

# Shady Notes

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ST LOUIS  
HOSTA  
SOCIETY



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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



*President Dave Birenbaum at the Illinois Central College  
hosta display garden in East Peoria, Illinois*

Greetings, Fellow Gardeners

2025 has presented an unusual gardening season. On the plus side, we had a pleasant spring and throughout the season rainfall just about when needed, thus limiting my time spent dragging a hose around.

On the downside, I live in an area that was subjected to marble-sized hail, which tore up many of my plants. I've been very fortunate that this was the first time for such torment. Then there were the strong winds that dropped an enormous number of sticks and branches on my friends.

Now everything looks overcooked a little from our lengthy summer heat. With heat coupled with all the rain, our gardens have been set up for another ugly nuisance: Southern Blight. I shan't go on about that.

But please read Lynn's article herein about this disease, identifying it, and possible control measures.

Alas, I have accepted the beauty of Mother Nature and the cyclical and changing nature of the natural world we have, knowing we have little control of Her. I have heeded sage advice from wise members to leave on the plants what may continue to grow to provide nourishment and employ techniques to control what ails the garden - and enjoy the hostas.

Please keep in mind that in addition to our October meeting program, we will also hold elections for the 2026-2027 Executive Board positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and also Past President by default).

As our Society activities wind down, the current and new Board will come together for a November 2 Board meeting to plan for 2026. I'd be delighted to hear if you are aware of any particular gardens or events you'd enjoy making part of our schedule. All members are invited to this meeting, which will be held at a member's home (details appear in our Calendar).

Remember, if you are planning to move or divide hostas, they'll require 5-6 weeks of growing time to establish roots. This means mid-September to October at the latest. In the meantime, continue to water, water, water!

— Dave

## PIP'S TIPS



If you like knowing which hosta varieties are in your garden but struggle with disappearing plant labels, try burying the plastic tag next to the plant in a consistent spot (the 3:00 position, for example). Don't have the original nursery tag? Create a new one from old blinds and an oil-based marker.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mark Heiland - St. Louis, MO

Diana Hetherington - Springfield, IL

Susie Risser - Springfield, IL

Valerie Rudy-Valli – St. Louis, MO



## THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT, I HAVE SOUTHERN BLIGHT!

*By Lynn Teller, Newsletter Editor*

I had heard of Southern Blight, but I first experienced it this summer while volunteering at the Missouri Botanical Garden. I was removing several broken stems from a hosta - damage I suspected was the work of a rabbit or other critter – and was told that the plant was infected with Southern Blight, a fungal disease that is deadly to a wide range of plants including vegetables, ornamentals, and shrubs. In fact, several hostas in the MoBot garden were affected and were already being treated by staff members. Southern Blight is common in St. Louis, where our hot, humid summers provide perfect breeding conditions.



*Southern Blight at The Missouri Botanical Garden*

A few days later, the reality of Southern Blight hit home. The *H.* 'Lakeside Paisley Print' by my front door looked trampled upon. I had noticed a few broken off stems earlier and attributed it to a recent storm, but now nearly the entire plant was lying on the ground. This flowerbed has been on my To Do List for a while because it has poor drainage and gets hit pretty hard by runoff when the gutters are full which was the case this particularly rainy spring.



*This H. 'Lakeside Paisley Print' went from having 2 or 3 damaged stems to this, in just a few days.*

So, what now? Treatment depends on how far the disease has progressed when you discover it. In the earliest stage, Southern Blight appears as a cottony, web-like growth called hyphae. After feeding on a plant for just 4–7 days, the fungus produces tiny, mustard seed-like structures called sclerotia. These tough little survival pods can persist in your soil for years, lying dormant through winter and then germinating the following summer when heat and humidity return, ready to restart the cycle. That's why the best defense is learning to recognize the disease early, before sclerotia ever form.

**The best defense is learning to recognize the disease early, before sclerotia have a chance to form.**

### Next Steps

1. Remove broken stems from the crown. Check them for sclerotia as well as at the crown and in the surrounding soil. If you only see white, weblike material (hyphae), congratulations, you caught it at an early stage.
2. Bag the broken stems and put in trash, not compost or yard waste.
3. (If Applicable) Remove soil containing sclerotia and place in a trash bag. Remove an additional inch of soil and add to the trash bag. Discard in trash, not compost or yard waste.
4. Drench the soil with a 10% bleach solution.
5. In a week, follow with fungicide containing tebuconazole. Currently, consumers have access to BIOADVANCED Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs (older versions are branded as Bayer).
6. Monitor for sclerotia. If present, remove as above and retreat with fungicide.





