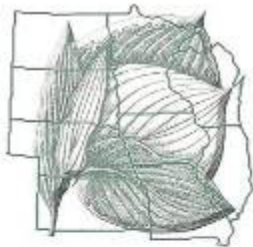
Contact: Dave Poos
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Crestwood, MO 63126
david.poos@att.net

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

Meetings held at the **Creve Coeur Government Center, 300 N. New Ballas, 63141** (between Ladue Road and Olive), unless otherwise noted.

Visit our Web site: www.stlouishosta.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/>