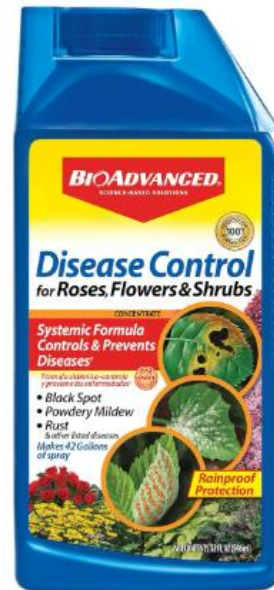
Photo Credit: Bill Meyer  
Threadlike hyphae appear in the early stage of Southern Blight.



The fungus can live in soil for years by forming sclerotia which first appears as white or tan balls, and then turn brown.



The fungus spreads through the soil and infects plants at or near the soil line, causing wilting and stem rot.



A fungicide containing tebuconazole in a consumer-friendly size. Other options are in much larger quantities.

More information on Southern Blight is available on the Hosta Library website:

[Overview](#)

[Excellent Article on Treatment Strategies by Bill Meyer](#)

## GARDEN WALKS TO REMEMBER

The St. Louis Hosta Society visited three South County gardens on June 8, 2025. We started at the home of Marian and Larry McCord. Their woodland garden featured a hillside of large hostas accented by colorful annuals, tall grasses, and delicate ferns. A stone pathway led visitors alongside a stream to a cozy gazebo—the perfect spot to pause and enjoy the view of the waterfall and koi pond.



*Marian and Larry's garden with its cascading stream and tranquil koi pond is a tribute to their late son Chad who contributed hundreds of hours to their creation.*





*The woodland garden includes many large, mature hostas.*



*The stone walkway was also designed and installed by the McCords.*



Next, we stopped at the home of Jamie and Lori Rockwell, where a large, sparkling pond and spacious seating areas gave the backyard the relaxed feel of a private resort. Boulders and rocks were accented by a wide variety of plants including fern, impatiens, cannas, coral bells, and hostas.



*Ahhhh.... I could get used to this*



*The colorful pond residents were fishing for compliments.*



Our final stop was the delightful garden of member Kathie Soehngen. Kathie's backyard has it all - a serene koi pond, a buzzing pollinator garden, colorful annuals, and a variety of perennials among hundreds of hostas. And she may just have the cleanest rocks you'll ever see.



*The mesmerizing koi pond welcomed visitors to the Soehngen garden.*





*A charming bridge lead visitors into a garden full of colorful blooms including hydrangeas, lilies, astilbe, and begonias*



*Here a hosta, there a hosta, everywhere a hosta...*



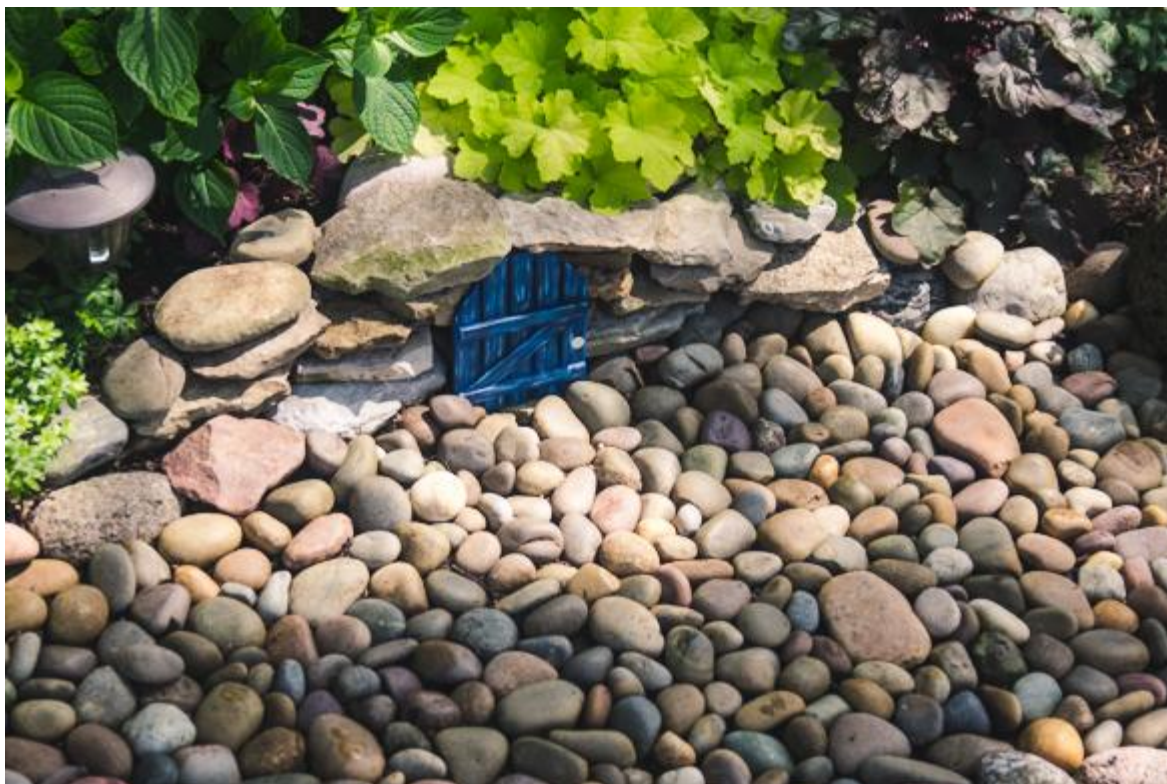


*Kathie's mix of plants in varying shapes, textures, and heights creates an eye-catching display.*



*The white picket fence provides the perfect backdrop for the colorful pollinator garden.*





*Kathie's spotless rock bed (kept tidy with a leaf blower) impressed even the most fastidious gardeners in the group*



*This striking orange lily attracted visitors and pollinators alike.*



## SWAP MEET

We wrapped up our June 8, 2025 meeting with something new - a hosta swap. Each participant brought a hosta, and the first pick was determined by random draw. When someone's plant was chosen, they got to select next, adding a fun incentive to bring an especially appealing plant that might be picked early. Based on member feedback, this is something we will add to our regular activities.



*President Dave Birenbaum and Vice President Janelle Criscione facilitated the swap*

## HELP WANTED THURSDAY MORNINGS



Front Row: Dave Birenbaum, Janelle Criscione, Lynn Teller, Carmen Christopher


Back Row: Mike Teller and Phyllis Weidman

If you would like to volunteer in the hosta garden at the Missouri Botanical Garden on Thursday mornings, please contact Phyllis at (314) 630-9036.

We perform basic maintenance tasks including weeding and deadheading, starting around 7:30 am. (And we have fun doing it!)



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<p>Sunday August 17 12:00 Lunch (optional) 2:00 pm Program</p>	<p>Lunch and Program</p>	<p>12:00 pm Lunch at Super Smokers in Eureka <a href="#">1567 W 5th St, Eureka, MO 63025</a></p> <p>2:00 pm Mike Saxton will lead an interesting discussion regarding elimination of invasive honeysuckle</p> <p>Shaw Nature Reserve, <a href="#">307 Pinetum Loop Road, Gray Summit, MO 63039</a></p> <p>Get gate token at Visitor Center, Meet at Carriage House, next to Bascom House</p>  <p>Mike Saxton is the Manager of Ecological Restoration and Land Stewardship at Shaw Nature Reserve, a division of the Missouri Botanical Garden, in Gray Summit, MO. Mike coordinates invasive species control efforts, native seed collection and sowing, and prescribed fire operations over the Reserve's 2,400 acres of diverse habitats.</p>
<p>Sunday October 19, 1:00 pm</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Meeting, topic TBD</p> <p>Mo Bot CBEC Building <a href="#">4651 Shaw Blvd, St Louis MO 63110</a></p>
<p>Sunday November 2, 1:00 pm</p>	<p>Board Meeting</p>	<p>Board 2026 planning meeting at Janelle Criscione's home. Members are welcome.</p> <p><a href="#">624 Locksley Place, Webster Groves, MO 63119</a></p>
<p>June 10 – 13, 2025</p>	<p>National Convention</p>	<p>American Hosta Society Convention in Dublin, OH</p>

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 19 – 11, 2025	Regional Convention	Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Madison, WI
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### OFFICIALS

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Kris Ash, Membership Chair  
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### St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

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

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

Membership term is January - December

Please visit our website  
[stlhosta.org](http://stlhosta.org)

Check us out on 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](https://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](#)